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PACIFIC CONSUMER ACCULTURATION IN NEW ZEALAND:  
UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF CONSUMPTION USING  
VIDEO DIARIES

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Waikato

By

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## Abstract

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New Zealand, *the land of milk and honey*, is the ‘dream’ of many Pacific people. Expectations of New Zealand were high as Pacific people dreamt of ‘the better life’ from migrated family members who retold their experiences confirming their version of life in New Zealand. Many Pacific migrants came with the intention of improving the lives of their families and for themselves. Positioned within the situational context of understanding Pacific migrants isolated from their culture, this thesis aims to understand how island-born Pacific people acculturate to New Zealand society as consumers. The research question centers on understanding how Pacific people living in New Zealand experience consumer acculturation.

This research founded on a critical ethnographic stance addresses traditionally unbalanced power relations between researcher and participant and ensures participants are in control of their involvement in the study. Video diaries are used to capture routine, daily experiences of Pacific consumers. Participants narrated and reflected on their lives in New Zealand and considered how this differed from their lives in the islands. Video diaries were conducted with nine participants from two cities in New Zealand; Hamilton and Dunedin. Participants are from; Samoa (3), Tonga (2), Fiji (3) and Cook Islands (1). Each participant is tasked with recording aspects of their lives for the duration of 6 to 8 weeks, meeting regularly with the researcher to discuss progress, change tapes, and, most importantly build a relationship. Upon completion of the diary fieldwork stage, the researcher and participant meet for a final interview to collaborate on themes and clarify any issues outstanding.

Participant narratives are expressed within five storylines: premigration expectations; change of the collective; becoming an individual; consumption desires; and, cultural maintenance. These storylines explore themes surrounding the consumer acculturation process in New Zealand. They illustrate that the reality of life in New Zealand varies considerably from participants’ initial expectations. Participants acknowledged that they needed to become more independent and take on more individualistic values to fit into their new environment. Participants attempted to maintain aspects of their culture, in particular, the ‘circle of giving’ through obligation. However, this was not always possible.

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

Consumer acculturation appeared throughout the everyday experiences of participants. This included; in public and private situations, in the home, work and at social occasions. Individual adaptation of consumption values from Pacific to Western pervaded all areas of participant lives. By looking at contemporary Pacific consumption patterns we learn that there is similarity to previous patterns of Western consumption. Consumption feeds the desires of many Pacific people to want more, have more, own more and replaces more traditional values like community ownership and reciprocity. A process of consumer acculturation developed from these understandings, highlights the movement of participants as they graduate to-and-from different phases of the process, i.e., from the dream, to the reality of life in New Zealand.

Understanding individual journeys of Pacific consumers highlights the acculturation processes that Pacific people go through to merge into New Zealand society. Through this insight, the meaning of consumption is considered and in turn how this translates to the wider culture, both in New Zealand and in the Pacific. Through understanding these consumption meanings and experiences, we consider ways to alleviate negative consumer acculturative experience. The bigger picture brings us back to questioning the relevance and structure of a consumer lifestyle. Within a New Zealand context, Pacific consumers would benefit from the integration of their core values into their daily lives and the embracing of their value system by wider societal structures. Seeking solutions from collective methods would encourage the retention of cultural values. Undoubtedly taking the “the best from both worlds” would be the ultimate route to navigating life in New Zealand.

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I did not do this thesis alone!

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Participants: Unique to every individual in this research is the story of how they arrived in New Zealand. Surrounding each of their stories, participants have opened a 'window' into their lives, sharing with me a portion of their time in New Zealand. These 'windows' of enlightenment have formed the basis of this thesis and tell a larger story of life in New Zealand from a Pacific point of view. Without these rich stories and open sharing from participants this thesis would not have been possible. Within the following thesis I am attempting to share knowledge that has been imparted upon me by individuals who have entrusted me with parts of their lives, private aspects of themselves and their families, and shared even the most vulnerable of family members, their children. With this knowledge I have attempted to present my understanding of their journey in a manner that may inevitably help others and does not expose

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

my participants to traditional researcher 'judgement' that leaves them without a forum to represent themselves. If I have failed at this attempt in any way then I apologise to my participants unreservedly. Wholeheartedly I say thank you for your involvement, trust and commitment to the project and to me.

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**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

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## Table of Contents

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Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	vii
Lists of Figures, Tables, and Charts.....	xiii
Definitions, Key Terms and Concepts .....	xiv
1. STARTING THE JOURNEY .....	1
Why does this study matter? .....	2
<i>Intentions of Research</i> .....	3
Establishing the Problem .....	5
My Guiding Question: What did I ask? .....	7
Putting the “Pacific” in Context: Historical Migration.....	9
<i>Waves of migration</i> .....	9
<i>Dawn Raids</i> .....	10
<i>Relationship with Tangata Whenua</i> .....	11
<i>Remittances to the Islands</i> .....	11
Being ‘Pacific’ myself... ..	14
The absence of an “Aha” .....	17
<i>My Reflection</i> .....	19
Constructing the Journey .....	20
2. SURVEYING THE LITERATURE: ACCULTURATION, CONSUMER ACCULTURATION AND CONSUMPTION .....	21
Defining Acculturation .....	22
So What Does Acculturation “Look” Like: Characteristics of Acculturation.....	24
Consumer Acculturation .....	30
Model of Consumer Acculturation .....	31
<i>My Reflection</i> .....	34
<i>Consumption, Culture and Identity</i> .....	43



**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

<i>Limitations of Current Consumer Research</i> .....	46
<i>My Reflection: Addressing the Gaps</i> .....	49
3. METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	51
Drifting through worlds: Finding my roots.....	52
<i>My Reflection on Beginning</i> .....	52
My Indigenous Dilemma: Cultural Consciousness.....	53
The essence of the inquiry: Critical Theory.....	55
Central Concepts in Critical Theory .....	57
<i>Marxian thought that informed Critical Theory</i> .....	58
<i>Reconceptualising Critical Theory</i> .....	59
An Indigenous Undertaking.....	63
Critical Ethnography .....	65
Movement to the Visual.....	67
<i>Visualising Consumer Research</i> .....	69
Video Diary Method Development.....	72
<i>My Reflection</i> .....	75
Friendship as Method.....	77
<i>My Reflection</i> .....	78
Critical Discourse Analysis and Thematic Analysis.....	79
4. CREATING CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC VIDEO DIARIES.....	81
Drifting into the Research.....	81
Before Entering the Field: trialling the process .....	83
Ethical Approval .....	86
<i>Consent Process</i> .....	86
<i>Counselling Services</i> .....	87
<i>Cultural Protocol</i> .....	87
Video Diary Equipment .....	89
Identifying Potential Participants.....	90
<i>Participant Recruitment</i> .....	91

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

<i>Undertaking a ‘Pacific-peoples’ study</i> .....	93
<i>Using Pacific language</i> .....	94
<i>Identifying “Pacific People”</i> .....	94
Charting the Video Diary Method .....	95
Capturing the Everyday: How did I use video diaries? .....	96
Stage One: Recruitment and initial interview .....	97
Stage Two: Doing ethnography and making video diaries .....	98
<i>Fieldwork Regions</i> .....	98
<i>Regular Contact</i> .....	99
<i>Dealing with procrastination</i> .....	103
Stage Three: Final interview .....	105
<i>My Reflection</i> .....	105
Finding Consumer Acculturation.....	106
<i>Seeking Meanings</i> .....	106
Analysis to Interpretation.....	108
<i>In Conclusion</i> .....	110
5. MEETING THE PARTICIPANTS.....	111
Cook Islands.....	112
<i>Ruth</i> .....	112
Fiji Islands.....	113
<i>Martha</i> .....	113
<i>Paul</i> .....	114
Samoa.....	115
<i>Sarah</i> .....	115
<i>Natalie</i> .....	116
<i>Jessica</i> .....	117
Tonga .....	118
<i>Mabel</i> .....	118
<i>Joel</i> .....	119

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

6. STRUCTURING STORYLINES .....	120
Premigration Expectations: Dreaming of Paradise in Paradise .....	126
7. STORYLINE ONE: THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY .....	127
Ode to Mum & Dad .....	127
<i>Spirit of Expectation</i> .....	130
<i>Expectations of Reuniting with Family</i> .....	136
In Closing: Expectations .....	141
PostMigration Conflict: The Reality of the Dream.....	143
8. STORYLINE TWO: DREAMING OF FAMILY .....	145
Being a Polynesian.....	145
<i>Changes in the family</i> .....	147
<i>The absence of the family and the collective</i> .....	150
<i>Increasing obstacles to closeness</i> .....	153
In Closing: Loss of the Collective .....	159
<i>Survival</i> .....	159
9. STORYLINE THREE: PEELING THE BANANA TO BECOME AN INDIVIDUAL ...	160
<i>Becoming an Individual</i> .....	162
<i>Being Religiously Independent</i> .....	170
<i>Independence/Freedom</i> .....	176
<i>Identity</i> .....	176
<i>Thinking of self</i> .....	176
10. STORYLINE FOUR: DREAMING OF ‘MORE’ .....	178
<i>It’s a Rich Man’s World</i> .....	180
<i>Consciousness of difference</i> .....	186
<i>A New Kind of Selfish</i> .....	192
Access to ‘More’ .....	196
<i>Dreaming of food</i> .....	197
<i>Dreaming of Drinking</i> .....	209
<i>Powerful and Irrational Addiction</i> .....	211

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

In Closing: Wanting more.....	215
<i>Consciousness of difference</i> .....	215
<i>Powerlessness – Addiction</i> .....	216
11.    STORYLINE FIVE: MAINTAINING CULTURE THROUGH OBLIGATION .....	217
Bread!! .....	217
The Circle of Giving: A System of Give and Take .....	221
<i>Family give and take</i> .....	228
<i>‘Buffering’ the Journey</i> .....	239
<i>The praxis of giving</i> .....	244
<i>Church give and tithe</i> .....	252
In Closing: Obligation Revealed.....	256
<i>Personal Sacrifice</i> .....	256
<i>Competitive Obligation</i> .....	257
12.    THE PACIFIC EXPERIENCE OF CONSUMER ACCULTURATION.....	259
Finding the ‘Pacific Experience’ in Consumer Acculturation .....	260
The Dream .....	262
Real Life Conflict .....	264
<i>Change/Absence of a collective way of life</i> .....	265
<i>Becoming an individual</i> .....	268
<i>Consumption desire</i> .....	269
Loss of Happiness .....	270
Attempted Recovery through Culture .....	272
Outcome .....	275
Understanding the Effects of a Consumer Lifestyle on Pacific People .....	277
13.    ENLIGHTENED BY NEW UNDERSTANDINGS .....	281
Concluding from what we have learnt .....	282
Research Scope .....	284
Strengths of the Study .....	285
Considering the Implications for Participants.....	286

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

Considering the Implications for Consumer Research .....	289
Considering the Methodological Implications.....	290
Considering the Implications for Social Policy .....	291
Considering the Implications for Future Research .....	292
<i>Pacific Consumers</i> .....	292
The End of This Journey and the Beginning of Another . . .	293
REFERENCES .....	294
APPENDICES .....	312
Appendix 1.0: Steps of the Participant Process for Video Diaries .....	312
Appendix 1.1: Participant Information Sheet .....	314
Appendix 1.2: Participant Stage One Consent Form .....	318
Appendix 1.3: Participant Stage Two Consent Form .....	319
Appendix 1.4: Video Diary Participant Guide.....	320
Appendix 1.5: Participant Schedule of Weekly Topics .....	322
Appendix 2.0: Research outputs from Thesis .....	323

## **Lists of Figures, Tables, and Charts**

---

Figure 1: Tonga (Mabel) .....	1
Figure 2: My aunties, grandfather, grandmother and my mother, the youngest. Circa 1940s .....	14
Figure 3: Four acculturation strategies based on two issues (Berry, 2003, p.23) .....	25
Figure 4: Framework for understanding acculturation: cultural and psychological levels (Berry, 2003, p. 20) .....	27
Figure 5: Empirical Model of Consumer Acculturation (Peñaloza, 1994, p. 48) .....	31
Figure 6: Dinner with my family and theirs.....	87
Figure 7: Participant Details .....	92
Figure 8: My Video Process .....	95
Figure 9: Some participants were more prepared than others.....	101
Figure 10: Script for diaries (Natalie) .....	102
Figure 11: Charting the Analysis through to Interpretation.....	108
Figure 12: Sharing my family and myself with my friend and participant (Charis).....	110
Figure 13: Better in New Zealand (Martha) .....	113
Figure 14: Good food! (Paul).....	114
Figure 16: Looking after my brother (Sarah).....	115
Figure 17: Church is so important (Natalie) .....	116
Figure 18: Otago's pretty flash! (Jessica) .....	117
Figure 19: New Zealand has always felt like home (Mabel) .....	118
Figure 20: We were young (Joel).....	119
Figure 21: Conceptual Pacific Consumer Acculturation Process .....	125
Figure 22: Wider variety of foods (Jessica) .....	132
Figure 23: Sense of community (Melaine) .....	138
Figure 24: Paying for childcare that is free in the islands (Ruth) .....	151
Figure 25: Sacred church (Melanie) .....	170
Figure 26: My main hang out for shopping (Ruth).....	181
Figure 27: Spaghetti bolognese (Jessica).....	198
Figure 28: I still buy in bulk (Joel) .....	202
Figure 29: Cooking house in Samoa (Natalie).....	203
Figure 30: Food at any function (Ruth) .....	206
Figure 31: Learning and teaching how to cook (Jessica).....	209
Figure 32: Giving to parents (Mabel) .....	229
Figure 33: Loading the container (Mabel) .....	230
Figure 34: Put the roof on the house (Mabel) .....	233
Figure 35: Shopping for everything (Ruth) .....	240
Figure 36: Showing me what they want (Jessica).....	251
Figure 37: A Process of Pacific Consumer Acculturation in New Zealand .....	261

## **Definitions, Key Terms and Concepts**

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Aiga:	family (Samoan)
Alofa:	love (Samoan)
Apiianga:	people who train to become pastors
Cuzzies:	colloquial term meaning cousin, relative, friend
Fa'alavelave:	A ceremonial occasion (wedding, funeral, etc) requiring the exchange of gifts (Meleisea, 1987, p. xvii) or the act of helping within families and community to overcome challenges (Wright, Ram, and Ward (2005)) (A Samoan word)
Fa'aSamoa:	literally “in the manner of the Samoans”, Samoan customs. (Meleisea, 1987, p. xvi)
fakalofa lahi atu:	hello, greeting (Niuean)
Fanau:	means family need reference here (A Samoan word)
Fia-palagi:	wanna be white person
Frangipani:	Flower of the Pacific
Fuzzy-wuzzy:	colloquial term meaning nice, special feelings towards someone/something
Half caste:	a person of mixed-racial parentage
Hangi:	earth-oven (Māori )
Kia ora:	hello, greeting (Māori )
Kia orana:	hello, greeting (Cook Islands)
Lavalava:	is a single rectangular piece of fabric worn as a ‘skirt’ in the islands
Malae:	an open outdoor area in the centre of a village for public meetings and entertainment
Malo e lelei:	hello, greeting (Tongan)
Mana:	power, dignity (Māori )
Māori:	tangata whenua of Aotearoa –people of the land (Māori )
McDonalds:	US Multinational restaurant chain
KFC:	Kentucky Fried Chicken Take away restaurant
Mea alofa:	means gift of love (Samoan)
Nausori :	Town in Fiji on the East Coast of Viti Levu

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

Ni sa Bula: hello, greeting (Fijian)

Overstayer: immigrant who has extended the stay of their visa, illegal immigrant

Pacific people: term to refer to people who are from the Pacific region. Predominantly used in NZ  
Pacific population is not one homogenous ethnic group, with more than 12 Pacific Island nations represented in NZ's Pacific community. The terms 'Pacific Islanders', 'Polynesians' and 'Pacific People' are used to describe these groups collectively. The collective label fails to acknowledge many differences that exist between Pacific ethnic groups, and creates the assumption of one homogenous group. (Sundborn, et al., 2006)

Pākehā: white/European people (Māori)

Palagi or Papalagi: literal sky breaker. Used of Europeans, whites. ((Meleisea, 1987, p. xviii). (A Samoan word)

Pokie machines: gaming machines

Raro: Shortened name for Rarotonga

Spaghetti bolognaise: Mince, Pasta sauce and spaghetti

Tala: is the currency of Samoa.

Talofa: hello, greeting (Samoan)

Tapa: is a bark cloth made in the Pacific Islands

Taro: is a tropical plant grown primarily as a vegetable food

The dole: colloquial term for the New Zealand unemployment benefit

Tithing: money given to the church. Usually this is given every Sunday and has traditionally been 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the household income

Tivaevae: means to stitch or sew; a form of art. (A Cook Islands word)

Twisties: a snack food made from milled corn and rice.

Umu: is a traditional earth-oven. Similar to Māori hangi.

White Sunday: a Samoan holiday in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in October. It is a celebration of childhood



## 1. STARTING THE JOURNEY

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**Figure 1: Tonga (Mabel)**

The focus of this thesis is on understanding the consumption experiences of Pacific immigrants to New Zealand. When we think about a ‘consumer’ in New Zealand, many people already have preconceptions about what this term means. What is taken for granted is that all people are familiar with this system and have similar expectations of the consumption process. However, this is not necessarily the case for all consumers. For many Pacific people who make the journey to New Zealand, there are high expectations about what being a ‘consumer’ in New Zealand will mean. Attached to the idea of being a consumer in New Zealand is the dream (Pulotu-Endemann & Leinatioletuitoga Peteru, 2001) of wanting, having, and being able to provide more for their family. There is little known about what consumption means for Pacific immigrants in New Zealand including understanding if and how individuals use consumption as a tool to acculturate into New Zealand society. Therefore, this research is located in understanding ‘being a consumer’ from a Pacific immigrant viewpoint and in doing so aims to illuminate their journey of ‘fitting-into’ New Zealand society and culture.

### **Why does this study matter?**

There are many reasons why this study is important. Primarily, New Zealand (NZ) has the largest Pacific population in the world, representing approximately 7% of the NZ population (Statistics NZ, 2006). Pacific people are projected to become about 12% of New Zealand's population by 2051 (Statistics NZ, 2002). This level of increase will also develop the Pacific population as a youthful one; it is estimated that by 2026 about 1 in 8 workers in the 15-39 age group will be Pacific (Statistics NZ, 2006). This changing demographic creates diversity and differences in values, cultures and understandings. Yet even with projections that the Pacific population within New Zealand will continue to grow; socioeconomic issues are also growing and need to be addressed.

The economic position of Pacific peoples in New Zealand has often been considerably lower than that of other groups. The Pacific Report (Statistics NZ, 2002) noted that the skills of this Pacific people "...are not always suited to the demands of the New Zealand labour market and they have been over-represented among the unemployed, lower-skilled workers and low income earners" (p. 17). Even with the growing trend of Pacific people moving from blue-collar to white-collar employment - a trend which is following trends for the wider NZ population - economic disparity still remains. This disparity is particularly so for older Pacific people, Island-born and those who are the lower skilled (Statistics NZ, 2002). As a result of their lower socioeconomic position in New Zealand, issues like low home ownership rates exist for Pacific people. Other issues identified in the Pacific Report include "...poorer health status because of factors such as diet, lifestyle, exposure to risk factors and less frequent use of health services. Compounding this are some cultural factors such as family size and dietary patterns" (2002, p. 26). Recent migrants are identified as being significantly at risk because of reduced knowledge of how to access services. This research can, therefore, assist in increasing effectiveness of social marketing campaigns that target the behaviour of specific audiences (Andreasen, 2006). These campaigns encourage holistic change in not only the individual but also in promoting changes in policy to take into account the dynamic of acculturation on the individual.

Secondly, little is known about the acculturation of Pacific immigrants, particularly in the consumption process. Understanding how Pacific consumers think of and use consumption as a strategy to acculturate to New Zealand culture is significant as a means to gain insight into the

harmony or discord that consumption creates. We can begin to understand the multiple conflicting values (as occur in varying ways with immigrant ethnic minorities) that each individual must navigate; the internal conflicts that impact and inevitably reshape the individual so that he or she can 'fit-into' New Zealand society. We can begin to see if consumption is important prior to migration and can observe the consumption goals (if any) of each migrating individual. We can also see how, or if, living in New Zealand has changed Pacific cultural meanings (e.g., fa'alavelave/giving), potentially foreseeing how this change will impact the wider culture into the future.

Understanding the individual journeys of Pacific consumers will highlight the acculturation processes that Pacific people go through to merge into New Zealand society. Only through this insight can we begin to grasp the meaning of consumption in each individual experience, but we can also consider how this translates to the wider culture, both in New Zealand and in the Pacific. Through understanding these consumption meanings and experiences, we can begin to uncover ways to alleviate negative consumer acculturative experience. These ways may be in the form of: (1) improving awareness of this process; (2) undertaking changes to the current process of acculturation; (3) furthering education directly to Pacific immigrants both pre and postmigration; and, (4) understanding if the responses recommended need to be more anticipatory or accommodating.

### ***Intentions of Research***

There are multiple intentions with this project. First, I am looking to uncover consumption meaning. Consumption plays a daily role in the lives of consumers in New Zealand. This reality is not always the case for Pacific people who traditionally rely more on the land for sustenance (especially those within a rural or village setting), and for those that have family land/s. In moving to New Zealand, Pacific immigrants have already developed goals around the attainment of consumption objectives. These goals centre predominantly on being able to gain a higher education and increase their personal income, particularly for the benefit of the collective (i.e., wider family). The individual's interaction with the values of his or her new society, particularly individualism, undeniably brings about changes that occur at a microlevel. Understanding Pacific consumption meanings will highlight the experience of becoming a consumer in a Western society, in turn, illuminating aspects of consumption that are predominantly taken for granted.

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

This study also has applied intentions. These are twofold; first, I hope to increase the awareness of Pacific consumers in terms of understanding and operating within a system that maintains elements of oppression (i.e., consumption) (Kraidy, 2002; Belk, 1998; Falk & Campbell, 1997; Friedman, 1994). Secondly, I hope to modify assumptions and practices of marketers, managers, consumers and researchers about the reality of consuming to “fit-into” a new host culture.

This research builds on existing consumer acculturation literature (e.g., Peñaloza, 1989, 1994; Berry 1980, 2003). However, the project is focused on gaining new insights into not only a different immigrant minority, but also observing consumer acculturation in a smaller Western nation, New Zealand. The unified intention to understand, create awareness and encourage change marks the significance of this research as a potential channel for increased social consciousness. The desire to create consciousness at a macrolevel has implications, and social benefits, for both national and international policy and social praxis through improved awareness of immigrant consumption values and meanings. This research will assist in understanding some of the challenges impacting Pacific immigrants to New Zealand, by providing deeper understandings of the individual Pacific experience of navigating the conflicting Western ‘individualistic’ and traditional Pacific ‘collective’ value systems.

This research creates an opportunity not only to learn more about what consumption means through an immigrant lens, but also how consumption generates acculturative experiences for Pacific families. I hope to construct an understanding of how consumption facilitates and/or hinders immigrant consumer acculturative experiences. This understanding can inform marketers involved in cross-cultural efforts and encourage professional awareness of the process of consumer acculturation.

Finally, the social and economic costs of maintaining and/or losing Pacific cultural values in New Zealand will be considered in relation to the consumption experience. Relationships, commitments and obligations to family by Pacific people are a strong and on-going issue for many based in New Zealand. This aims includes looking at aspects of consumption related to gift-giving, obligation, remittances, tithing, and supporting family members. The significance of these issues may help or hinder the consumer acculturation process for Pacific people but cannot be dismissed as an impacting factor of the acculturation journey.

### **Establishing the Problem**

Within marketing world-wide, interest in the ethnic consumer has slowly increased through cross-cultural, comparative and ethnographic studies. There has been growing interest in the field, and as global communities grow more and more diverse. Marketers are faced with the need to have more awareness of the differences within specific consumer groups and this lack of awareness has clearly been a significant problem in the past: "...the politics of exclusion reduces the kinds of voices that are heard" (Stern, 1998, p. 61). Ethnic consumer studies have highlighted the differences not only across global nations but also within nations. However, many of the existing studies of immigrant consumer acculturation are concentrated within the United States where there are large annual immigration numbers.

More recently there has been a resurgence of interest which is emphasising the importance of understanding acculturation across disciplines. While this attention has produced some insightful population specific studies (e.g. Peñaloza, 1994; Caetano & Clark, 2003; Fung, 2002), there are still differences in the understandings of the acculturation process (Ogden, Ogden, & Schau, 2004). Studies have predominantly focused on Hispanic/Mexican (Peñaloza, 1989, 1994; Maldonado & Tansuhaj, 1998, 2002; Floyd & Gramann, 1993; Garcia-Vazquez, 1995; Hernandez, Cohen, & Garcia, 2000), and Asian (Lee, 1989; Jun, Ball, & Gentry, 1993; Oh, Koeske, & Sales, 2002; Park, Paik, Skinner, Ok, & Spindler, 2003) populations. Other global population studies have included: Nigerian (Schiffman, Dillon, & Ngumah, 1981); Pakistani immigrants to Bradford, England (Chapman & Jamal, 1997); and Indian Punjabi Sikh, in Britain (Lindridge & Dhillon, 2005).

Acculturation is of great importance to consumer research as it provides an understanding of the changes taking place at both the group and individual levels. Through understanding acculturation, it is possible to gain insight into the strategies that minority and host cultures utilise to navigate life together, particularly their interaction as consumers. The group level is concerned with changes in "social structure, economic base, and political organization" (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002, p. 350). At the individual, level, the changes are in phenomena such as "identity, values, and attitudes." (p. 350). From these two perspectives, issues of how the immigrant consumer adapts to and adopts various aspects of the host culture to fit into his or her new environment, and the adaptation of the wider cultural group, are mutually

explored. Gilly (1995) noted that there are two aspects of crosscultural consumer experience that are of particular interest to consumer researchers. First the adaptation or acculturation of the immigrant consumer is important not only because of what is learnt about the *Other*, “but also because of what it reveals about ourselves” (p. 505). Secondly, new product adaptation and product familiarity take on different meaning for immigrants when in a new environment.

Although there is substantial literature on aspects of consumer acculturation and crosscultural consumer experiences, these areas have been considered through studies of particular populations (i.e., immigrant populations in the United States). There is a significant lack of research into minority immigrant groups to other parts of the world. For example, very little is known about consumption experiences and more specifically about consumer acculturation processes within New Zealand. Researchers, like Peñaloza (1994), have recommended that further research into consumer acculturation is undertaken across cultures and in different countries to encourage further insight into and awareness of similarities and differences crossculturally. Peñaloza (1994) stresses that this research is “...crucial to the development of theory pertaining to the nexus of sub-cultural and international consumer behavior” (p. 52) and further suggests that the legacy of postcolonial relations may remain in the form of shared cultural traditions and cultural influences on consumer behaviour. In particular, consumer acculturation research has not been undertaken within a Pacific population, creating a lack of understanding and awareness of the experiences of this immigrant population into New Zealand.

Predominantly, research on broader Pacific immigration issues centres on remittances, the return of funds and gifts from the migrant back to the islands. These studies, although significant in understanding the high level of responsibility that each remitting migrant (and his or her family) shoulders, and the levels of remittances, do little to highlight how this flow of monies translates into issues for migrants as *consumers* within New Zealand.

**My Guiding Question: What did I ask?**

The question guiding my research: “How do Pacific people living in New Zealand experience consumer acculturation?” flowed directly from the observations and experiences and conversations that I had in the years leading up to the project. Although broad, the question allowed me the scope to move in and out of my gathered knowledge to follow hidden paths if and when I was required to do so. I hoped to gain an understanding of everyday consumption through individual experience and further understand how this consumption contributes to acculturative experiences for this immigrant group. This depth of consumption understanding is significant for this study as I make various assumptions (supported by existing literature). These are a) that consumption has different meaning within a traditional exchange system to its meaning in the Western exchange system, and b) that Pacific values have for the immigrant altered from those in their traditional context and continue to change due in part to consumer acculturation processes. The above guiding question is structured in a way that requires a deconstruction of aspects of public and private consumption through understanding individual acculturative processes. These include looking at the meanings of consumption for an immigrant culture, quite separately from the existing Western “norms” of that process.

While one central question drives my research, there are also secondary questions that contribute to the central focus. In order to understand how it is that Pacific people experience consumer acculturation, I ask:

- How do Pacific people understand consumption?
- What impact do the influence of Western ideology/values have on the individual?
- How do Western values change the Pacific consumer acculturative experience?

By asking these questions, I guide the participant towards deep insights of their everyday experiences and reflections on their own meanings. These questions were refined over the course of the research and shaped further by the direction taken by the participants, and the concepts that were developing from their insights. My aim is to understand consumer acculturation, I do not seek to measure particular variables of acculturation, but to observe how Pacific immigrants to New Zealand experience this in their lives. With this insight I hope to

generate understanding into how their attempts to adapt to New Zealand society have impacted the individual and his or her core values.

If consumption acts as a process of communication that attaches aspects of identity, meaning and group affiliation to an individual, then this process should shed light on how individual and cultural values alter as a result. This enlightenment should also create further insight into understanding immigrant navigation of two polarised, value systems, indigenous culture and consumer culture, and thus provide additional understanding of the acculturation process.

To answer my research questions, I needed a method for “capturing the everyday”, and that aligned with my critical ontological and epistemological stances. Ensuring that the participants had control of their own involvement during the process of researching was paramount. Video diaries were chosen as the method through which participants could share their own experiences and allow me to observe multiple areas of their lives, both in and out of the home. Participants identified their own areas of interest and were provided with suggestions for topics. Video diaries are a culturally appropriate method that allows for more time, reflexivity, and depth with each participant. Depending on their use, video diaries realise the goal of handing over power and control to the participant, encouraging rich insight and participant-driven reflections. They enable multiple levels of analysis, capturing hidden aspects of related phenomena, and foster a relationship-based collaboration that extends the research-participant interface and understanding.



### **Putting the “Pacific” in Context: Historical Migration**

Pacific people have a long association with New Zealand. Providing a context for the relationships with the various Pacific nations could be a thesis in itself; however, understanding the environment of New Zealand for those coming here is extremely important in developing an insight into the lives and expectations of New Zealand. Therefore, I have tried to consider the major conditions of New Zealand to “set the scene” for the reader.

#### ***Waves of migration***

Pacific migration has primarily occurred in waves. The waves typically follow a period of unrest (e.g., coup; high unemployment rates; low political stability) within the island nation. During the late 1950s the first major wave of Pacific migration began “in response to the post-war expansion of the urban-located manufacturing sector” (Gendall, Spoonley, & Trlin, 2007, p. 9). The growing need for skilled, semiskilled and unskilled labour in New Zealand was a primary reason for the decision of Pacific people to come to New Zealand and which made life here more appealing. Immigrants tend to cluster in major cities, particularly Auckland, where most immigrants settle (Berry et al., 2006) (65.8%: Statistics NZ, 2002) and Wellington (13.2%: Statistics NZ, 2002). This pattern creates centers for minority cultures (Lee & Tse, 1994, p. 73).

Predominantly, the early waves of migration from the Pacific to New Zealand came from the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji (Statistics NZ, 2002). This trend continued into the 1960s and 1970s when the scale of migration from all over the Pacific grew again (Statistics NZ, 2002). Many nations in the Pacific experienced large drops in population numbers as people migrated to New Zealand. Tonga lost around 25% of its population during the period 1969-1974 (de Bres, 1974) through emigration to New Zealand thus marking this uncontrolled labour migration period as “destructive”, and it being referred to as an “acute labour drain” (de Bres & Campbell, 1975, p. 26).

During the latter part of this wave in the early 1970s, public and political perceptions of immigrant labour in New Zealand were declining against a background of economic recession and increasing unemployment (Gendall et al., 2007). To continue to take advantage of the opportunities for employment available in New Zealand many Pacific people had resorted to “overstaying” and seeking employment with employers who would “turn a blind eye” to their

status (Spoonley, Gendall, & Trlin, 2007, p.1). Many were also establishing their lives and settling their families in New Zealand (de Bres, 1974; de Bres & Campbell, 1975, 1976). By the time of the 1976 New Zealand census, Pacific people made up 2.1% (almost 65,700) of the total population. There had been a steady growth in migration, but primarily in the growth of first and second generation New Zealand-born Pacific people. However, this period was marked more by the strong arm tactics of the New Zealand government. Illegal Pacific immigrants were hunted during early morning raids, colloquially named “Dawn Raids”.

### ***Dawn Raids***

Within a new host society there are typically stable structures of social inequality (Nauck & Settles, 2001) directed at marginalising immigrants. New Zealand during this period was a significant example of this practice for Pacific people. During the early 1970s, many New Zealanders had developed a great dislike for Polynesians (Field, 2006). Dawn raids were the New Zealand Government’s answer to the increasing numbers of Pacific “overstayers”. These raids were introduced as a method of locating illegal immigrants and were usually undertaken during the early hours of the morning (2am-3am). The reality of these raids was that they were focused on the Pacific population rather than broader immigrant populations. This strategy made Pacific people more conscious of their differences and sense of feeling like outsiders rather than New Zealanders (de Bres & Campbell, 1976). The effects of New Zealand deporting illegal immigrants were significant not only for New Zealand, as without their labour many of the factories in Auckland would have had to shut down due to labour shortages, but also significant for Pacific nations.

The Tongan Government was concerned about the “effects of repatriation on the Tongan economy, not only in terms of mouths to feed and more jobs to find in an already chronic situation of unemployment and poverty, but also in terms of the associated cut-off of overseas earnings in the form of remittances from the migrants” (de Bres & Campbell, 1976, p. 27). The dawn raids of this era were called to a halt after considerable damage had been done to the individuals affected and the perception of Pacific people within the wider community.

### ***Relationship with Tangata Whenua***

A simmering disharmony between Māori and Pacific people living in New Zealand became apparent during the 70s and 80s. They were fighting for equality, against rather than beside each other. Awatere (1984) identified that there were other issues that Pacific people were more concerned with:

The difficulty with Polynesians is not that they are white, but that white culture in the form of Christianity, and its sidekick aggressive materialism has so impacted on their culture. They are ravaged by a desperate need to ‘get’ white education, material goodies and white status. In the short term it means that the Pacific Island people are not at this moment prepared to ally themselves with us. But this could change in the long term. All this white education, goodies and status have a high cultural cost, which future generations will have to pay. Perhaps then we could look again. (p. 14 as cited in McIntosh, 2001, p.149)

Māori observations of Pacific people were of a Christian and consumption-obsessed group, focused on the attainment of “more”. Whether correct or not, this view again highlights the perceptions and hurdles that Pacific people had to overcome to “fit-into” their new country. The stigma and difference of being Pacific had gained significant social momentum during this period and marked a difficult stage of Pacific migration to New Zealand.

### ***Remittances to the Islands***

Spoonley (2001) identified the intention of many Pacific migrants to New Zealand was to “generate financial returns for the original community” (p. 85), pointing out that New Zealand wages were higher and, therefore, able to be returned to their island community more readily. Decisions prior to migration are made collectively, including the decision to migrate. They are usually tied to lifecycle or major event and have a purpose (Nauck & Settles, 2001). Young single women were chosen by their communities to come to New Zealand as they were seen as more likely to remit (Macpherson, 1997 as cited in Spoonley, 2001). Later, families were more likely to travel together, or reunite (Spoonley, 2001). Connell (2006a) concurs with Spoonley, describing migration as directly influenced by the opportunities and/or benefits made available to

those remaining in the islands and members were deliberately chosen for their reliability to remit. According to Connell:

[M]igration decisions are usually shaped within a family context, as migrants leave to meet certain family expectations, the key one of which is usually financial support for kin. Migration has rarely been an individual decision to meet individual goals, nor has it been dictated by national interests (except perhaps in the case of Kiribati and Tuvalu). Migration is directed at improving the living standards of those who remain at home and the lifestyle and income of the migrants. In Tonga, 'there are few opportunities for socioeconomic advancement ... and migration is perceived as the only solution' (Lee 2004: 135). In Samoa, the reason for migration was simply 'to seek wealth for all' (Muliaiana 2001: 25). Consequently, 'families deliberate carefully about which members would be most likely to do well overseas and be reliable in sending remittances' (Gailey 1992b: 465; Cowling 1990). Through this process, extended households, as in Tonga, have transformed themselves into 'transnational corporations of kin', which strategically allocate family labour to local and overseas destinations to maximize income opportunities, minimize risk and benefit from resultant remittance flows (Marcus 1981). To an even greater extent, therefore, than for internal migration (where health, education and social reasons explain some part of migration), international migration is more evidently an economic phenomenon, though other factors are necessarily involved. (p. 70)

Spoonley (2001) points out that there are two main questions regarding the flow of remittances to the islands; the first is the size of remittances, and the second is remittance decay. The first of these is still plagued with issues of accuracy in measurement as many remittances are handled in cash and other informal channels. To this day, much of the income for many small island nations rests on migrant remittances, which has moved from being a "minor, supplementary source of income for islanders to a position so vital that migrant remittances are the chief source of personal income for Western Samoans" (Shankman, 1976, p. xi). In 1989 remittances to Tonga were estimated as four times the revenue earned through exports, which equated to approximately 45% of GDP (Phillips, 1999, 476 as cited in Spoonley, 2001). Although there are notable disparities between undeclared and recorded remittances, unrecorded remittances represent around 40% more than those recorded (Spoonley, 2001).

Brown (1994) identified that research indicated remittances are predominantly used for the purchase of imported consumer goods. Shankman (1976) had earlier pointed out that Samoans want what Europeans have; however, their fundamental problem is how to meet these wants. The focus on the attainment of consumer goods has been a long-term issue for Pacific consumers. Very little of the remitted funds were found to be used for savings or for future investments, perpetuating the need for future migration. Brown noted:

remittances have raised levels of consumption without creating a firm basis within the domestic economy for maintaining them in future. . . .as foreign transfers in the form of official aid and private remittances have become more dominant, the lack of investment in productive activities has become more pronounced (Yusuf and Peters, 1985, p.12). Ascertain of this sort tend to reinforce the concept of the “migrant syndrome” and the “frozen” domestic economy” (1994, p. 348).

The second issue around remittance decay concerns the decline of remittances over time and what this may mean to the communities dependent on those funds. Brown (1994) raises concern over the sustainability of remittances through “changing migration rates, recession or other factors” (p. 348). Spoonley (2001) acknowledges that remittances are currently stable; however, he also identifies the paradox of remittances in the way they falsely bolster the economy while potentially stagnating it at the same time, i.e., “The income is important to basic economic survival, but it also perpetuates institutions and policies which might be making the economic future worse” (p. 88). Overall remittances to Tonga are estimated at 40% of GDP; Samoan remittances are approximately 25% of GDP; while Fijian figures are more contested at approximately 7-15% of GDP.

More recently there has been research interest in finding out if anecdotal evidence regarding migrant wage expectation prior to migration is in fact high (McKenzie, Gibson, & Stillman, 2007). Although the results of this particular study showed that expectations were lower than the reality of earning potential in New Zealand, there were also reasons why: “One mechanism that immigrants might use to try and mitigate the pressure to remit to extended family, or to at least reduce the level of remittances sought, might be to claim that they are earning less than they actually are. If this is the case . . . we should expect them to have lower expectations of income” (p. 25).

**Being ‘Pacific’ myself...**

I have always felt that who I am and the experiences that shape me both help and hinder my ability to see clarity in any given situation. Therefore, I want to share my experiences and motivation to undertake this study, to explain how I came to this research topic, and why it is important to me. I am a first generation New Zealand born Pacific Islander-slash-European. My mother is a native Fijian, born in Nausori. She spent most of her life there in a house her father built by making bricks every day after working at the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company.



**Figure 2: My aunties, grandfather, grandmother and my mother, the youngest. Circa 1940s**

Her father Frank was part Fijian, with an American grandfather, Archilles Underwood from Michigan. Archilles came to Fiji in 1861 purchasing land in Nausuesue, Kadavu which was later developed into a sugar cane plantation. In 1862 he married Tarugona from Kadavu and had seven children, one of whom, Levi Archibald Underwood was my great-grandfather. Levi married my great grandmother Maria Joy from Nokonoko, Ra and they had my grandfather Frank Underwood in Naigavatina, Kadavu (along with other children). My mother's mother,

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

Martha Underwood was from Vutia, Rewa. She had 14 children to Frank, three of whom died as infants. My mother was the last of the 11 surviving children and as such grew up in an environment that she described to me, when I was a child, as “spoilt”.

She attended Suva Girls High School, learning little of her Fijian culture and no Fijian language, only English. She spent most of her time in the city growing up focused on Western ideals of beauty and consumption. She first came for a sojourn to New Zealand on a cruise ship (a replica of which recently we found in Melbourne Museum) travelling by herself to explore New Zealand. Shortly after returning to Fiji she met and married a New Zealander in the Air Force, who was residing in Fiji. They relocated to New Zealand, but the marriage was doomed to failure. Years after, when she was living in Auckland, she met my father who had left Germany when he was only 17 and had spent many years travelling around Australia and New Zealand.

In my twenties I learnt more about my Fijian side than ever before. I acknowledged that this was a side of me that I should love rather than shun. Moving into a Masters degree that focused on indigenous issues and prioritised the view of the “native” helped me realise that I had much to learn and offer with such a rich and diverse heritage of my own. After my Masters, I found employment with a Hamilton based Pacific mental health organisation. My initial awareness of acculturation and the unrelenting questions that followed were prompted predominantly by this experience with Pacific addiction. Although my time in this role was cut short by the opportunity to undertake my doctorate, I continued for many years to work for the organisation as a Board member and policy writer for Pacific-based initiatives, including domestic violence and compulsive consumption programmes. But it was during my initial time as a Problem Gambling Health Promoter that I became aware of the alarming rates of Pacific and Māori addiction issues centring on excessive, compulsive, and pathological consumption.

What I found during this experience was that many of the individuals involved in harmful forms of consumption activity were actively seeking one of three things: (1) an escape from reality or responsibility, (2) an opportunity to pay the bills, and/or (3) a change in their circumstances. Consumption in these destructive forms was merely a method of *escapism*, and, at the same time, it also provided a way for the individual to “fit-into” the dominant paradigms of

the norm, enabling those people the opportunity to participate in and reflect their new society's values.

With this insight gained from the coal-face of Pacific mental health, I began to wonder about the reasons behind these desires. Gambling and alcoholism appeared to me to be symptoms of a bigger problem, but I could not identify what that problem was. What I did realize was that we (in the organisation) were the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. Even my health promotion was creating awareness about an issue that had developed from something else – but what? I began to consider the broader changes that Pacific immigrants confronted and returned to my own observations within my mother's experiences and those of her family. While consumption existed in Fiji there were limited choices, reduced access to products and a continual dream on the horizon of what life could be like – away from the islands. I was beginning to see that the social and economic structure of consumption existed within the realm of Western philosophy and that it was the imposition of this dominant ideology, even dominant hegemony, that were making people and cultures complicit in the consumption process, creating negative ripples for the individual. What I identified was that Pacific immigrants were undeniably part of a traditional culture and yet had to become part of a dominant capitalist culture in their new country. The distance and disconnection between these two worlds intrigued me and left me questioning the dilemma of DuBois' *double consciousness*: the process of navigating between two worlds (1989) both for myself and within the potential research topic.

I tell this short story about my history both in and out of New Zealand to position myself and stake my claim as a Pacific researcher in New Zealand. I am firmly rooted in the culture of both my Fijian and German sides, yet I still yearn to learn more about my Fijian side and I hope one day to live there, learning more about the culture that my aunties seem so natural with. But even with this acknowledgment, I am still part of these cultures, New Zealand, Fijian, and German. As confused as I once was about where I belong, I realize now that I am tied to these places regardless of my own uncertainties and I carry with pride the stories of my family, the difficulties, the strife and occasional triumph. I tell my story first because throughout this thesis I will reveal the stories of others. Who I am contextualises me and how I handle the knowledge that I have been entrusted with. I have worked at writing myself and my family into the thesis, not only in the text, but also within the fieldwork and the lives of my participants. I am the storyteller, but they are not my stories.



### **The absence of an “Aha”**

Putting my ideas for my thesis on to paper was a long and difficult process. I cannot remember a time leading up to the submission of my PhD proposal where I suddenly felt that I “knew” exactly what I was looking for and how to find it. There was no “aha” moment in the beginning. I had to work at conceptualising the problem and looking at it from alternative angles. My movement into this topic came about from a series of experiences and realisations, stemming from, as I have mentioned already, my own interest in my Fijian heritage and my awakening glimpse into the traumas of life in New Zealand for many Pacific people.

I do remember some pivotal realisations, however. As part of my role as a problem gambling health promoter I had to assist in the development of a Pacific life skills programme - part of which had to be budget related - to be delivered to Pacific people who came to the organisation for other services. During the development of this programme I realised just how many presuppositions I had surrounding Pacific people, particularly that everyone had a level playing field for success in New Zealand. Witnessing the differences in their core values - particularly surrounding budgeting - and obligatory priorities was illuminating for me. I realised that although these individuals had changed since leaving the islands, there were still fundamental aspects of their cultural norms, values, belief and practices that remained constant. But exactly what changes had occurred and how these had impacted on their decisions within New Zealand was a mystery. I began to find questions in many of the activities that I was undertaking within various Pacific communities.

On another occasion, I delivered a short seminar to a Samoan congregation on the perils of pokie machines. I spoke about the normalisation of gambling within the community and what this meant for the younger generation. Afterward I was barraged with questions about what I thought they should do about funding. It was explained to me that various forms of gambling (e.g., housie, raffles) were used to fund-raise for the church and to undertake planned activities. Gambling was an important tool for their survival, yet I had not been aware of just how much they needed these forms of gambling to re-invest in the funds into their activities. But what did this mean for other forms of consumption and why was there such a strong defence for this particular form of fundraising?

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

In addition to my own observations, conversations with newly migrated Pacific people also started me thinking about the sacrifices that individuals made in order to support their families. Not only were there substantial gifts/contributions to the church, but the money being sent back to the islands was significant and quite clearly a hardship for some. I was formulating the eventual direction of my fieldwork, but had little insight at this time into just how significant these experiences would be. In fact it took nearly a year to be able to submit my PhD proposal. These experiences, and what I had subsequently learned about gambling, had directed me more to viewing gambling as a symptom of a larger issue. I found that excessive and compulsive forms of consumption and more generally, everyday consumption, had hidden meanings and were in part responsible for the ultimate changes that each individual had to make to “fit-into” New Zealand society. But what were these insidious aspects of consumption and what did they mean for Pacific people?

This research area was where I felt that I needed to be. I needed to be looking at the everyday consumption choices and activities of Pacific immigrants and observing how these were impacting on their lives and experiences in New Zealand. It was difficult to capture, conceptualise and distil the questions that I had into one issue. Although I knew I had to look at the wider aspects of each participant’s life and explore how they were adapting into New Zealand as consumers, I still needed to explore more about the adaption process for migrants itself. Consumer acculturation and finding “consumption meaning” were the “aha” I had been waiting for and finally I realised that I had the topic for my thesis.

***My Reflection***

*Undeniably Pacific cultures are not isolated systems that exist in a separate, stagnant space untouched by the rest of the world. Changes that are occurring across the world still sweep through the islands, with their white sands and coconut trees. Consumption as a form of economic exchange also exists in the islands and has done for many years; however, as a movement, consumption is restrained by everyday issues such as low wages, high unemployment and low standards of living. Improving New Zealanders' awareness of Pacific issues and the differences there are, both in the demands placed upon those individuals who have migrated to New Zealand, and the continuing discrimination towards them establishes this study as unique and hugely significant to the well-being of this consumer group.*

### **Constructing the Journey**

The journey in these pages is not a linear one. Throughout the process of constructing, collecting, analysing and writing I have moved into and out of the data, the literature, conversations, experiences, socialisation, and isolation. Change was the only constant as I acknowledged that I had to adapt to those spontaneous situations placed before me. What I present in the following pages of this thesis is the shared experiences of nine participants and, of course, unavoidably myself and those of my family. Throughout I have included my own voice and reflections on what was occurring and how I navigated within the milieu of friendship, research, and student and family life. Each storyline constructed from the diaries of participants begins with a different Pacific journey, highlighting the uniqueness of each path travelled.

I start Chapter Two with a review of the literature: What is already known and what was important to know before I began. Chapter Three offers the philosophical and methodological foundations for this research where critical theory and indigenous understandings are described. Chapter Four builds on the foundations of the previous chapter and describes the methods of this research, focusing on the video diary method. This method was tailored to the population and the needs of my Pacific group. Chapter Five presents each participant, where I introduce them in the context of their home nation. Each participant profile provides a short description from passages in participant diaries about what is significant to the individual about New Zealand.

Chapter Six describes the structuring of the subsequent storyline chapters. The following chapters, seven to eleven, are selected participant narratives. The five storylines present the participants' points of view. They are a break-down of participant iterations, anomalies, and contradictions. They tell a unified story of life immigrating to New Zealand. These storylines form the bulk of the thesis as they are rich with the details of life from the individuals' perspectives and allow for their experiences to pour through the text into our consciousness. The final chapters, Twelve and Thirteen, bring together the consumption meanings and acculturative processes through which each participant had to pass. It is clear that each story is unique, but these chapters consider the broader implications of the drawn-out themes. In this way, we can have better insight into the "bigger" picture of life in New Zealand and can begin to have some insight into the impact of consumption on Pacific peoples living there.

## 2. SURVEYING THE LITERATURE: ACCULTURATION, CONSUMER ACCULTURATION AND CONSUMPTION

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Because of the quantity and diversity of literature on acculturation, I chose to focus this review on acculturation related to consumption. Acculturation appeared to have become an answer to many of the problems that immigrants faced in settling into a new country. Rather than be bogged down by the sheer volume of literature on acculturation, I felt I needed to refine my search to consider only those aspects of acculturation that dealt with “consumption”, or the “consumer”. From here, I began to find a more focused use of acculturation to understand immigrant consumption behaviour and acculturation strategies focused on consumer behaviour within the new host culture. Although most of the literature focused on understanding consumer acculturation within the US, there were also pivotal studies that pushed me to consider *what consumer acculturation processes looked like outside of the US marketplace*.

This chapter explores what we know about acculturation, and sets these understandings within the context of consumption. I examine literature on consumption and consumer acculturation to understand what is already known and find where the gaps are in the existing literature. I start by defining the concept of acculturation and consider its subsequent evolution. Next, I focus on consumer acculturation studies from a psychological and sociological point of view. Lastly, I provide an overview of the “bigger picture” of consumption from a political perspective.

## Defining Acculturation

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Acculturation originated within the field of anthropology (Peñaloza, 1989). It was, therefore, within anthropology that the first pivotal definition of acculturation developed. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) defined acculturation as:

those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups . . . under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation (p. 149)

This seminal definition provided a foundation for early conceptual understandings of acculturation and positioned acculturation as only one aspect of the broader concept of cultural change (Berry, 2003). Later, the Social Science Research Council (1954) worked to “synthesize and codify research and theory in the field of acculturation” (p. 973). Their definition provided a more comprehensive characterisation of acculturation:

. . . acculturation may be defined as culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modification induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaption of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors. (Social Science Research Council, 1954, p. 974).

This movement toward expanding the concept of acculturation allowed for understandings of acculturation to broaden from the original limited conceptualisation of being a component of cultural change. Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen (2002) identified that, while the first of these definitions limited acculturation to “one aspect” of the broader topic of culture change, the second extended acculturation to include:

change that is indirect (not cultural but “ecological”), delayed (“internal adjustments,” presumably of both a cultural and psychological character, take time), and can be

“reactive” (that is rejecting the cultural influence, and changing toward a more “traditional” way of life, rather than inevitability toward greater similarity with the dominant culture). (Berry et al., 2002, p.350).

As a result of migration, individuals and families having shifted to a new host country begin a process of acculturation change. With understandings of acculturation broadening to include change that did not ultimately lead to the assimilation of the migrant population into the host culture, questions could be posed about the impact of inter-cultural contact for both the host and immigrant cultures. The strategies that each group utilised to negotiate their altered environment were now seen to take place overtime. Berry’s (2003) description of acculturation as a *process* of maintaining cultural balance, considered two-way change further - not only the ethnic participation in acculturation, but also the two-way relationship between host and immigrant communities. This consideration reiterated that change occurred within both groups (to varying degrees).

Changes to the immigrant groups, however, had potentially greater consequences as new immigrants had less local knowledge, financial security and fewer familial relationships when they arrived in the new country. Berry and Kim (1988) considered the types of change that occurred. Firstly, *physical* change may occur. This may be in the environment, housing, increased population, more or less pollution, amongst others. The physical changes within the environment are typically the first to be experienced by the immigrant. Secondly, *biological* changes may occur with access to food, nutritional conditioning, exposure to new illnesses, mixed-ethnicity children. These longer-term changes appear over time, when the immigrant is adapting to new conditions and seeking out contact with the host culture. Thirdly, *cultural* changes are at the heart of the definition: “original political, economic, technical, linguistic, religious, and social institutions become altered, or new ones take their place” (Berry & Kim, 1988, p. 208). Finally, *psychological* changes, including change to mental health, occur as individuals adapt to their new environment.

In pulling together the multiple definitions and understandings of acculturation the definition that created the foundation for this study’s understanding was that of the Social Science Research Council. Through this definition and subsequent interpretations by researchers (in particular Berry), acculturation involved features that considered alternative strategies and outcomes for both groups. The major significance of this definition was that the concepts of

adaptation, reactivity, time (internal adjustments) and change became part of the definition. There was a movement away from the belief that the minority ethnic group would inevitably assimilate into the host culture. With this definition of acculturation in mind, we can move to understanding the specifics of acculturation.

### **So What Does Acculturation “Look” Like: Characteristics of Acculturation**

Acculturation is a complex phenomenon. Predominantly the understandings of acculturation are from a US perspective and this view dominates the landscape of “what acculturation looks like”. To understand the phenomenon of acculturation, Berry (1980) derived a series of characteristics of acculturation. These are: (1) the nature of acculturation, (2) the characteristic course of acculturation, (3) the levels at which it takes place, and, (4) the issue of measurement (Berry, 1980). Berry notes, however, that there is no attempt to consider the worldwide features of acculturation. Rather his focus in establishing these characteristics is based on “the impact of dominant colonial and contemporary societies in North America upon indigenous peoples and ethnic groups” (Berry, 1980, p. 10).

#### **The nature of acculturation: Type of contact**

The nature of acculturation refers to the initial contact and resultant change between two autonomous cultural groups. This contact must cause either one or both of these groups to transform in some way. Berry notes that change may occur only in one group; however, he identifies that typically “one group dominates the other and contributes more to the flow of cultural elements than does the weaker of the groups” (Berry, 1980, p. 10). This transitional relationship varies considerably and is dependent not only on existing relations, but also on initial contact. Predominantly, the contact and resultant change is a negative process, “difficult, reactive, and conflictual” (Berry, 1980, p. 10), with the outcome being a variety of potential relationships and/or processes of adaptation between the cultures. The eventual form of accommodation then becomes the nature of acculturation.

#### **The characteristic course of acculturation: Contact, conflict and adaption phases**

The course of acculturation takes on different phases in the immigrants’ transition to their new host country. Predominantly, acculturation phases have been founded on the contact, conflict and adaptation referred to by Berry (1980) as the three-phase course: “The first phase is



necessary, the second is probable, and some form of the third is inevitable” (Berry, 1980, p. 11). Contact is necessary for acculturation to occur in the first instance and can vary depending on the length, type, purpose, and nature of contact. It can occur “through trade, invasion, enslavement, educational or missionary activity, or through telecommunications” (Berry, 1980, p. 11). Multiple variables contribute to the extent and severity of acculturation (e.g., nature, purpose, length). Conflict also occurs during the period of acculturation, to varying degrees, and depends on the level of resistance by the groups. Finally, adaptation refers to an array of strategies that both groups utilise to reduce or stabilise conflict. These strategies differ depending on the relationship between the groups and the level of maintenance of traditional culture and identity. The adaptation phase is where acculturation strategies are inherent and links closely to Berry’s later work (2003) on further developing acculturation strategies that distinguish the different techniques of the immigrant and host communities. The dual strategies (Figure 3) are based on the two views of ethnocultural groups (integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization), and that of larger society (multiculturalism, melting-pot, segregation and exclusion), encompassing eight strategies in total (Berry, 2003). These strategies have become the basis for broadly understanding how immigrant cultures adapt to host cultures.

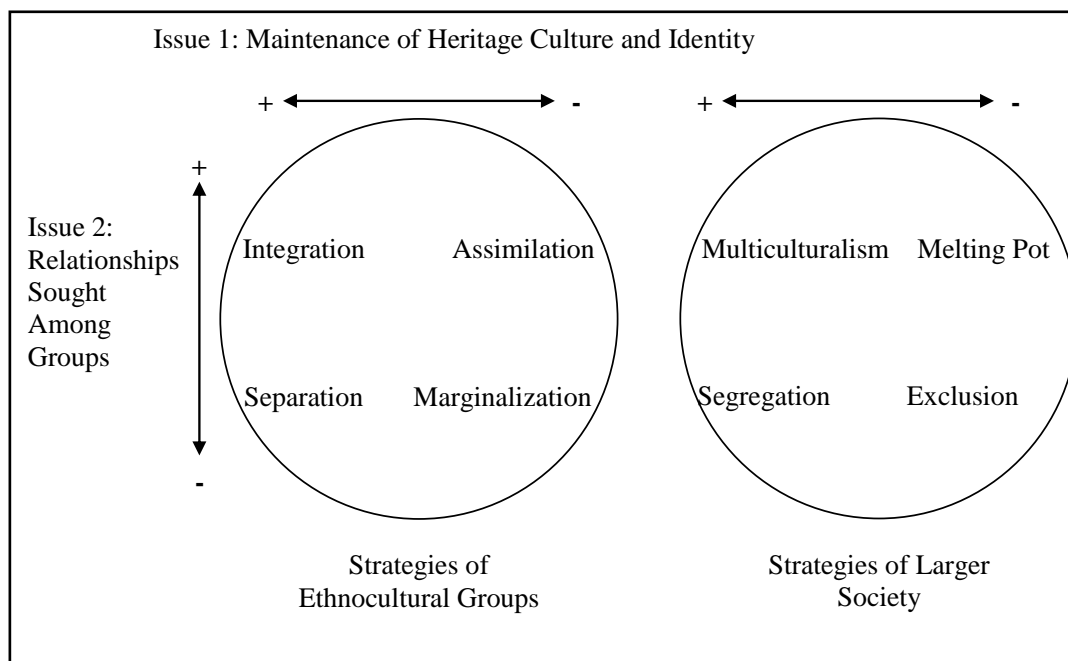


Figure 3: Four acculturation strategies based on two issues (Berry, 2003, p.23)

Assimilation versus Acculturation

Acculturation researchers had previously focused more on assimilation, describing acculturation as a subprocess of assimilation. Prior to the 1980s, the “traditional model” of assimilation that consisted of seven components of assimilation, including acculturation (referred to as *cultural assimilation*) was utilised to assess “full assimilation” (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983). Through this model, assimilation was thought to be the natural course of acculturation varying only in the length of time it took for the individual to “fully” assimilate. The traditional model of assimilation was often used during this period to discuss outcomes of cultural assimilation or acculturation.

The *perception* of assimilation as the ultimate and inevitable outcome of acculturation was persistent. Mounting research illustrated that alternative modes or strategies of acculturation occurred and that perceptions of acculturation as linear were over-simplistic (Berry, 1976, 1980; Peñaloza, 1989). Jun, Ball, and Gentry (1993) considered modes of individual acculturation in their study of Korean immigrants to the United States. They focused on Berry’s different modes of acculturation, with assimilation as only one outcome of acculturation. Jun, Ball, and Gentry identified that the acculturation process previously considered quite linear, differed considerably from a straight forward process of assimilation from the culture of origin to the new host culture. Instead, they observed that the acculturation process moved backward and forward over sometimes a considerable amount of time. Other researchers have pointed out that this linear view of acculturation toward assimilation is a continuing concern for the field of acculturation research (Chun, Balls Organista, & Marin, 2003). Ogden, Ogden and Schau (2004) restated that there has been confusion over the years as to the specific definition of acculturation. The terms *acculturation* and *assimilation* have been used interchangeably or as different concepts, depending on the discipline. Chun, Balls Organista and Marin (2003) offer a caveat in the preface to their book:

Showing the pains of birth and adolescent development of the field, the label *acculturation* is used by some authors to denote patterns of adaptation that imply only one outcome is possible – assimilation . . . Despite our efforts to resolve this problem, at times the reader will find the assumption is made in the literature that assimilation is tantamount to acculturation. In this sense, many researchers and practitioners assume

certain components of one's culture of origin are lost when a new repertoire of skills and behaviors are learned from another distinct culture. This unidimensional notion of acculturation continues to plague the field despite numerous suggestions by researchers to think of this process as a multifaceted phenomenon. (Chun, Balls Organista, & Marin, 2003, p. xxv).

Levels of acculturation: Individual and group

Acculturation occurs at two levels, the group level and the individual level. The distinction between these levels is significant for two reasons: (1) the phenomena are different at both levels “for example, at the population level, changes in the social structure, economic base, and political organization frequently occur, while at the individual level, the changes are in such phenomena as identity, values and attitudes” (Berry et al., 2002, p. 350); and, (2) “not all acculturating individuals participate in the collective changes that are underway in their group to the same extent or in the same way” (p. 350).

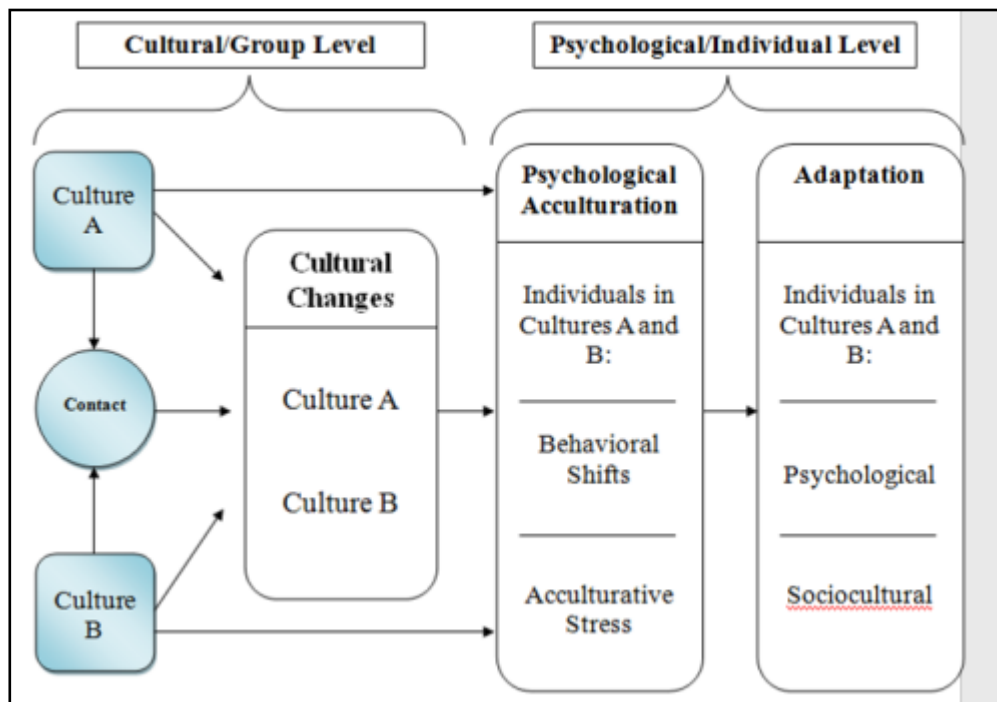


Figure 4: Framework for understanding acculturation: cultural and psychological levels (Berry, 2003, p. 20)

Acculturation occurs at the cultural and psychological levels. Berry (2003) constructed a framework of acculturation that identifies and links cultural and psychological acculturation (Figure 4). Primarily the framework was intended to map out the various occurrences of acculturation that need to be “conceptualized” and “measured” (Berry, 2003). On the left, the cultural level, key features of the two cultures (A and B) need to be understood, prior to their major contact, i.e., “the nature of their contact relationships, and the resulting cultural changes in both groups and in the emerging ethnocultural groups during the process of acculturation” (p. 19). The changes can be either minor or substantial and have varying impact on the individual. Berry identifies that there are several routes to understanding acculturation:

At the individual level (*right*), one must consider the psychological changes that individuals in both groups undergo and the effects of eventual adaptation to their new situations. . . . These changes can be a set of rather easily accomplished behavioral changes (e.g., in ways of speaking, dressing, or eating; in cultural identity) or they can be more problematic, producing *acculturative stress* as manifested by uncertainty, anxiety, and depression (Berry, 1976). Adaptations can be primarily internal, or *psychological* (i.e., adaptations that affect the sense of well-being or self-esteem), or *sociocultural* (i.e., adaptation that link the individual to others in the new society as manifested, e.g., in competence in the activities of daily intercultural living (Berry, 2003, p. 21).

The individual level is where most of the acculturation research is focused. The motivation of the individual and his or her purpose for migration factor into the ease or difficulty of their acculturation process. Within the individual stage, various phases of acculturation occur. These stages were identified during Oberg’s (1960) study of missionary acculturation (as cited from Peñaloza, 1989). Four stages were identified: honeymoon, rejection tolerance, and integration. Phase one is the *honeymoon* stage where the cultural contact is superficial; the individual is interested in what the other culture is about. At this stage there is barely any adaptation, if any. Phase two is the *rejection* phase, predominantly focused on negative perceptions of the new culture. During this phase the individual becomes aware that his or her behaviour is not appropriate, but may not know how to change this behaviour. The migrants seek out companionship from others within their own original culture, reducing their own cultural contact with the host culture and subsequent adaptation. Conflict is high for the individual during this phase. Phase three is the *tolerance* stage. Individuals are slowly beginning

to learn more about the new culture and adopting some new cultural skills and abilities. Conflict is becoming reduced. During the final phase, *integration*, the individual has begun to feel confident in the new culture, has acquired cultural skills that enable them to function in the new culture (Peñaloza, 1989, p. 110). Peñaloza points out, however, that while missionaries have a “mission” that may make them more resistant to cultural change, the immigrant may not. In the case of immigrants, they may be more susceptible to adaptation as they may be driven by other motivations. Regardless of the intention for migration, each individual travels through these stages with varying degrees of progression and order.

### *The measurement of acculturation*

There are vast discrepancies within the field of acculturation, particularly around the issue of measurement. Earlier studies of acculturation considered it to be a linear process moving from the culture of origin, over time to the host culture. Some researchers still maintain that acculturation is unidimensional, and “that an individual can be placed along a continuum of change with increasing involvement with the mainstream culture” (Park, Paik, Skinner, Ok, & Spindler, 2003, p. 142). Other researchers have identified that acculturation is a multidimensional concept that incorporates: language usage; cultural identification; media usage and social environment/activities (O’Guinn & Faber, 1985; Jun et al., 1993), preference for residency (Jun et al., 1993); and role adjustment (Maldonado & Tansuhaj, 1999), among others. Trimble (2003) identified that there have been many changes to the techniques and procedures for measuring the concept of acculturation but notes:

...some critics argue that researchers are measuring an elusive construct whose meaning is undergoing change. ...there is no doubt that when two or more intact cultural groups come into direct contact and experience change, conflict is one predictable outcome. How individuals and groups deal with the contact and the possible cultural conflict continues to be an important and significant question (Trimble, 2003, p. 5).

The above acknowledgement that the important question around ‘how individuals and groups deal with conflict’ highlights a significant area of interest for this thesis. Although not focused on understanding the measurement of this conflict, this thesis finds its niche in the identification of sites and influences of conflict.

## Consumer Acculturation

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Moving from acculturation we look more specifically to consumer acculturation. Consumer acculturation can be identified as a component or subset (Peñaloza, 1989) of acculturation. More specifically, while acculturation research focuses on “cultural change as the result of cultural contact and adaptation” (p. 111), consumer acculturation has been identified as focusing on the manifestation of cultural adaptation within the *marketplace* (Peñaloza, 1989). This distinction illustrates the difference between the broader concept of acculturation and its subset, consumer acculturation. Through this understanding, the process of acculturation becomes confined to the realm of the consumption sphere. Ogden, Ogden, & Schau (2004) broaden this distinction as, “specific to the consumption process” (p. 4) rather than just the marketplace, allowing for processes of consumption that occur away from the marketplace. Peñaloza (1989) goes on to describe consumer acculturation as “an eclectic process of learning and selectively displaying culturally defined consumption skills, knowledge, and behaviors” (p. 110).

Consumer acculturation has been considered in a variety of contexts in marketing research. Primarily, studies on ethnic and minority groups revolve around ethnic populations within the United States (Burton, 2000) e.g., Hispanics and Latinos (Peñaloza, 1989, 1994; Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999; Garcia-Vazquez, 1995; Maldonado & Tansuhaj, 1998). O’Guinn and Faber (1985) noted that research on Hispanics was already a recurrent trend and recommended that future research diversified not only into subgroups of ethnicities, but also to different ethnic groups. Although researchers have been slow to address this gap in the research of ethnic minorities, it has been gaining momentum globally. Studies have included: Indians in India and in the United States (Meehta & Belk, 1991); Hong Kong immigrants in Canada (Lee & Tse, 1994); subcultures in Thailand (Gentry, Jun, & Tansuhaj, 1995); expatriate Americans in Spain (Gilly, 1995); Haitian immigrants to the United States (Oswald, 1999); Indian Punjabi Sikh men in Britain (Lindridge & Dhillon, 2005); Kenyan immigrants to the United States (Wamwara-Mbugua, Cornwell, & Boller, 2006). Through existing research on ethnic minority consumers we know that the process of acculturation is often understood as a powerful force that shapes individual lives (Caetano & Clarke, 2003), marketer practices (Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999), and

ethnic identity (Phinney, 2003). Immigrants are primarily motivated to move to a new country for economic benefit and the “better life” (Peñaloza, 1994; Chapman & Jamal, 1997).

### Model of Consumer Acculturation

Visualising the complexities of consumer acculturation is significant in understanding the processes and influences experienced by immigrants. With continued calls for structure within the understanding of consumer acculturation, Peñaloza (1989) (based on Berry’s (1980) earlier work) redeveloped a conceptual, simplified model of immigrant consumer acculturation in the United States. This model included dual sets of variables, corresponding to both a culture of origin and a host culture. The model identified the process of immigrant consumer behaviour as complex and constrained by factors both within the environment/culture and within the circumstances of the individual. Later, Peñaloza (1994) developed this model further, empirically testing the model on 23 individuals from 14 households (Figure 5).

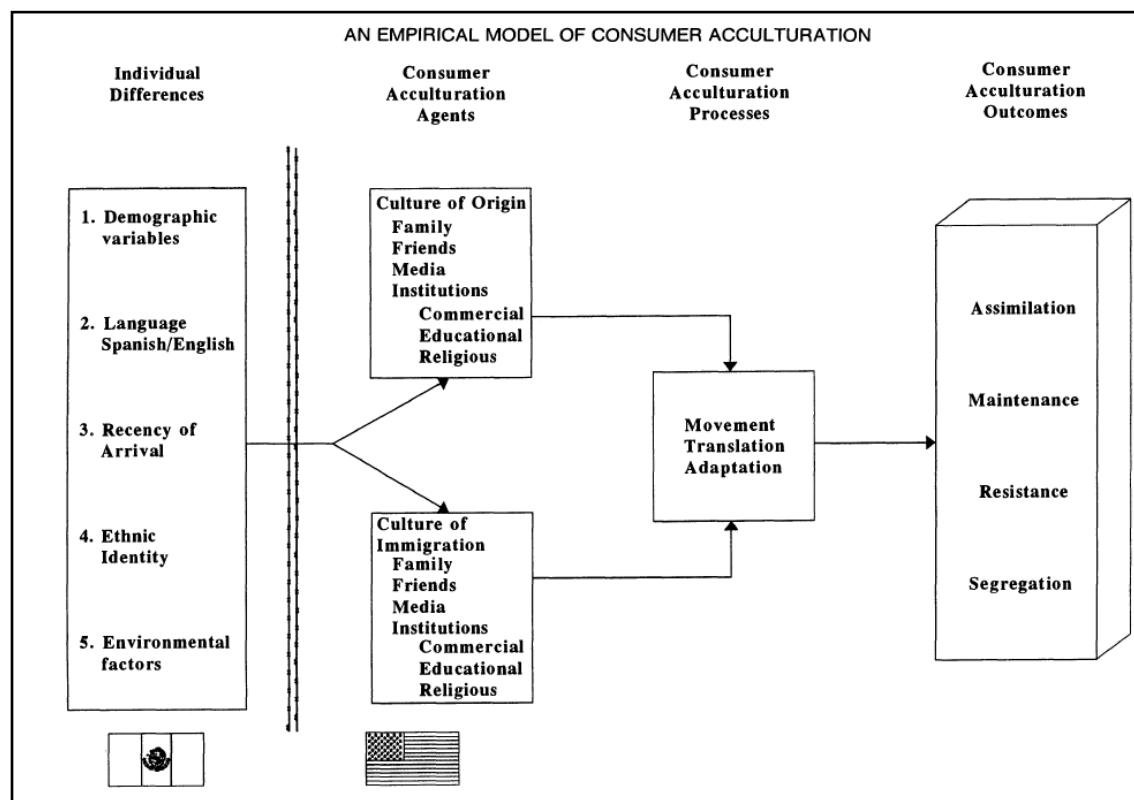


Figure 5: Empirical Model of Consumer Acculturation (Peñaloza, 1994, p. 48)

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

The model consisted of four components that link both the country of origin and host culture in informing the consumer acculturation process. First, individual differences highlighted the diversity of informants and their journey to the US. This category comprised factors like: demographic variables (“age, social class, rural/urban residence, gender, work status and length of stay in the US”) (p. 48), language; recency of arrival; ethnic identity; and environmental factors. Those informants from rural areas experienced greater difficulties because they were not exposed in Mexico to a consumption environment (that may have resembled the US consumption environment) as their urban counterparts had been. This conclusion is also reflective of Jun, Ball, and Gentry’s (1993) findings. They found in their study of 53 Korean students residing in the US that those who lived rurally were “more hesitant to abandon the traditional culture” (p. 81).

Second, dual consumer-acculturating agents aligned with Mexican and US culture include family, friends, media, retail businesses, schools, and churches. Informants relied on “social networks of family and friends from Mexico to get a job, to find a place to live, to learn their way around, and to learn English (p. 49). Third, the consumer acculturation process is initiated by people’s movement from one country to another. Immigrants came to the US in search of better working conditions, higher pay, and education for their children. Anticipated earnings and consumption were motivators for immigration. Informants experienced aspects of transformation and adaptation; however, because of a growing Latino consumer subculture, they recognised that some aspects of consumption had not changed at all.

Finally, there were consumer acculturation outcomes, within which consumers fall into one of four groups: (1) they assimilate into the culture of origin, that is, they adopt the US culture; (2) they maintain their culture of origin, maintaining ties to Mexican culture; (3) they resist the pressure to change, both from Anglo and Mexican cultures. For example, “Informants disliked and resisted to varying degrees the materials, time fixation, isolation, and discrimination they associated with the US culture. . . . [They] also resisted aspects of Mexican culture, such as its limits on individual autonomy and elements of its holiday traditions” (p. 49); (4) informants physically segregated themselves from US mainstream culture.

Consumers, while having to consume, did not eliminate their traditional cultural identity. Rather their affiliation with their country of origin grew to higher levels than they were prior to



their migration. In a similar segregatory manner, Mehta and Belk (1991) explored Indian immigrants to the United States, finding that these individuals began to overidentify with their culture of origin. Emerging from their findings they drew from the research a notion of informants desiring both to “adapt and preserve Indian heritage” (p. 407). Mehta and Belk found that:

In acquiring and displaying mementos and souvenirs that proclaim Indian identity, they are more patriotically Indian than those left behind in India, a pattern that appears to differ from that of prior generations of immigrants to the United States, who often engaged in “overidentification” with the host culture. . . . Perhaps because of their high educational and occupational status, the Indian immigrants studied are more prone to . . . “hyperidentification” with India (p. 408).

The hyperidentification of immigrants is well documented throughout consumer acculturation research. Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) sought to understand this phenomenon further by examining the food consumption patterns of Mexican immigrants to the United States, and found that this was not the case. They determined that Mexican-American food consumption patterns were not like those of Anglos or Mexicans, and did not follow a “linear progression from the cultural style of the culture of origin to that of the culture of residence” (p. 301). Instead, Mexican-American consumption exceeded that of the other groups, to the same level as stereotypical Anglo patterns. The acculturating individuals looked to attain the “perception” of Anglo cultural style. Their consumption was of an internalised conception of the American way of life which the researchers hypothesised was due to premigration exposure to the culture, mass-media and postmigration depictions of American life.

Research from around the globe is highlighting differences from the US norm of understanding and experiencing acculturation. Üstüner and Holt (2007) identified deviations from Peñaloza’s consumer acculturation model to consider alternative contexts of dominated acculturation. Their study focused on poor migrants in a Turkish squatter. They specified three modes of acculturation; “migrants reconstitute their village culture in the city, shutting out the dominant ideology; or they collectively pursue the dominant ideology as a myth through ritualized consumption; or they give up on both pursuits, resulting in a shattered identity project” (p. 41). They postulate that dominated acculturation is the predominant mode of consumer

acculturation in the world today. This is potentially an important consideration for future research and it is significant for this research when we consider that the methods through which Turkish squatters utilised consumption in a “mythical” manner (which involved the temporary ritualistic performance of an aspect of cultural life), excluded consumption or rejected consumption had significant impacts on their identity.

### ***My Reflection***

*It is clear here that there are alternative contexts through which consumers acculturate into new societies. The reasons for consuming; “overidentification” with the host culture; and, or “hyperidentification” with their traditional culture have a significant impact on an immigrants sense of individual and collective identity and acculturation process into the host culture. Whilst I start here with a US dominant perspective, I note that there is a continued movement to consider ethnic minorities away from that paradigm. I am not the first researcher to ask if a dominant US perspective or model can fit the rest of the world. My goal is to prioritise the complexities of life in New Zealand, rather than signal an “answer” for the entire globe.*

### **Religion and Acculturation**

Religion is potentially significant in the acculturation of Pacific consumers to New Zealand. However, religion’s influence in consumption and consumer acculturation is often overlooked (Lindridge, 2005; 2009). Studies in the area are scarce, with two notable exceptions being Belk (1983) who identified that religions had long been vocal about the contrast in materialistic values to religious fulfilment, and Schiffman, Dillon, and Ngumah (1981). Schiffman, Dillon, and Ngumah (1981) looked at the influence of subcultural (religion) and personality (dogmatism scale) factors on consumer acculturation in Nigerian students to the United States. They explored two religions; Islam and Christianity, finding that religious affiliation was related to the likelihood of accepting products that were unfamiliar to Nigerians (dependent also on personality traits). Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer (2005) also found that type of

religion had a positive association to level of acculturation. They explored the involvement of Asian-Indian consumers living in the United States and purchasing Indian ethnic apparel and contemporary American clothing. They found that “subjects who practiced Christianity were more acculturated than subjects who were Hindu” (p. 100). This incongruence and substantial diversity between religious and consumption values reflects a similar distinction between Pacific and Western cultures, where, in the historically highly religious cultures of the Pacific, the desire to want more for the individual sits uncomfortably.

There is a great diversity between religions and their fit with consumerist culture. Lindridge (2009) notes that the field of consumer acculturation would benefit from increased contextual understanding of religion’s impact. Lindridge (2005) focused on the effect of religiosity on culture and consumption through comparing Indians living in Britain, with Asian Indians and British Whites. The sample size was 415. Lindridge (2005) found that “attendance at a religious institution is not akin to viewing religion as an important aspect of daily life . . . and religion is an acculturation agent” (p. 142). Lindridge’s (2009) later study looked at second generation British-born Indian women that were Hindu, Sikh, or Muslim. He found that religion did have an impact on consumption, but acknowledged that its affect is more complex than originally thought. Having a wide-ranging understanding of religion illustrated that how individuals consume “to express their strength of and identification with religion will ultimately express their identification with their ethnic group, their acculturation level and political/ideological outcomes” (p. 16).

### *Mass-Media and Learning Acculturation*

The mass-media has been highlighted as a tool for immigrants to learn about the new culture both pre and post migration. O’Guinn, Lee and Faber (1986) considered mass-media, particularly pictorial mass-media “...enormously powerful and incredibly pervasive” (p. 580). They put forward the idea that mass-media offered a safer and less-risky path to consumer acculturation because no contact or interaction with the host population had to be engaged in. Lee (1989) addressed this notion further in his study of Chinese immigrants to the United States. He found that because ethnic minorities watch more television relative to other groups in the United States “their use of mass media, especially television, becomes an important way of

learning the value system, the social and interpersonal role structures of the American culture” (p. 774). Television became their guide to American life and they aspired to live life as it was portrayed on the television. Increased exposure to the host culture assisted in their adaptation of the new culture to a certain extent.

While mass-media is universally acknowledged as a method of learning about the host culture, not all immigrants expose themselves to this influence. Lee and Tse (1994a) found that the media-usage of Hong Kong immigrants to the United States did not change significantly upon moving to the host country. Changes were slow and occurred over many years, with many long-term immigrants (at least 7 years) still preferring ethnic media. However, Lee and Tse acknowledged that immigrant exposure to mass-media assisted in acculturating individuals’ adoption of majority norms. Hmida, Ozcaglar-Toulouse, and Fosse-Gomez (2009) studied the role of media in the acculturation processes of Maghrebin immigrants in France. Like O’Guinn, Lee and Faber (1986), Lee (1989) and Lee and Tse (1994a), they found that there was a relationship between acculturation and media. However, they asked if media should “be considered as an agent of acculturation or rather as an indicator of it? The literature insists that the former role is correct; our research indicates that the latter concept is also worth consideration” (p. 530). If engagement with media assists acculturation for individuals, does it also indicate that acculturation has occurred? They recommend further research in this area.

### *Marketers as Agents of Change*

Marketers can assist or exacerbate the consumer acculturation process. Peñaloza (1994) acknowledged the significant role that marketers can play in the consumer acculturation process: “Marketers were critically important agents of consumer acculturation, for marketers “saw” Mexican people in the United States very well, even as they were invisible in other contexts. Marketers were shown to impact Mexican immigrants’ consumer acculturation processes in two ways, via segmentation strategies in the United States and international trade between the United States and Mexico” (Peñaloza, 1994, p. 50). This interest in them meant that Mexican people became ‘visible’ to other sectors of their community.

The value of marketers as “bicultural mediators”, assisting in the consumer acculturation journey is acknowledged within the field. Peñaloza and Gilly (1999) focused on marketer

acculturation. They found that within the ethnic marketplace in the United States, marketers acted as *bicultural mediators*. Marketers had opportunities to either integrate ethnic culture into their products and services and/or assimilate ethnic consumer customs into more national market practices and assumptions. Omar, Kirby, and Blankson (2003) also described marketers as bicultural mediators. Their study explored African and Caribbean companies in Britain and highlighted that company owners must “cross personal and collective cultural borders, and negotiate the competing pulls of multiple cultures as they “unlearn” and “relearn” various cultural norms, expectations and consumer behavioural patterns” (p. 91). They found that African and Caribbean companies “accommodated their consumers, assimilated them to mainstream market practices and responded to their resistance” (p. 94). Overall, marketers played a supporting role in the acculturation process for individuals.

Within African-American acculturation research, marketers were found to do much more than solely mediate the divide between the cultures. Lamont and Molnar’s (2001) study of marketing professionals who specialise in African-American consumer segments reflected the work of Peñaloza and Gilly (1999), and Omar, Kirby, and Blankson (2003) as being significant to the consumer acculturation process. However, they found that marketing professionals contributed to aspects of the acculturation process that far exceeded the consumer sphere, spilling ‘black’ culture into mainstream acceptance. They found that marketing professionals: (1) actively shaped the meanings of the “black consumer” category for the public; (2) promoted powerful normative models of collective identity that equated social membership with conspicuous consumption; (3) believed that African-Americans used consumption to defy racism and shared collective identities most valued in American society (e.g., middle-class membership); and (4) simultaneously enacted a positive vision of their cultural distinctiveness (Lamont & Molnar, 2001, p. 31). The potential for marketers to “smooth” the acculturation process for immigrant groups is significant.

The methods that marketers use to reach various segments of the immigrant population have been considered alongside marketers’ mediator role. Jun, Ball, and Gentry (1993) and, in a subsequent article, Jun, Gentry, Ball, and Gonzalez-Molina (1994) recommended that marketers reach less acculturated consumers through appeals tailored to the target group’s ethnic orientation. More specifically, they identify that that use of the group’s native language and ethnic media would accommodate them. They advocated for the mode of acculturation to be

identified, rather than assumed to be assimilation. Appeals based on an assimilation mode may further alienate large segments of the acculturating group. Jun, Gentry, Ball, and Gonzalez-Molina (1994) noted that acculturation was a cyclic process (e.g., Oberg 1960; Peñaloza, 1989). They recommended that marketers use techniques to reach acculturating people through diverse means, “encouraging assimilation for those wishing to do so” or by “facilitating traditional activities” (p. 7).

Consumption was classed more as an economic function earlier in its conception. Later, the exploration of consumption extended this perspective to view consumption as an independent social phenomenon, a process of understanding wider life strategies (Friedman, 1994), identifying consumption as a vehicle for social transformation, generating both positive and negative effects on consumers. When considering the consumer acculturation journey, it is impossible to overlook the reasons why immigrants are seeking out consumption goals. Yes, consumption is an avenue for learning and interacting with the new host culture and yes, there are inevitabilities of needing to interact within the marketplace. But, why do immigrants *desire* involvement in the consumption process? Literature around consumption considers the various paradoxes that face individuals within their new society. These include that, for the immigrant, consumption is: 1) Created by exposure to the consumer world; 2) a source of identity (through individual consumption and accumulation); 3) a point of differentiation between cultures; 4) facilitating social immersion; and 5) a point of conflict for individualistic versus collectivists values.

Consumption has more recently evolved into a mechanism that cannot be considered in isolation from its social context. Belk (1985) pointed out, “it has only been within the last few hundred years that the chance to seek psychological well-being via discretionary consumption has come within reach of the masses” (p. 265). The increased opportunity for consumers to consume has transpired through augmented wages, greater availability of credit, and the opportunity to transcend previous boundaries of social order. This situation means that now people can choose to be who they want to be and this choice becomes not only part of their personal identity, but in turn makes them part of a chosen social group. People feel like they become worth more when they have things, acquire more status, receive more respect and reverence from others, in turn making them feel better about themselves (Belk, 1998).

In more recent human history, the desire to consume nonessential commodities became more pronounced. The consumption of nonessential commodities became part of a capitalistic endeavour to “create a system of false needs in order to maintain the never ending need to accumulate capital” (Friedman, 1994, p. 2). Lunt and Livingstone (1992) warned that this significant growth in consumption was leading to unforeseen consequences; “The 1980s saw a boom in house prices, in the use of consumer credit, in personal borrowing and debt, in the availability of consumer goods, in advertising, and so forth. Yet, we still know very little of the impact these changes have had on people’s lives” (p. 2). The increased access and ever-growing desire to be involved in consumption resonated vividly with “traditional cultures”. Wilk (1994) highlighted the paradox that individuals faced:

Third World consumption is inherently acculturation caused by exposure to world consumer culture; through a kind of ‘bait-and-switch’ the consumer never gets what is offered by the object...Acculturated individuals purchase objects in order to attain what their image suggests, but there is never enough behind the image. Their desire is forever renewed but never satisfied. Their quest for social identity requires that they spend more and more, yet the logic of consumption itself cancels the sign-effect of their acquisitions. (Philbert 1989:63, paraphrasing D’Haerne 1980: 183) as cited in Wilk, 1994, p. 99)

Through this passage, it is possible to gain some sense of the triviality and futility of pursuing consumption. Not only are immigrants sold a dream that can never be fulfilled, but there is a continually shifting goal-line. The “quest for social identity” within their new society impacts on the choices consumers make to achieve acceptance into a particular society. It also depicts the choices they make in other areas of their lives. These consumption choices are made as conscious indicators of the society they have chosen to belong to. Falk and Campbell (1997) highlight the importance of these choices:

The basic choice that a rational individual has to make is the choice about what kind of society to live in. According to that choice the rest follows. Artifacts are selected to demonstrate the choice. The food that is eaten, clothes are worn, cinema, books, music, holidays, all the rest are choices that conform with the initial choice for a form of society. Commodities are chosen because they are not neutral: they are chosen because they would not be tolerated in the rejected forms of society and are therefore

permissible in the preferred form. Hostility is implicit in their selection. (Falk & Campbell, 1997, pp. 17-18).

The choices that consumers make either assist in their acceptance within the culture, or, exacerbate their rejection from the culture. From the acculturating consumers' point of view, consumption becomes a route to "fitting into" their new host culture. Lamont and Molnar (2001), like Falk and Campbell (1997), identified that the decisions and freedoms of consuming are not always a rite of passage, but involve elements of pressure and power. Cultural, gender and racial pressure shape the involvement and participation in consumption practices. Lamont and Molnar (2001) share the difficulties their respondents expressed that black consumers have when defining their identity through consumption. "Blacks carry a stigmatized social identity on their body. . . . it is particularly important to them to display visible signs of high status . . . in order to counteract racism, to conspicuously distance themselves from the 'ghetto black' stereotype . . . The need to signal worthiness through conspicuous consumption is potentially as powerful as the all-pervasive experience of racism that blacks face on a daily basis" (Lamont & Molnar, 2001, p. 37). With this insight, consumption then becomes the point at which distinction can be made to differentiate one culture from another, or, the place where out-group individuals can simulate, mimic and redefine themselves as "acceptable" to another culture.

In many ways the nature of consumption has a pervading force pushing it. Western culture provides the meanings and the standard which other cultures embracing consumption attempt to reach. This point is significant in understanding the "plight" of the immigrant who desires to achieve those Western standards of consumption. Consumption potentially becomes an all-consuming part of an individual's life. Lunt and Livingstone (1992) go further by suggesting that consumption has become a major leisure activity, "that dreaming about, planning and shopping for goods and then arranging them in our homes, is a supreme source of pleasure" (p. 2). They identified that more than a leisure activity, the involvement with consumption has penetrated everyday life: "People's involvement with material culture is such that mass consumption infiltrates everyday life not only at the levels of economic processes, social activities and household structures, but also at the level of meaningful psychological experience – affecting the construction of identities, the formation of relationships, the framing of events" (p. 24). The host cultures' consumption becomes the standard by, and the sites at which, immigrants can participate and be accepted.



Following Western consumption examples, other cultures look to “fit the mould”. Kraidy (2002) identified that consumption of the West, by Maronites, was mimicry and simulation. The Maronite youth consumption was validated through mimicry of an American television show and simulation of certain features of the aesthetic Western ideal. They looked to imitate everything Western, particularly from the US, “things [were] swallowed rapidly, snatched up, as if [young people were] waiting for something new to swallow in order *to fill an unbearable void*” (p. 201). However, the increasing desire to mimic the West was leading to identity crises, through a fragmented identity. The space between what is “original identity” and what is the “accepted reality” is bridged by the use of consumption as a mediator. What is most noticeable here is the desire and need for achieving in-group participation, they are determined in their resolve to achieve some kind of “wholeness”.

The emerging discourse on the morality of consumption proposes to consider why and what the moral issues of consumption are. Wilk (2001) identifies the contemporary research movement of moralising consumption as problematic, suggesting caution, but also calls for continued investigation into the phenomena: “The moral issues raised by consumption therefore have a dual nature (at least); they are both grounded in common human experience, in ‘practical reason’, and at the same time they are part of public discourse about morality, a discourse that has broader cultural, symbolic, and political context” (p. 255).

### *Pacific People and Acculturation*

In refining and identifying the gaps in the literature regarding acculturation and, in particular consumer acculturation, I found only two studies that included Pacific people. Neither of these studies took a focused look at the population. The first of these is Houston and Venkatesh (1996). They utilised a grounded theory approach to understand the health care consumption patterns of Asian and Pacific Island immigrants to the United States. The second of these studies was a global effort using data from over 7,000 immigrant youth living in 13 different countries (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Pacific Islanders residing in New Zealand were one of the cultures considered in this study.

The first of these studies looked to understand immigrant consumption habits. With a view to understanding how immigrant groups utilised health care services, Houston and Venkatesh (1996) identified that Asian and Pacific Island immigrants expressed hybrid patterns

of consumption in their health care use. Which meant that Asian and Pacific groups were using a mix of traditional and Western medicine and treatments. This pattern was compounded further by the fact that sometimes these were used simultaneously. Houston and Venkatesh (1996) reflected the notions of Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) and Peñaloza (1994), drawing attention to the need to “expand traditional consumer acculturation theory to reflect unique patterns of consumption that challenge traditional notions of Anglo-conformity” (p. 422).

The categorisation of “Pacific Islanders” and the blurring of ethnic groups were problematic issues for both studies. Houston and Venkatesh’s (1996) use of the group term “Pacific Islanders” was awkward, particularly from a New Zealand perspective. They neglected to define the individual countries that they were considering under this broad ethnic category, instead grouping both Asian and Pacific countries together. For example, their population included, “but is not limited to ethnic groups such as the Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Asian, Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, etc” (p. 418). To further confound population issues, their fieldwork site was in a primary health care organisation that delivered services and programmes to “Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Samoan, Tongan, Thai, and Vietnamese communities” (p. 418). Within Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006), “Pacific Islanders” were identified as “mainly from Samoa, Fiji, and the Cook Islands” (p. 44).

Identifying findings specific to ethnic groups was challenging. Because of the global diversity of the youth project, finding implications specifically for Pacific youth was buried in recommendations for all acculturating youth. Phinney, Berry, Sam, and Vedder (2006) identified that “cultural maintenance should be desired by the immigrant community and permitted (even encouraged) by the society as a whole” (p. 232), as should participant inclusion and interaction in the larger society. Their recommendations highlighted initiatives that could improve immigrant integration. The recommendations included: providing support, encouraging participation with wider society, encouraging acceptance of cultural diversity, and improved education (Phinney, Berry, Sam, & Vedder, 2006)

*Consumption, Culture and Identity*

In the area of identity formation related to consumption, we know that consumption acts as a form of socialization, status categorisation, and as a means of signalling group affiliation. The process of identity formation is complex and multi-layered, involving both *domination* and *resistance* (Fung, 2002). In order to understand the significance of identity formation on the culture and the individual, cultural identity is important in providing an opportunity to consider the bigger picture, while thinking also about the meaningful interpretations and contributions of individual actions in constructing or deconstructing cultural groups (Kidd, 2002). The study of identity construction particularly related to a cultural process such as consumption draws heavily from understanding the meaning of daily human behaviour.

Fung's (2002) study on the construction of women's identities through women's magazines found that the processes of identification can be constructed on three equivalent consumption levels:

1. by modeling the behaviors of the communities they are sustaining a relationship with them
2. by identifying with an idealized community-constructed beauty and seeking to consume products which collectively suggests mimicry of this idealization
3. by attributing a kind of shelter and support from the emotional and relational problems of life

These findings suggested that individual and group identity was structured to conform to the dominant capitalistic logic and highlighted the insidious nature of the dominant/Other relations in Western cultures. The assimilation of values and identity appears to be being undertaken within a power vacuum of consuming homogeneity through tribal affiliation (group membership) and product symbolism (communication), thereby eliminating heterogeneity or the diversity of choice and the alternative. Fung's claim of structured identification-consumption as shaping identity to conform to society's dominant capitalistic logic illustrates the significance of every-day consumption practices on individual and cultural identity. While his study rests in developing gender distinctions and understandings it is possible to conceive of similar findings within an ethnic based study.

Oswald (1999) more broadly considered the impact of consumption on identity for middle-class Haitian immigrants to the US. She identified that consumers "culture swap"

“...they borrow or buy the cultural trappings of other groups in order to form an identity” (p.303). There is a clear distinction in the demand for identity, “...in a society that denies the immigrant integration, in a world where traditional group identity around family and nation have broken down, and where image has replaced reality.” (p. 304). Oswald goes on to describe how consumption takes on different meanings dependent on context and as consumers switch between one identity and another: “Ethnic consumers “swap cultures” by swapping goods, moving between multiple worlds rather than blending these worlds into a single homogeneous identity.” (p. 310).

Within Oswald’s conceptualisation of identity formation she categorised the performance of consumption as meaningful. The theatrics of consumption was played out by the consumer establishing personal and social identity with the potential outcome of consuming being liberating (1999). Maffesoli (1996) sees the consuming individual as a member of a larger group whose universe is created by *product symbolism* (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2002), which begins to extend the conventional boundaries of consumer understanding. Maffesoli (1996) views *symbolism* in a circular motion that is characterized by a requirement to recognize oneself, generating duplicity that engenders recognition: “The social is based on the rational association of individuals having a precise identity and an autonomous existence; as to sociality, it is founded on the fundamental ambiguity of symbolic structuring” (p.95). In other words, the tribe becomes the location of autonomy, removed from the individual and founded on the fusion and *massification*<sup>1</sup> of symbolism. This reframing of the consumer is particularly useful when we are attempting to deconstruct the assumptions of Western consumption and integrate an Indigenous world view for the reason that if we view consumer acculturation as a process of communicating our group affiliation then it may be possible to understand just how this integrates or differentiates Indigenous cultural affiliation and/or levels of identity. Consumption as a process of communication then becomes broadened to being a social act and cultural event, “...implying traditions, rituals and symbolism (culture), socialization, status hierarchies, and ideology (society) as well as conformity and deviance (normativity)” (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2002, 21).

Deciphering a collective cultural understanding of consumption may provide insight into how a dominant tradition like consumption contributes to altering cultural identity and values through the process of consumer acculturation. This can be seen when we consider the very

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<sup>1</sup> Large scale uniformity

different exchange and commodity values held within Pacific communities. Fijians, for example, believe that there is no point worrying about tomorrow, that things will sort themselves out, and that accumulating possessions is futile as possessions must be shared and enjoyed with others while they are alive (Ravuvu, 1983). Western culture however places more esteem on the accumulation of individual wealth and materialism (Belk, 1985) revering capitalistic values and polarizing the cultures through their understanding of accumulation, placing Pacific immigrants within New Zealand on a steep consumer learning curve. Peñaloza (1994) found similar discrepancies between the value systems and understandings of individualism and consumption of Mexican immigrants to the U.S. and mainstream Americans. Language proficiency (of the host language), length of time in the host country, and ecological factors such as; family, pre-migration exposure and adjustment to Western customs, and cultural involvement either reduced or exacerbated the impact of identity issues and consumer acculturation for Mexican immigrants; factors which may also be attributed to the Pacific experience. Cultural involvement in particular is potentially a significant factor in understanding identity and acculturation, as the strength of association to either the host culture, or the traditional culture of the individual may have bearing on their levels of social and self-assurance and in turn manifest during their consumption practices/experiences.

Askegaard, Arnould and Kjeldgaard (2005) study of Greenlanders in Denmark, consider the generalisability for culture swapping methods and "...explore informants' self reflexive subject positions as they contend with various acculturative pressures through consumption practices.' (p.161). They move beyond previous research on the topic and consider a third consumer acculturation force, transnational influence. They extend the view of postassimilationist theory beyond the North American cultural realm and consider the act of consuming as a "tactical choice" (p.161), and dispute Berry's fixed locals for acculturative categories. Askegaard et al, instead insist that "...consumer culture persistently encourages the differentiation and emergence of new segments..." (p. 169). This is because, like Oswald found, immigrant consumers use products to negotiate difference between the cultures and construct their own unique identity (Askegaard et al, 2005).

Üstüner and Holt (2007) examine the consumer identities of women in a Turkish squatter, and note the synthesis between previous literature of consumer acculturation. They identify that consumer identity is typically the focus with minority identity expression gaining a significant

component of the attention. Üstüner and Holt identified three modes of acculturation under the broader dominated consumer acculturation model. These are: (1) migrants reconstitute their village culture in the city and shut out the dominant ideology (p.41); (2) collectively pursue the dominant ideology as a myth through ritualized consumption (p.41); or (3) they give up on both and this results in a shattered identity project (p.41).

### ***Limitations of Current Consumer Research***

Throughout consumer research there are calls for greater focus on minority groups. Burton (2000), like multiple researchers in marketing (e.g., Peñaloza, 1989; Sue, 2003; Ogden, Ogden & Schau, 2004), identified that there was a disproportionate lack of research on ethnic minorities, both in European and American marketing literature. Ogden, Ogden & Schau (2004), also identified that there were large gaps in the consumption and marketing literature in the areas of understanding minority consumers and consumer acculturation. In particular, they note that alongside this lack of interest there has been a continuing call for more research to be undertaken to understand acculturation and microcultures, particularly when trying to reach ethnic groups (O'Guinn & Faber, 1985; Peñaloza, 1989; Houston & Venkatesh, 1996; Burton, 2000; Ogden, Ogden & Schau, 2004).

Researchers have speculated on the reasons why ethnicity, identity and acculturation have been neglected in marketing research. Within Burton's (2000) review of acculturation, she notes that models of acculturation, although useful to assess and measure acculturation, suffer from various limitations. These include that culture is seen as unchanging and fixed, and that there is the presumption that all individuals have the autonomy to decide what behaviours they adopt from the host culture and which they will retain from their own culture. Acculturation is seen as the way individuals accept or reject the host culture; however, there is little acknowledgement of the way that minority culture has evolved over time. Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) made the same point nearly two decades ago, "culture is adaptive. Collective adjustments are made when changes occur in the material conditions of life. Therefore as a society is confronted with different conditions, its culture adapts" (p. 292).

Adaption has been identified as a trait of consumption as well as culture. Wallendorf and Reilly (1983) identified that consumption is an ever-evolving construct. The meaning of

consumption has evolved into more than a product and the *manner of consumption*, it is now about its ability to carry and communicate meanings (McCracken, 1986) and lifestyle choices. But these meanings are constantly changing. McCracken (1986) found that this observation was often overlooked, “[a] great limitation of present approaches to the study of the cultural meaning of consumer goods is the failure to observe that this meaning is constantly in transit” (p. 71). McCracken expressed this transfer of meaning as a linear progression, from the culturally constituted world, to consumer goods, to the individual, and while it considers one flow of meaning, it raises questions regarding the contemporary relevance of a one-way process and the likelihood of using this model crossculturally.

Limitations of consumer acculturation research have highlighted the need for more flexibility and capacity. Ogden, Ogden, and Schau (2004) undertook a review of literature regarding ethnicity and consumer acculturation. They focused on identifying gaps within existing literature on microcultural and consumer acculturation research. Overall, they found that there were four main gaps: “(1) Need for more intra-microcultural research; (2) A lack of integrative research in relation to consumer acculturation studies; (3) Additional research is needed on acculturation measurement scales; (4) More research is needed on product category breadth in current academic research in microcultural, or ethnic, consumption” (p. 2). They also acknowledge that the broad categories of “ethnic”, “ethnicity”, and/or “ethnic identity” have lumped people together across nations; e.g., “Hispanic” or “Asian”. Sue (2003) noted that the study of acculturation is predominantly undertaken separate from the environment where the individual lives, yet the person-environment match is significant in understanding acculturation in context. With this in mind, Sue identified four issues regarding acculturation research: (1) Measuring the different cultural skills or knowledge within the acculturating individual needs to be considered alongside the “strategies” they use to acculturate into the new country; (2) What is the cost of acculturation? While we already know that there are culture conflicts and value clashes that the individual has to face, what are the positive and negative impacts on other areas; (3) “Researchers tend to measure what is easy (e.g., generation, language, food preferences) rather than tackle the important but difficult-to-measure phenomena such as affective and intimate relationships and values” (p. xix); (4) Majority-minority group relations are often overlooked. However, the status of these relations is significant to acculturation research as relations illustrate overt and insidious forms of prejudice and discrimination. Sue provides the

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

excessive drinking of the American-Indians as an example of needing to understand patterns of exploitation in addition to references to cultural difference.



***My Reflection: Addressing the Gaps***

*Within the review I identify specific gaps in the literature. These are:*

*Gap 1: How do individuals deal with conflict?*

*Gap 2: Research needs to diversify to other sub-groups, ethnicities, depart from dominant Western paradigms.*

*Gap 3: The need to understand the effect of consumption on everyday experiences.*

*Gap 4: The need to hear focused Pacific voices.*

*Gap 5: The need to view culture and consumption as fluid rather than static entities.*

*One of the first priorities of this research is to delve into how acculturation looks from a New Zealand/Pacific perspective, at the individual level. I expect that a Pacific conceptualisation of the acculturation process will differ from that of a US conceptualisation. Pacific cultures, although sharing some similarities with other global ethnic minorities are unique and, therefore, need to be researched separately, revealing differences when compared to what is already known. I want to emphasise that there is clearly a pattern of omission regarding the type of research undertaken and the continued calls for more insight and research. Primarily, I point to the neglect of ethnic groups, minorities, microcultures, and the importance of each group's relationship and/or status with the majority culture.*

*I want to clarify that I am not entering into the measurement discussion/debate. The confusion regarding the measurement of acculturation indicates that there is still more work needed on understanding the complexities of the individual's journey. I am taking a different approach, utilizing methods which are harmonious with my ontological, epistemological and methodological standpoints, and I intend to explore individual experiences of acculturation, both in the public and private spheres of daily life. I am also adding a new point of view, that of Pacific consumers to New Zealand, which will focus on applying a critical perspective to this research through which I hope will identify alternative solutions to wellbeing.*

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

*The repeated acknowledgments of researchers that there is a greater need for ethnic, minority research and that there are gaps in understanding consumer acculturation in these groups is significant. The admission by researchers in the field that there is a continued absence of the wider environment and the context of the individual has directed the placement of my research in providing the “bigger picture” of Pacific immigrant life. The ties to culture, family and church for Pacific people are significant components of their lives in New Zealand. Yet these aspects of their lives are frequently omitted from research.*

*The value of consumer acculturation is not just limited in its relevance to the field of consumer research. In understanding consumer acculturation, it is possible to extend learning in other fields, including understanding negative behaviours, tailoring social marketing campaigns, and developing various policy agendas in areas such as health, education and family wellbeing.*

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

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From the vantage point of the colonized . . . the word “research” is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary.

(Smith, 1999, p. 1).

It has been to the detriment of Western society, and indeed contemporary Pacific societies, that Pacific peoples’ cultures have become defined by, and confined to a repertoire of palm trees, Bacardi rum and inane hip-wriggling, grimacing and swaying people. The irony of this paradise paradigm is the creation of Western minds who feared their own sexuality, did not understand the nature of their divinity, and whose concept of identity became captured through a loss of self in relationship to others.

(Pulotu-Endemann & Peteru, 2001, p. 123).

One of the great current attractions of ethnography to traditions of cultural criticism in the West, and especially the Marxist tradition, is . . . in letting ethnography demonstrate that the most powerful and novel criticisms of capitalist society lie embedded in the everyday conditions and talk of ethnographic subjects, more powerful and novel even than the contributions of intellectuals whose self-conscious task and cultural criticism has been. The ethnographer is midwife, as it were, who delivers and articulates what is vernacularly expressed in working class lives, and for that matter, middle class lives.

(Marcus, 1986, p. 180).

**Drifting through worlds: Finding my roots**

***My Reflection on Beginning***

*My reflection on this part of the journey starts by emphasising that this was never a linear process. Constructing my ontological and epistemological understandings and creating a synthesis between them, my chosen method, and population meant that I had to continually delve into my fieldwork, analysis, and writing, and then pull back to see where it was taking me. I was always questioning how I could refine my methods to better assist my participants and gain better insight into their lives. This was an enduring process of bettering me, my research, and meeting the needs of my participants.*

### **My Indigenous Dilemma: Cultural Consciousness**

Historically, Western research has been Eurocentric. It has had a negative presence within indigenous communities worldwide (Smith, 1999; Lorde, 2003; Mohanty, 2003). Traditional Western research has focused on explaining a situation that ultimately enables, “the *prediction and control* of phenomena, whether physical or human” (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 211). The “validity” and relevance of non-Western based approaches that prioritise subjective realities and multiple truths, have, in the past, been excluded in favour of the “expert” researcher. Traditional Eurocentric knowledge strives to divide the world into compartments (Battiste, 1996), while the research enacts this desire to divide. This stance is founded on the view that Western intellectualism and academia need to exist in a sterile environment, presenting only the reality of the phenomena through the lens of the researcher, without unnecessary processes of emotion, relationships, or subject input. While postcolonial and postmodern thought reveal that Eurocentric thought is not universally accepted or experienced, Eurocentrism is still unavoidably part of the academic discourse and process (Battiste, 1996).

I come into the conversation with an awareness of this situation. Within the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of my research I begin with an acknowledgement of my dilemma: that of an indigenous researcher, undertaking research in a Western realm, on a minority population - my own population. I am aware that I am in a privileged position of having access to people’s lives and having a voice that presents my view of their lives, but does not offer those participants the right of rebuttal, nor the forum for stating their feedback publicly. Therefore I tread carefully, trying not to repeat the injustices of previous research. I acknowledge that I drift in and out of one world, to the other, trying to find the balance between academic requirements and indigenous sensitivity.

Making the initial choice of method started with a quest for a method that integrated principles of whakawhanaungatanga [establishing relationships (Bishop, 1996) that are fair and equal]. Whakawhanaungatanga, whilst grounded in Kaupapa Māori [the Māori way/agenda] philosophy, provided the basis for my research direction, one that built relationships, and fostered collaboration and interconnectedness (Bishop, 1996) between the participant and researcher. I wanted the research to prioritise the participants and put them in the privileged place that is more traditionally held by the researcher. This was a place where I was

uncomfortable and opposed to standing in. I maintain that I am not the “creator” of the knowledge in this thesis; rather I am a vessel to protect the knowledge of those from whom I learn. I am also driven by a desire to empower change in Pacific consumers, particularly as I have seen firsthand the difficulties of life in New Zealand for many Pacific immigrants. For this research I decided that I needed to push past an interpretive position, to the distant outpost of a critical stance.

Within this chapter, I present the foundations of my research: critical theory, ethnography, visual methods and indigenous accountability. These robust foundations are the footing from which I build the structure of my research. I present an overview of these concepts, starting by clarifying the question of critical “thinking” and “theory” and I move from the traditional understanding of this theory to the new “reconceptualised” critical theory. These understandings are considered in the context of my role and responsibilities as an indigenous Pacific woman researcher. From here I present critical ethnography, establishing a visual approach and the development of friendship between researcher and participant as significant components of this method.

### **The essence of the inquiry: Critical Theory**

Critical theory was conceived in the Frankfurt School, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. To take a critical approach implies that the researcher is engaging in the inquiry with the expectation that his or her work will contribute to bringing about change in some form (Schramm, 2005). It is a systematic rejection of a value-neutral position and aims directly at freedom, social justice (Prasad, 2005) and parity. A critical stance advocates challenging the status quo and disrupting the assumptions of society. The researchers' values are central to the task, purpose and methods of research and promote change and emancipation (Ponterotto, 2005; Thomas, 1993). Since its conception, critical theory has evolved from its original form. More recently a reconceptualisation of the theory has made it all the more relevant to postcolonial agendas, like those of feminism and indigenous studies. The following section considers the changing nature of the critical stance and details the use of the reconceptualised perspective for this project.

Critical theory can be defined as a “social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory oriented only to understanding or explaining it” (Pyles, 2009, p. 29). None of the original theorists (Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, Erich Fromme, Herbert Marcuse, among others (Prasad, 2005)) claimed to have a unified approach to cultural criticisms (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Prasad, 2005). Rather, critical theory is an amalgamation of an assortment of ideas and theories that are engaged with cultural critique (Prasad, 2005). Critical theorists defied orthodox Marxist thought, deepening their belief “that injustice and subjugation shape the lived world” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, p. 434) thus focusing and extending the interpretative tradition, bringing “a critical edge and ethical tone to its analysis” (Prasad, 2005, p. 149).

There is some confusion over the understanding and application of critical theory (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003; Thomas, 1993; Prasad & Caproni, 1997). The confusion in the critical conversation appears to be in distinguishing between critical theory and critical thinking. Prasad and Caproni (1997) highlight that critical thinking is merely a “pedagogic movement to implant systematic reflection within the broad assumptions of liberal humanism” (p. 286). While critical theory is also concerned with this area, it does so within a framework that differs from that of critical thinking. Prasad and Caproni focus on four broad themes that make this distinction: (1) that all reality is socially constructed; (2) that social constructions of reality are

significantly influenced by power relations and ideology that limit individuals living full lives through hiding social contradictions and creating false expectations; (3) that the social and historical contexts are significant, not only in the macrostructure, but also in the everyday activities of people; (4) that awareness leads to praxis, encouraging social change and action.

Gaining an understanding of what critical theory is, has posed several problems for researchers in the past. This difficulty is predominantly because of the ever-changing nature of critical thought and the diversity of ideas and theories. However, Kincheloe and McLaren (2003) suggest that reconceptualised critical theory of the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be described as:

...question[ing] the assumption that societies such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the nations in the European Union, for example, are unproblematically democratic and free. Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially since the early 1960s, individuals in these societies have been acculturated to feel comfortable in relations of domination and subordination rather than equality and independence.  
(p. 436)



### **Central Concepts in Critical Theory**

The belief in a constructed lived experience that is mediated by power relations within social and historical contexts is central to the criticalist position (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Ponterotto, 2005). “*Ideology-critique*” is the central concept to, and, representative of critical theory. It is “the incessant and systematic critique of ideological forces in every aspect of social life” (Prasad, 2005, p. 139). Held (1980) explains the critique of ideology as, “the immanent critique of an object – a critique which (to put it crudely) assesses an object in terms of its own standards and ideals – is possible only in so far as ‘ideology contains a rational element with which the critique can deal’” (p. 106). To Jürgen Habermas and the Frankfurt School, the concept of ideology explains our willing acceptance of the more dominating and objectionable aspects of capitalism, socialism, and fascism (Prasad, 2005). Ideology is the power or force that systemically distorts accounts of reality, concealing and legitimising social imbalance and injustice (Prasad, 2005; Prasad & Caproni, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 2003). These power relations are emphasised further by differences between the cultures (i.e., Pacific and Western); however, it is within these power relations that criticalists conceptualise reality, events and experiences (Ponterotto, 2005).

All major thinkers in the critical tradition held a belief in the need for scholarly praxis and ideology-critique (Prasad, 2005), but each then pursued his or her own line of inquiry:

- Adrono and Horkeimer developed the concept of *instrumental reason*. This “produces a cultural view of formal knowledge as being (a) detached from everyday human experience and (b) intended to control nature, people, and social arrangements” (Prasad, 2005, p. 144);
- Marcuse’s *one-dimensional man* (later Adrono & Horkheimer’s discussions as well) centred on the standardisation of all walks of life and the reverence for the pursuit of pleasure which should be considered more as the “commodification impulse” rather than as emancipatory or sinful (Prasad, 2005);
- *Communicative action* theorised by Habermas considered language use (Prasad, 2005). To be human is to communicate and within this is the idea of *genuine consensus* (Prasad, 2005) that is rarely realised (Held, 1980). Consensus is the cornerstone of Habermas’s

theory and when this takes place we have an ideal speech community where “all individuals have an equal right to enter the discussion” (Prasad, 2005, p. 147);

- Finally, *distorted communication* takes place when meaningful conversations are prohibited and when there are violations to the ideal speech community (Prasad, 2005). Habermas was more concerned with *systematically distorted communication* (Held, 1980) that strategically “works to reproduce, rather than produce, themselves” (Deetz, 1992 as cited in Prasad, 2005, p. 148) with the intention of excluding alternative discourses (Prasad, 2005). Power relations are implicit with this process.

Inherent within this is *discursive closure* where opposing views are shut-down. Strategies of this include: “disqualification, naturalisation, topical avoidance, and pacification” (Prasad, 2005, p. 148). Working within the critical traditions requires a high level of *language sensitivity* which acknowledges the ambiguity and complexities of language (Prasad, 2005), creating consensus and the avoidance of systematically distorted communication.

### ***Marxian thought that informed Critical Theory***

Although there were major differences between each of the members of the Frankfurt School in their assessment of capitalism, there was also significant confluence that was “informed by familiar Marxian tenets” (Held, 1980, pp. 40-41). Held (1980) outlines these aspects of Marxian thought that form the critical theoretical foundation within the respective analyses of those from the Frankfurt School. They are:

1. We live in a society dominated by the capitalist mode of production. It is a society based on exchange. Products are manufactured *primarily* for their realization as economic value and profit, and not for their capacity to satisfy human wants and desires.
2. The commodity character of products is not simply determined by their exchange, but by their being abstractly exchanged. Exchange, based on abstract labour time, affects the objective form as well as the subjective side of the productive process. It affects the former through its determination of the form of products and labour (labour power) and the latter through its debasement of human relationships.

3. The products of human labour are viewed as independent, ‘having a life of their own’ a ‘natural’ value. The social and material relations which result from exchange, distribution and consumption are not immediately comprehensible. They are veiled by necessary illusion – the fetishism of commodities.
4. Capitalism is not a harmonious social whole. Both in the realm of the production of commodities and in the sphere of illusion, it is based on contradictions. The dominant relations of production restrain the developed forces of production and produce a series of antagonisms. Antagonisms arise in the cultural sphere as well as in the economic. Contradictions between socially generated illusions (ideology) and actuality (performance, effects) lead to crisis.
5. The free market is progressively replaced by the oligopolistic and monopolistic mass production of standardised goods.
6. The progressive rise in the organic composition of capital – the amount of fixed capital per worker – exacerbates the inherently unstable accumulation process. In order to sustain this process, its protagonists utilise all means available – including imperialist expansion and war (Held, 1980).

The political task within these tenets is the emancipation of people from the shackles of these material conditions. Horkheimer defended these central elements of Marxian political economy (Held, 1980) and maintained that “capitalism facilitates an enormous expansion of production and the ever greater control of nature, it also undermines the necessity for the perpetual postponement of gratification. . . . [It] reduce[s] individuals to the status of mere functionaries of economic mechanism and enforces suffering on a massive scale” (Held, 1980, p. 44).

### ***Reconceptualising Critical Theory***

Kincheloe and McLaren (2003) present their interpretation of a reconceptualised critical theory for the new millennium. They summarise a guide to the social sphere, helping to devise questions and strategies for exploring the world and issues of power and justice. They consider 10 issues related to reconceptualising critical theory:

1. Critical enlightenment: considers “competing power interests between groups and individuals within a society – identifying who gains and who loses in specific situations” (p. 437). Privileged groups have an interest in maintaining the status quo. Defining who are the winners and losers in particular social arrangements and the process through which these occur is the point of critical enlightenment.
2. Critical emancipation: seeking out the power to control their own lives and exposing the power/forces that prevent individuals from shaping their own decisions. While we are looking for forces that insidiously shape our lives, we respect those journeys that differ from our own.
3. The rejection of economic determinism: “does not accept the orthodox Marxist notion that ‘base’ determines ‘superstructure’” (p. 437). This idea means that although economic factors are important and cannot be separated from other factors of oppression, there are also multiple other forms of power and domination (including race, gender) that are significant also.
4. The critique of instrumental or technical rationality: is seen as “one of the most oppressive features of contemporary society. Such a form of “hyper reason” involves an obsession with means in preference to ends. Critical theorists claim that instrumental/technical rationality is more interested in method and efficiency than in purpose. It delimits its questions to “how to” instead of “why should”. . . . instrumental/technical rationality often separates fact from value in its obsession with “proper” method, losing in the process an understanding of the value choices always involved in the production of so-called facts” (p. 438).
5. The impact of desire: “A reconceptualized critical theory appreciates post-structuralist psychoanalysis... a rejection of the traditional psychoanalysis tendency to view individuals as rational and autonomous beings” (p. 438). This belief allows for researchers to “dig deeply” at the unconscious processes that resist change and encourage negative and harmful behaviour. Critical researchers can push for emancipatory projects that promote change - avoiding patriarchal, bourgeois, ethnocentric, and misogynist practices.

6. A reconceptualised critical theory of power: hegemony: covers the need to understand the various and complex ways that power dominates and shapes consciousness. Power “is a basic constituent of human existence” (p. 439). Gramsci’s hegemony involves the winning of consent of the masses by the dominant power through cultural institutions, like schools, churches, and media. This is achieved within “a set of social relations that are legitimised by their depiction as natural and inevitable”, however it is never fully established “as it is always contested by various groups with different agendas” (p. 440).
7. A reconceptualised critical theory of power: ideology: The structures of hegemony cannot be separated from the development of ideology. That is, hegemony is the consent of the masses by the powerful “then ideological hegemony involves the cultural forms, the meanings, the rituals, and the representations that produce consent to the status quo and the individuals’ particular places within it” (p. 440). The reconceptualised perspective refutes the propaganda model’s assumption that people are passive and easily manipulated victims.
8. A reconceptualised critical theory of power: linguistic/discursive power: Language is seen as a social practice that is “unstable” and there is a belief that meanings shift depending on the context. Within the reconceptualised perspective “linguistic descriptions are not simply about the world but serve to construct it. criticalists begin to study the way language in the form of discourses serves as a form of regulation and domination” (p. 441). Discursive closure is implicit in research, undermining multiple meanings of language in favour of one “correct” way.
9. Focusing on the relationship between culture, power, and domination: Culture is being blurred as the distinction between the real and the simulated becomes unclear. This creates new forms of domination; “This proliferation of signs and images functions as a mechanism of control in Western societies” (p. 442).
10. The role of cultural pedagogy in critical theory: “By using the term *cultural pedagogy*, we are specifically referring to the ways particular cultural agents produce particular hegemonic ways of seeing. ...the new “educators” in the electronically wired contemporary era are those who possess the financial resources to use mass media” (p. 442).

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

A re-conceptualised view of critical theory aligns the theory more purposefully to the issues of contemporary society. The older conceptualisations of the theory have now been refined to further consider the advantages of this theory to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. From this reconceptualised viewpoint it is possible to begin to reshape the meaning of the theory, its relevance to social issues, and to align it to the appropriate method/s.

### **An Indigenous Undertaking**

As an Indigenous researcher I am unavoidably charged with undertaking research that is embedded in culturally appropriate methods, inclusive of other cultural traditions and approaches, and fluid in its application. As a Pacific researcher I focused my research to assist with the betterment of Pacific peoples. Taufe'ulungaki (2000) identified important traits of Pacific research, encouraging the integration of Pacific epistemologies into all fields:

*If research is to make meaningful contributions to Pacific societies, then its primary purpose is to reclaim Pacific knowledge and values for Pacific peoples. It must also:*

- *increase our understanding of the issues at stake*
- *lead and develop consistent future scenarios by increasing awareness of problems and solutions*
- *use research to improve the lives of Pacific peoples*
- *transform the practices of those in power and influencing policy*
- *ensure that educational and social policies are informed by sound research outcomes*
- *aim to transform Pacific societies in accordance with Pacific values and aspirations*
- *take into account the need for social responsibility in addressing the technological, ecological and ethical questions of inquiry*
- *use a holistic approach in gaining universal understanding of issues by focusing on interdisciplinary and intersectoral research*
- *expose the incongruence between Pacific core values and those of the dominant paradigms and educational programmes*
- *be educative in nature and practical in their usages*
- *be enabling of and empowering to the researched*
- *be responsive to changing Pacific contexts*

(Taufe'ulungaki (2000) as cited in Anae et al., 2001, pp. 8-9)

As a guideline, research methodologies will be established in a “Pacific Way”, identified as:

- *talking things over rather than taking rigid stances*
- *being prepared to negotiate, being flexible*
- *using adaptation and compromise*

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

- acknowledging oratory and verbal negotiation have deep traditional roots in Pacific cultures, therefore, the 'Pacific Way' is spoken rather than written
  - employing kinship networks
  - embracing universal Pacific notions of generosity with time, labour and property
  - following Pacific perceptions of time, leisure, dress, food, dancing
  - accepting the inseparable dynamics of church and culture, and indigenisation of Christianity
- (Anae et al., 2001). It is also imperative to identify that this research is based on an understanding of Pacific values that include: "respect, reciprocity, communalism, collective responsibility, gerontocracy, humility, love, service and spirituality" (p. 14). These values will shape the processes that were used for this project.



### **Critical Ethnography**

Critical ethnography stems from the traditional ethnographic convention and combines with critical theory. It is oriented towards exposing oppressive practices (Johnson & Duberley, 2003), making value-laden judgments (Thomas, 1993), and providing historical and structural insights (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). The most important difference between the critical and traditional system is “that a critical approach seeks to make social actors aware of domination or oppressive social structures. This awareness is used instrumentally as a necessary step towards social change” (Murray & Ozanne, 2006, p. 50) and works in “the divide between the powerful and the powerless” (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005, 217). Critical ethnography builds on the traditional role of conventional ethnography, through incorporating a reflective process of choosing “between conceptual alternatives and making value laden judgments of meaning and method to challenge research, policy and other forms of human activity” (Thomas, 1993, p. 4). It examines not only knowledge and action, but also culture. It expands on the conventional application of ethnography by extending the more traditional question of “what is” to “what could be” (Thomas, 1993). However, an indigenous researcher’s role pushes even further than that of the critical ethnographer’s role, through his or her position within both the worlds of “Western” (research) and “Other” (culture).

Kraidy (2002) advocated native ethnography as a sub-category of critical ethnography, describing the native ethnographer as a “translator positioned between different and sometimes antagonistic worldviews” (p. 193). This uneasy balance also highlights the difficulty with the term “native” that unavoidably implies a level of purity that may not exist, particularly as the *hybridity* of cultural intermingling distorts the distinct division between cultures (i.e., European and Pacific in New Zealand), creating questions regarding adoption of values and assimilation into the host culture. The discourse of native ethnography becomes hybrid in its ability to bring together identity and otherness to undo their fixity, exposing hybridity as not a contradiction of identity, but rather as its unavoidable systematic condition (Kraidy, 2002).

The native ethnographer’s role also aligns to DuBois’ (1989) “double consciousness”. This is a privileged position between the two worlds of academia and indigeneity that is fraught with the difficulties of navigating between relevance and sensitivity. The inclusion of DuBois’ (1989) double consciousness should be viewed as a “transcendent position allowing one to see

and understand positions of inclusion and exclusion – margins and mainstream” (Ladson-Billings, 2003, p. 403). This positioning enables observation of and participation within the dominant system with the capacity to see incomparably farther and deeper. Yet even with this acknowledgement, and the very valid opportunity for insight, research reflecting on Western ideological assumptions through the lens of the Other is relatively limited.

Critical ethnography pushes beyond surface issues and looks to explore the “hidden” and taken for granted assumptions, disrupting the status quo. Madison (2005) highlights three areas of the critical ethnographer’s ethical responsibility, and considers how best to represent the Other and their world for just purposes. These are through: positionality, dialogue/otherness, and theory/method. Finding layers of complicity in the everyday tasks, the critical ethnographer envisions “alternative life possibilities” (p. 6). Utilising “positionality” forces the researchers to “acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases just as we are denouncing the power structures that surround our subjects” (p. 7). Madison identifies that critical ethnographers must move beyond questioning the notion of “objective”, by also critiquing the notion of “subjective”. Where critical researchers positions themselves leaves them open to the opportunity to be proven wrong; it is reflexive, a turning back on their position and representations.

To be grounded in the world of the ‘Other’ is of vital importance to negotiating an open dialogue that moves toward “substantial and viable meanings that make a difference in the Other’s world” (Madison, 2005, p. 9). The dialogical stance is candid and resists conclusions, keeping conversations between the researcher and the Other open and ongoing. In this way the perception of “timelessness” that traditional ethnography suffers from is removed. Critical ethnography presents the dialogue between researcher and the Other that:

moves from ethnographic present to ethnographic presence by opening the passageways for readers and audiences to experience and grasp the partial presence of a temporal conversation constituted by the Other’s voice, body, history, and yearnings. This conversation with the Other, brought forth by dialogue, reveals itself as a lively, changing being through time and no longer an artefact captured in the ethnographer’s monologue, immobile and forever stagnant. (Madison, 2005, p. 10)

Finally through critical ethnography it is possible to see the practical “doing” or “performance” of critical theory. Critical ethnography is critical theory in action (Madison,

2005). “We rely on theory . . . to interpret or illuminate a social action. However, in composing a lay summary, designing interview questions, or coding data, theory may inspire and guide, but it is a methodological process that directs and completes the task” (p. 15).

### **Movement to the Visual**

Ethnographers have long used visual images (Pink, 2001; Belk & Kozinets, 2005a; MacDougall, 2006; McLean & Leibing, 2007) as film and photographic technologies have allowed them to do so. Primarily, during these early ethnographic efforts, the visual was about the “objective recording” of the natives, or other cultures. Objectivity and the invisibility of the camera and researcher were paramount to the success of the inclusion of the visual. Visual images were utilised to capture ethnographer observations of their subjects, and provide corroboration of their experiences. However, as MacDougall (1998) points out, although there has never been a lack of interest in the visual, there has been a lack of knowledge about what to do with the visual. Early remedies to this problem were to bring the exotic to the world (e.g., Hottentot Venus). Holliday (2004) noted that “images were largely excluded from academic journals in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as they became seen as “emotive” and “subjective”.” (p. 1598). Pink (2001) identified that even later during the 1960-1980s the environment for presenting the visual remained hostile, with accusations of early visual ethnographic efforts as “lacking objectivity and scientific rigour” (p. 7). Visual images and representations were considered “invalid”, with some opponents suggesting that visual images were nothing more than “vacation pictures” (Pink, 2001, p. 7).

During the 1960-1980s debates centred on the appropriateness and place of visual images in ethnography. Seminal works during this period like Collier’s (1967) “Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method” began to argue back that photography could be a formidable asset to add to the ethnographer’s toolkit. Spindler and Spindler in the Forward to Collier’s (1967) book distinguish the difference when photography is employed in research: “Usually an anthropologist takes a photograph to illustrate a finding that he has already decided is significant . . . He waits until whatever it is happens, then points his camera at it. His camera is then incidental to his research activity and comes into use late in the fieldwork period. . . . This is a legitimate use of the camera but falls far short of the potential of photography” (p. x). Spindler

and Spindler later acknowledge Collier as inductively using the camera; “The fieldworker can take a picture of something he does not fully, or even partially, understand something that he can record for later understanding. And the explanation can come not only from his own accumulating insight but from a native informant as well” (p. xi). Hence the photo elicitation movement was born from Collier’s new techniques.

However, Collier reverts to justifying the method in terms of its scientific validity: “This approach is consistent with scientific processes. With it we can arrive at a sound position for appraising the cyclopaedic mass of documentation found within cultural photographs. Elements that might remain intangible can be anchored into a cultural frame that can finally accommodate the whole photographic record” (p. 104). In Collier and Collier’s (1986), later revised and expanded edition of the same title, these sentiments of conforming to systematised observation reiterate that their view of the visual within research had not changed; “the photograph fixes the image for analysis and reappraisal” (p. 64), requiring “systematic selectivity”, in contrast to “narrative based communication – “stories”-” that they identified as “not research” (p. 162).

Collier and Collier’s interpretation of the visual, analysed in a systematic way, in their opinion could be used with written text to provide realistic observations. Pink (2001) describes their perspective as depending on “a realist interpretation of still and moving images” (p. 8). She notes that this perspective is what they were also criticised for. Other ethnographers during this period felt that the visual, and indeed that ethnographer interpretation were ‘constructed narratives’ or ‘partial truths’. MacDougall (1975) had taken the stance that there was a fundamental inequality in taking an “observational stance as a film-maker” (Grimshaw, 2005, p. 24). This observational quality inherently made the observer, a voyeur. MacDougall insisted instead that film become participatory, creating relationships between the film-maker and the filmed. Grimshaw (2005) described this relationship as “an exchange, a dialogue or a conversation between different parties, rather than a task animated by notions of data collection and scientific interpretation” (p. 25).

Geertz (1988) identified that there could only be parts of the whole expressed. Although his inference was made with earlier fieldwork accounts (i.e., Malinowski’s “A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term” (1967) and “Argonauts of the Western Pacific” (1922)) the dilemma remained; “It is crucial . . . not because it reveals the reality of ethnographic experience but because it forces us to grapple with the complexities of such encounters and to treat all textual

accounts based on fieldwork as partial constructions” (p. 97). We can draw from this critique that any work that fixes the subject but does not consider the view from the lens of the Other could be considered a “partial construction” or as Clifford (1986) labelled this in his earlier book, “Writing Culture”, “fictions”.

Clifford (1986) defends the use of the term ‘fictions’ as having lost the traditional notion of “falsehood, of something merely opposed to the truth. It suggests the partiality of cultural and historical truths, the ways they are systematic and elusive.” (p. 6). Clifford saw that the acceptance of ‘ethnographic truths’ as inherently partial could be beneficial to the research, as a “source of representational tact” (p. 7). This movement toward ethnographic fictions and away from universal truths promoted a more accepting environment of visual research. Behar (1996) also described the turning tide of her anthropological field:

In Anthropology, which historically exists to “give voice” to others, there is no greater taboo than self-revelation. The impetus of our discipline, with its roots in Western fantasies about barbaric others, has been to focus primarily on “cultural” rather than “individual” realities. The irony is that anthropology has been rooted in an “I”-understood as having a complex, psychology and history-observing a “we” that, until recently, was viewed as plural, ahistorical, and nonindividuated. Lately anthropologists have been pushing at that irony . . . this has led to retheorization of genres like the life history and the life story, and the creation of hybrid genres like the self-ethnography and ethnobiography. (Behar, 1996, p. 26)

More recently there has been a growing acceptance and awareness of the value of the visual (Holm, 2008). Major shifts were made during the 1990s when the visual became part of an intentional departure away from positivistic scientific research (Pink, 2001, 2007) and which continued into the 2000s.

### ***Visualising Consumer Research***

Within consumer research, use of the visual has increased, although this method has not been uncontested. In the following section I provide an overview of some seminal research utilising visual methods within consumer research and I look at contemporary biases toward the use of visual methods in the field also.

Wallendorf, Belk and Heisley (1988) discuss their use of photography and videography within the wider Consumer Behavior Odyssey Project. Photography was utilised drawing on an

autodriving technique, which Heisley and Levy employed later (discussed next). Videography was used not only as a data collection tool, but also as an output of the research. As they explain: “a manuscript cannot capture the richness of the audio and visual data gathered in this project. Consistent with that rationale, all this paper attempts is an outline of the topics illustrated on the videotape. There are just some things that a paper can't do for a research project. So, see the videotape” (p. 528).

Heisley and Levy (1991) developed an auto-driving technique, building on Collier's (1967) photoelicitation technique. It was designed to give “the informant increased voice and authority in interpreting consumption events” (p. 257). In this method, photographs were taken by the researcher in the participant's home and then these photographs were utilised at a later time to elicit insights from informants. Informants were not involved in the choice of photographs initially taken, nor were they involved in the final selection of photos. However, Heisley and Levy included a form of collaboration between the researcher and participant: “autodriving is a positive step toward achieving the negotiated understanding that contemporary social research emphasises as desirable” (p. 269). Autodriving added credibility to the researchers' own interpretation and understandings of a given situation and allowed the participants to become more active in the interpretation of themselves and their lives.

The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) (Zaltman & Coulter, 1995) expands on Heisley and Levy's photoelicitation technique as a more formal means of conducting advertising research (Coulter, Zaltman & Coulter, 2001). In this method, the participants provide their own visual images (both self-created and externally created photographs and/or pictures). During the semistructured interview these images provide the participants with the opportunity to express more freely their thoughts and feelings on the topic under investigation (Coulter, Zaltman & Coulter, 2001).

In the same year as the ZMET, Schouten and McAlexander (1995) incorporated photography into their ethnographic design. They used photographs to relive the lived experience, but also as a record of “visual symbolism encountered in modes of dress, grooming, motorcycle customization, and other behaviours in the HDSC” (Harley-Davidson-oriented subculture of consumption) (p. 47). They explored the subculture of Harley Davidson riders, and inevitability their own evolutionary shift from “outsiders” to “acceptance” to “passing as bikers”. Photography was implicit in their representation of HDSC.

Peñaloza (2000) used a multimethod ethnographic approach to capture “marketers’ processes of producing cultural meanings at a western stock show and rodeo” (p. 82). In 2001, Peñaloza presented the consumers’ point of view at the same stock show. The method included the use of participant observation, in-depth interviews, photograph records and material analysis. Over 550 photographs were taken of the event over a 6 year period. They were collected to “...maintain visible records of people and activities” (2000, p. 87). The photographs also signalled areas for further research.

Video emerged after photography and film had secured their place in the ethnographer’s toolkit. Collier and Collier (1986) saw the potential of video for field work because of its low-cost in relation to film and the possibilities of extended filming hours. During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century it quickly became a viable method for collecting and capturing participant perspectives, although it is not without controversy. Heisley (2001) explored the current bias and potential future direction of visual research. She identified various barriers to researcher use of the visual including: a) that visual work may be seen as less serious; b) the loss of control can feel uncomfortable or threatening for the researcher; c) a lack of familiarity; d) that the written word seen to be more intellectual than the visual; e) the lack of a peer review process; f) a significant workload (Heisley, 2001). Belk and Kozinets (2005b) also identify the same distinction as Heisley that “it is still true that western society privileges the written word over the visual image or spoken word” (p. 196).

On this note, it is possible to see that although great progress has been made in advancing the use of visual methods within consumer research, there are still attitudes around the visual that need to be altered. Belk and Kozinets (2005b) noted that more specific types of visual research carried additional negative perceptions: “videography is at the margins of the scholarly fields of consumer and marketing research . . . there remains a prejudice toward video. Videography tends to be perceived as being closer to data than theory” (p. 197).

### **Video Diary Method Development**

Video diaries are a tool of ethnography. Outside of marketing, video diaries have been used as the main method for various studies on minority groups. Within marketing, visual methods are beginning to develop as legitimate and significant processes through which to gather data for research projects (Belk & Kozinets, 2005a). However, video diaries have been largely neglected within marketing and have only more recently been adopted as components of multimethod approaches (e.g., youth culture (Helyar, 2007)). Video diaries in particular could be utilized more frequently in consumer research (Brown, Costley, Friend, & Varey, in print) and other areas (Geeson, 2007; Buchwald, Schantz-Laursen, & Delmar, 2009) where their incorporation into consumer projects could assist in providing greater insight into understanding how consumers function, reflect, feel and understand (Brown et al., in print). Within this section, I look at research that has identified video diaries as the main method.

Video diaries are participant-generated video archives (Gibson, 2005), produced to capture researcher-defined activities and events of a participant's life. In addition to capturing visual data, verbal data is also captured contributing to a multisensory experience when reviewing the footage. Video facilitates oratory, a primary method of traditional communication in many Pacific communities, both currently and historically. In previous studies where video diaries were utilised as the main method, researchers gave participants varied times and access to the cameras, anywhere from 1 week (Gibson, 2005) to 2 months (Noyes, 2004; Holliday 2004; Rich, Lamola, Amory, & Schneider, 2000).

Video diaries have been used as the main method of data collection in various research projects outside of marketing. Primarily, research has been on vulnerable groups, e.g., medical patients, school children, disabled patients. Noyes (2004) used video diaries as the main method alongside other qualitative methods to map the learning dispositions of primary school children prior to their transfer to secondary school (p. 193). His use of the method entailed setting up a private "diary room" at the school that the children attended. The six children were able to freely use the room one day a week for seven weeks, with the eventual need for a roster to be developed to ensure all children were able to access the room. The researcher and participants agreed on the content of the diaries which Noyes later acknowledged as "developing into a kind of personal diary, 'written' to videotape" (p. 197).



In addition to Noyes work with video and children there have been more studies developed using this method. Buchwald, Schantz-Laursen, and Delmar (2009) also utilised the video diary method with children. It was as part of a larger project - Millions of Stars - “focused on obtaining knowledge of children’s handling of serious cancer illness in a parent, the aim of which is to ensure the best possible care for the affected families” (p. 13). They undertook the method in a similar manner to Noyes but with the camera kept in their homes for an agreed period of time (for example 1 month). Routine diary entry times were scheduled so that the children would keep to a daily timetable, which they recommended would be suitable for a particular hour of the day (e.g., after dinner). The participants were instructed to record a summary of their day, their thoughts, feelings and reflections. The equipment was returned at the end of the agreed period of time and the tapes were collected at this stage also, for the researcher to review and analyse.

There are many different ways to utilise the video diary method. Holliday’s (2004) development of video diaries focused on using the method as the primary collection tool. This use of video diaries gave participants more freedom during the fieldwork period. The project was focused on capturing identity performance the idea “that individuals make and remake their identities according to the spaces that they occupy” (p. 1597). Holliday conducted an initial interview with each participant, giving them a specific set of guidelines to follow. She then left the camera with them for up to 2 months (p. 1599). Topics for recording included: “the practice of dressing in clothes they normally wore for staying in, going out, or going to work. Diarists were then asked to film themselves in their typical choice of outfit for each setting and to comment on them and what the clothes, hairstyles, jewellery, and other bodily arrangements were designed to portray” (p. 1599). At the end of this period she collected the tapes and talked over the experience with the participant.

The flexibility of the video diary method for participant’s to tell their stories in different ways is significant. Gibson (2005) took the approach of co-producing video diaries with her participants. She used video diaries to create “participant-generated video accounts” (p. 2) with 10 young men who had severe physical impairments. Because of the limited mobility of the participants they were provided with a “small hands-free “bullet” camera that was mounted on a baseball cap and connected to a standard digital video camera placed in a bag and hung from the wheelchair” (p. 2). Gibson undertook an initial semistructured interview and then gave each

participant one week to record a video that “reflected “who he is” and “what life is like”” (p. 2). Subsequently, a final interview was undertaken during which time their created video was viewed and discussed. Gibson identified that throughout the video diary process she and other family members of the participant were involved with guiding, and in some cases co-creating the diary entries. She noted that on occasion she controlled the camera, inadvertently directing the discussion and participant’s focus.

One long-standing use of video has been with the VIA method. Rich, Lamola, Amory, and Schneider (2000) used the video diary method known as, Video Intervention/Prevention Assessment (VIA). Although this particular video method was initially developed in 1994 at Harvard Medical School (Rich, 2004) its current use has developed iteratively (Rich, Lamola, Gordon, & Chalfen, 2000; Rich & Pataschnick, 2002; Rich, Pataschnick, & Chalfen, 2002; Rich, 2004). In this particular study, Rich et al, (2000) studied the variations “between participants’ medical history interviews and the visual narratives” (p. 469) of 20 young people aged between 8 and 25 years; with the instructions to “teach us about your asthma” (Rich, Lamola, Gordon, & Chalfen, 2000, p. 157). Participants were trained in the use of the camera and were asked to record narratives of how they managed their asthma over a 4 to 8 week period. They were provided with a list of video assignments which included “tours of their home and neighbourhood environments, activities of daily living, such as meals, school, and play, interactions with health care providers, and management of their asthma” (Rich et al, 2000, p. 471). Each evening participants were asked to record a personal monologue of their day, including their thoughts, feelings, and observations. A research coordinator met with them weekly to exchange tapes, and discuss any concerns. A final interview was undertaken with each participant.

Within consumer research, Sunderland and Denny (2002, 2007) utilise video diaries in their commercial consumer research practice, Practica Group (<http://www.practicagroup.com>). They have assigned consumers tasks such as “microwave and refrigerator use, the cooking of favorite meals, the life of pickup trucks, channel selection among satellite and digital TV subscribers, skincare routines, and beer drinking” (2002, p. 4). Consultants collect the footage and the collected footage is edited to composite a 30 minute to 1 hour length documentary for the client.

Video diaries provide an opportunity to capture the daily processes of consumption, including; thoughts, feelings, emotions, information about purchases, financial concerns, anything related to consumption, and any acculturative experience that could potentially be relevant. It offers the participants an opportunity to reveal descriptions of their experiences without having to do so with someone else present. This method does not mean that the researcher is absent from the recording process, rather there is the unavoidable inclusion of the researcher when and how the participant chooses. Davies (2008) noted that one of the central tasks of the visual ethnographer is “to contextualise the images, to elaborate on the circumstances in which the recording is made, as well as on the technical improvements in observation” (p. 133). Therefore, this method is not used as a conventional form of transcribing taped interviews, rather, it is included with the intention of capturing the voice and “representing the voices of others” (Denzin, 1997, p. 43).

The video diary method is problematic, however, in that previous researchers using video diaries have not developed an in-depth instructional guide for potential researchers wanting to embark on this method. In an attempt to address this weakness (in the following chapter) I describe a transferable process of the method so that other researchers have instruction on this version of the method and more insight into the challenges and benefits ahead of them. I also address how to overcome the hurdles and provide a general overview of the process that could be utilised for other research topics.

### ***My Reflection***

*Video diaries are not an easy solution to the more difficult task of ethnography; they are an additional tool in the ethnographic tool belt. Having participants capture their own lives - both the mundane and the exceptional - is undoubtedly a fortuitous thing. Not only are we able to view and review footage of situations that participants consider important, but we are also able to understand routines, uncover insights into the behaviours of lives (both spoken and discrete) which we may not otherwise be privy to. We get to experience looking at a portion of their life through their lens. We can also gain additional input into the participant by family reflecting on*

*a recorded event, experience participant epiphanies as they review themselves on camera and seek input from others into their interpretation of a particular event or discussion.*

*Recording the visual through a digital camera offers an alternative route to achieving what many indigenous/feminist/critical researchers are hoping for - that is, a chance to return the power of researching back to our participant/s. It provides participants with the opportunity to take control of their representations and record what they choose. As is debated by some ethnographers – when is it appropriate to pick up the camera? I no longer have to ask. I have already removed myself from that decision. This was not in an effort to remove myself from the research process, far from it. In fact, I found myself more and more in front of the camera, within the gaze of the participant and indeed sharing my life and family with them as much as they were with me.*

### **Friendship as Method**

The concept of friendship and interpersonal relationships in research is not new (Hendry, 1992; Tillmann-Healy, 2006; Staller, Block, & Horner, 2008). Harper (1996) mentions briefly the concepts of friendship, companionship and relationship in his fieldwork on tramps who ride the freight trains in America. Harper expressed the complexities of his relationship with his travel companion:

At first he taught me how to make it on the road and ignored most of my questions. Something changed the chemistry between us and he stepped out of his normal role to tell me about his childhood, his parents and his life before hitting the road. I had learned not to expect such self-revelations, and I think Carl sensed as well that they constituted transgressions of the normal tramp way. . . . When he opened up to me I responded with friendship (category from my life, not his). When he distanced himself I felt rebuffed, and I felt a great loss at the end of our time together. I never really learned to experience the world as a tramp and I knew that unless I moved completely into that life my values would probably remain in the world of relationships and commitments. (Harper, 1996, p. 66)

In the milieu of these fascinating stories, there is little to explain the intricacies of gaining those mutual feelings. The reader is acutely aware of the significance of the various relationships as part of what made up Harper's journey.

Friendship as method is based on various established approaches to qualitative research. Tillmann-Healy (2006) founded her use of the method on the approaches of interpretivism stemming from hermeneutics (interpretation), and *verstehen* (understanding), from phenomenology. She included aspects of feminist thought which "combines interpretivist assumptions with political commitments to consciousness raising, empowerment, and social change." (p. 277). Patricia Hill Collins' Standpoint theory incorporated a focus on power relations much like critical theory. This approach considers "dialogue, relationships, and an ethic of caring that invites expressiveness, emotion, and empathy (Collins, 1991)" (as cited in Tillman-Healy, 2006, p. 277). Aspects of queer methodologies and Michelle Fine's (1994) "working the hyphens" were also part of her friendship method.

### **My Reflection**

*Undertaking to use “friendship as method” was not initially a conscious choice. Although I was acutely aware of my desire to remove the traditional power-imbalance between researcher and participant, I had considered this decision more an extension of the critical ideology and justified my approach to participants as being concerned and aware. During a presentation, midway through my discussion, I was asked about my “big brother” approach to my participants and if I felt I would have had the same results had I not been standing over my participants so much. I realised that what I had been saying was not being conveyed in a manner that truly illustrated the depth of the relationship and how significant each participant became to me. I did not emphasise that my involvement with participants was more about ensuring their wellbeing and retelling their experiences and stories of their lives at their own pace, and under their own direction. Gaining mutual friendship and building up characteristics of friendship based on trust, empathy, respect, and rapport were my ultimate goals and I shared both of myself and my family in order to achieve those outcomes.*

*Although not all participants remained friends with me, over the duration of their involvement, they were the people that I interacted with most in my life. Whether I was present with them, or way from them they were foremost in my consciousness: Are they doing ok? How are they dealing with that issue? How is their study/work going? Did they reveal too much about themselves? What do their family members think? Are they all right after that fight with their partner? What do they think about the way that I’ve interpreted this? My relationship with each participant was my priority and in the instances where I remain in contact and in friendship with participants I attempted to maintain bringing them into my research and my life.*

### **Critical Discourse Analysis and Thematic Analysis**

The analysis of the video diaries and interviews were conducted utilising Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA was complemented with thematic analysis. The choice of CDA stemmed directly from the selection of methodology and methods. Sitz (2008) identifies that discourse analysis inserts "...the discursive level so as to understand how discourses and practices together constitute the "reality" of the social world" (2008, p. 177); later acknowledging that CDA has its foundations in "discursive psychology, ethnomethodology and foucauldian approaches" (p. 181). The focus on discursive analysis also complements the critical theoretical stance that forms the foundations of the research.

CDA offers the opportunity to understand, from participants' experiences, wider social and cultural structures. Context is explicit in the analysis process (Sitz, 2008). As one goal of this research is to seek understanding of the power structures inherent within consumption processes that contribute to immigrant acculturative experience, CDA facilitates and enables not only an *awareness* of societal structures, but also intends to *explain* social interaction and structure (Van Dijk, 2001). The appeal of this analysis is also in its exploration of relationships between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) the wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes intended to understand how such events arise and are shaped by and through the relations of power (Locke, 2004; Sitz, 2008).

CDA is utilised as a tool to interpret the captured, individual experiences of the social context, meaning and assumptions of consumption. Thomas (1993) describes this process of interpretation as *defamiliarizing* ourselves with what we have seen and translating it into something new, expressing this as "a way of distancing ourselves from the taken-for-granted aspect of what we see and allowing us to view what we have seen more critically" (1993, p. 43). Locke sums up CDA as: (1) Viewing human subjectivity as at least in part constructed or inscribed in discourse, and discourse as manifested in the various ways people are and enact the sorts of people they are; (2) viewing reality as textually and intertextually mediated via verbal and nonverbal language systems, and texts as sites for both the inculcation and the contestation of discourses; (3) viewing the systematic analysis and interpretation of texts as potentially revelatory of ways in which discourses consolidate power and colonise human subjects through often covert position calls (Locke, 2004, p. 2).

Sitz recognizes that CDA must consider its interpretations for multiple audiences and must encompass three aspects: (1) a critic of the discourse aiming at discovering inconsistencies, contradictions, paradoxes and dilemma displayed by the discourse; (2) a sociodiagnostic critic seeking demystification of the pervasive, “manipulatory” discursive practices; and (3) a prospective critic associated with an ethic and pragmatic dimension, seeking to interpret the discrepancies and contradictions of the discourse by linking it to other types of discourses (2008, p. 181).

The use of thematic analysis was employed to pull together threads of participant diaries to weave into the larger storylines. The storylines were developed from themes that became apparent in the analysis of participant discourse and undeniably through the visual aspects of the diaries. When discourse displayed elements of contradiction, paradox, dilemma, iteration and/or confluence in the reading and viewing of participant diaries, these were noted and collated in “themes”. Each theme became part of the sub-plots of various storylines, with each storyline reflective of the participant’s journey to New Zealand.



#### 4. CREATING CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC VIDEO DIARIES

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##### Drifting into the Research

Being “in” my research has always been an important focus of mine, both as a researcher and as a Pacific woman. In working with cultural groups that are both a minority and historically sensitive to research, particularly research being done “on” the population, I wanted to interweave myself with not only the text of my thesis, but also throughout the entire process of fieldwork collection and analysis. To begin with, I had a few concerns on my mind. Firstly, I wanted to use a method that was culturally aware and sensitive to the population that I was researching, and secondly I wanted to use a method that would embrace the critical stance and encourage participant reflections and awareness-raising. Finally, I wanted to ensure that whatever method I chose, it would generate enough data to result in a thesis.

I entertained the idea of video diaries when I was considering storytelling and other narrative techniques. I found some interesting studies using video diary collection. Primarily, an article on sexuality performance by Holliday (2004) was the catalyst for my decision to use this method. The depth and candour Holliday gained from her participants using video diaries was remarkable and I was fascinated by the focus on the participants’ voice. During the fieldwork stage in her research, when participants had access to the camera, each participant had centre stage in narrating his or her own lives and exposing aspects of his or her routines that appeared unanticipated by the researcher, and on occasion by the participant. Although my eventual method for diary use diverged away from Holliday’s method, it was successful in varied ways through: capturing participants’ deep insights and multiple opportunities for reflections. Diaries were acknowledged by some participants as a catalyst for personal change.

Much of the difficulty I had after this early processing was in developing a process to undertake this method. There were no prescriptive guides, or “how to” processes that I could rely on. Initially I turned to literature on written diaries, journals and self-recordings (Wheeler & Reis, 1991; Holbrook, 1995; Hogan, 1995; Pauls, 2000; Patterson, 2005; Waddington, 2005); however, I quickly learned that although some issues were the same, and that I needed to structure the method significantly differently. To overcome this problem I began a thorough

search of diary processes and visual methods, ranging from health to the social sciences and also within marketing. I found that there were really no guides showing me how to undertake this method and shape it to my unique project. More concerning was that there were no suggestions for gathering participant knowledge, eliciting deep participant reflections and even knowing how to attract the “right participants” for such a graphic and permanent method. Thus began my journey of developing a workable and successful method for this form of data collection.

Having laid the foundation of what my research was going to do, and how it was going to do it I had to then find specific answers to the questions that I had constructed. There were several factors impacting in my decision to select a method, not the least of which was the priority of the participant being central in the research.

### **Before Entering the Field: trialling the process**

Deciding on video diaries as my chosen method, and knowing that I had a responsibility to my research population, were just the tip of the iceberg. From here I had to establish a guide for recording that could assist participants during their recording. To develop this guide I decided that I should “test” the method and create the necessary process based on my own experiences using video diaries. During 2006 I started trialling the process by keeping my own video diary at home. I gained significant insight into the video diary process by undertaking one myself.

Concurrent with this personal diary, I began a video diary trial with a woman in her 60s. I wanted to find out about the difficulties of filming, technology, the regularity of entries, the quality of entries, and the relevance of participant input. I dropped the camera off with the participant and picked up tapes 1 week later, without additional contact. It was during this time that I realised that I was focusing too much on the safety of the equipment, and the quantity of footage, rather than on the quality of the entry. I kept requesting that the participant keep up with daily entries and sometimes the participant would be starting an entry at midnight, or later. Upon reviewing these recordings, I also found that they were just blow by blow accounts of the day. There was no insight into her life, the lives of her family, nor any kind of reflection that would be useful for the project. This was a steep learning curve.

To encourage further insight by the participant I attempted to provide suggestions of what to film and how to reflect on it. However, I found that the participant was only doing things that I had suggested and was making no attempt at having a communicative relationship with the camera, as I was hoping for. The guidelines of topics to discuss had become a prescriptive list that the participant adhered to as she felt that “research” required a strict formula. The participant also confided in me that she could not understand how what she had to record could be “research”. It was at this point that I knew I needed changes to the way that I supported my video diary participants.

I decided to make multiple changes. I became much more visible in their lives. For example, I made myself available 24/7 for participants to reach me for personal or study related issues. I maintained regular contact through email, texting, personal visits, and telephone calls. I worked at building up a relationship of trust and respect. I relaxed my expectations of daily

entries and instead emphasised recording an event and then reflecting on it afterwards. I suggested following the recommended topics for talking about daily issues and recording events especially during the early weeks of recording. I shaped questions for each participant based directly on their experiences of the previous week's recordings. I avoided worrying about the camera equipment and being concerned about what would happen if participants lost or damaged the camera. I wanted them to feel like the equipment was theirs for the duration of their diaries and encouraged them to capture special events (e.g., family get-togethers, children's sports) that they wanted for their own collection and not as part of the research project.

I learnt that a semistructured script (one that described prompt questions, typical activities that would be advantageous to record) was extremely helpful in prompting participant discussion. However, although this approach was valuable early on in the diary process, it lost its value after the routine of diary entries became ingrained into a daily schedule. I also had a valuable realisation when reading about the Consumer Behaviour Odyssey which made me aware that I needed participants to capture more than the inside of their bedrooms or homes. The Odyssey was an ethnographic study that extended throughout the United States:

Unlike most field studies, this project is not an ethnography of a particular site, other than the broad context of American consumption. Rather than focusing on a particular site or a particular type of product, its focus is on how people describe their consumption and the deep meanings this consumption can have for them. They do not see their consumer behavior as a purchase process, as have many academic and corporate researchers. Instead they see their consumption as a pervasive and sometimes important part of their lives. (Wallendorf, Belk & Heisley, 1988, p. 530)

Similar to the Odyssey Project, I wanted participants to explore their lives and the wider context of their environment, rather than just the inside of their bedroom at home. I hoped that I could be privy to their experiences in such a way that would illuminate my understandings of their acculturation processes as consumers. So, rather than focusing on a particular site of consumption or consumer product, I focused on understanding the broader context of consumption. I needed the camera to be a tool to capture their wider lives and external environment. But I was not sure about how to encourage this activity. This was an epiphany of sorts as I began to understand that a talking head provided only one dimension of a

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

multidimensional opportunity. With a camera I had the opportunity to view consumer interactions between the participants and their family, community, workplace, study, while socialising, relaxing, being happy, purchasing, in conflict, anything that they would take the camera to. There were significant possibilities if participants felt that the camera was theirs. While the process for video diaries still had to evolve during subsequent participant involvement, many of the barriers and rigidity I had as an instructor of this process had diminished.

### **Ethical Approval**

Gaining ethical approval as an academic process was important for the forward momentum of my research and the security of my participants. Ethics approval was received during November 2006 from the Waikato Management School Ethics Committee. I adhered to the *University of Waikato Research Ethics Regulations* and made the cultural needs of the research participants a priority. If there was ever conflict between my critical stance and indigenous methodologies and my research objectives, then I deferred at all times to a culturally sensitive approach.

### ***Consent Process***

Gaining consent from participants for the purpose of capturing and disseminating visual images was an important part of the ethics process. I wanted to be able to use participant images for conferences to both the community and within academia and I needed to use their images for my thesis. I tried to be as transparent as possible about what I would use the final footage for and I wanted to ensure that my participants were comfortable with the images that were going to end up in my care. I wanted to mitigate any concerns that participants may have had about sharing their footage by allowing for multiple opportunities to add to, amend, or omit their recordings and involvement in the research project. Therefore, I developed a two-stage process for consent (Refer to Appendix 1.0: Steps of the Participant Process for Video Diaries) that I would describe to participants alongside the participant information sheet (Appendix 1.1: Participant Information Sheet). Stage One Consent (Appendix 1.2: Participant Stage One Consent Form) was designed to ensure that participants were fully informed of the project and their commitment in the research process. It also confirmed the participant's willingness to be involved in the project, while outlining his or her right to withdraw at any stage.

Stage Two Consent (Appendix 1.3: Participant Stage Two Consent Form) reiterated the researcher's intention to utilise all authorised images, video footage and data in various forums including, the PhD thesis and academic outputs. There was an option for the participant to decline this usage and/or the community output. The second stage consent form was completed weekly to release footage collected for that week. Once the second stage consent form was signed after I had collected tapes, then I began transcribing and analysing footage. Although I

received consent to use participants' real names we have used pseudonyms throughout because of the sometimes sensitive content in their revelations.

### ***Counselling Services***

More than just meeting the academic requirements of the University, I was focused on making a change, or having outcomes for each participant. Realising that this intention could potentially cause conflict in participants' lives, I established protocols for addressing participant needs if they arose and if I could not assist. I located Pacific focused counselling services that would be able to assist my participants if they required support. Where I was unable to assist the participant, or I had extended the boundaries of my knowledge, whether culturally or emotionally, I sought professional advice. This came through counselling services, and cultural advisors. The advice I sought was both for my participants and me. If it was necessary, I would sensitively suggest that they seek (with my support) further assistance. For some of the issues that I came across, participants had previously or were currently receiving professional support.

### ***Cultural Protocol***

Cultural advice and support were an on-going requirement of mine throughout my fieldwork and the PhD. I found that many of the cultural advisors I had established relationships with during the early stages of my thesis were not available later when I needed their advice,

especially during fieldwork. I had to adapt to this situation by acquiring new cultural mentors. I found mentors within academia, through work related colleagues, and in my own family. I was also able to seek advice and specific word translations through some participants and/or their families. This interaction was particularly successful as many were so in-tune with their culture and the customs, always willing to share so



**Figure 6: Dinner with my family and theirs.**

that I could learn more about their culture.

I had made a commitment to learning and utilising cultural values of gift giving, sharing food and giving information or keeping participants informed of my progress. This commitment was important to me as I wanted to go beyond the boundaries of researcher and grow the relationship between each participant and myself. Unfortunately, this part was sometimes extremely difficult as financially it began to become costly over time. However, at every opportunity I would provide lunch, coffee, chocolates, anything that I could. At the end of each participant's time I presented them with a copy of their video diaries on DVD and a token of thanks: a book, flowers, voucher, wine; it varied for each participant. On one occasion I felt so upset at my inability to bring food to a participant's home when I visited that I made a recorded field note that captured my embarrassment and disappointment:

*It was a successful meeting, I had Ella-Rose [my daughter] with me, but I felt bad. I didn't have enough money to bring morning tea so I did feel . . . I did feel bad for not being able to do that. It just felt wrong. But unfortunately there was nothing I could do about that. I'll just bring double the amount next time or something. But for me that was a very foreign sensation because I bring things along to every meeting but I just couldn't do it this particular time. Yeah, just an expensive month I guess. So that's certainly not a feeling I want to repeat. (Charis, Field note 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2008)*

Participants would also invite me into their home to share a meal, coffee, cake, wine or go out for a meal. I intensively critiqued my role in these environments asking myself if I was moving beyond the role of researcher and into friendship. But friendship characteristics and the qualities of trust, respect and empathy were part of how I approached my participants and represented myself. I was not a researcher to them. I was a person, a woman, a mother, a fellow student, and a friend. Therefore, I unashamedly embraced this as part of our growing interaction and relationship, finding that confidence grew and I became privy to life experiences that sometimes they had never shared with anyone else.



### **Video Diary Equipment**

After gaining ethical approval from the University I needed to find funding for equipment. I worked my way through department stores and websites that specialised in camera equipment and found what I thought would best suit my requirements and offer ease of use for participants. I was primarily concerned with removing technological barriers for participants. My academic department had agreed to fund the initial purchase of equipment and in 2006 I also received a substantial grant from Trust Waikato to purchase additional equipment that I required to have more participants 'on the go' recording. Trust Waikato's only requirement was that I hand all equipment over to the University of Waikato upon completion of my research.

Final equipment included: 2 x PANASONIC DVD Video Cameras VDR-D150; 2 x PANASONIC 3CCD Mini DV NV-GS180; 2 x Camera Tripod – Universal; Mini DVDs for recording in cameras (Memorex 8cm DVD-RAM 1.4GB) x 30; DVDs for editing (Imation DVD+RW 4.75GB) x 100; Tapes for Mini DV cameras (TDK Mini DV 60) x 40; Hard cases for Imation DVDs x 100; DVD and case labels x 100; External hard drive storage (Iomega External 300GB Hard Drive); External Sound (Panasonic Microphone RPKV25); Audio digital recording for back-up sound (Olympus DS-2 DVR Notetaker); Participant Photo collection (FUJIFILM FinePix A400 and A500 Zoom Camera); Digital image editing software (Adobe Photoshop Elements 4.0 & Premiere Elements 2.0 – PCCD); Word processing software (Microsoft Office Home and Student 2007); Extra USB ports (USB 1.1 HUB).

Just as Collier and Collier (1987) stated, "Video is in a rapid state of technological development and many statements here may soon be obsolete" (p 221), an observation that remain true today.

### **Identifying Potential Participants**

I came into this research from a pan-Pacific mental health organisation where I experienced and observed firsthand the difficulties of life in New Zealand. What I recognised was that there were similarities in the presenting issues that ignored country of origin. Many of the struggles that Pacific people were experiencing were common to all Pacific groups in New Zealand. Addictive and excessive consumption habits were not unique to one culture or nation; rather, these issues blanketed many Pacific groups. Within these negative behaviours were similarities in the outcomes of the transition that each individual was making, from being part of a whole, to becoming an individual within New Zealand. My justification for undertaking this project with such a diverse group of Pacific nations becomes possible through the similarities of experiences, rather than the complexities of difference within their respective cultures. I do not attempt to homogenise the Pacific experience; rather, I want to understand the broader issues related to Pacific experiences in New Zealand. I decided upon a Pacific population with the intention to prepare for and present the differing views of Pacific people and their own interpretations of who they are, how they see themselves, and their own historical perspectives of their country, emphasising the individual characteristics of each culture as they appeared.

Criteria identified for the participant selection process were intentionally broad to include a diverse array of individual characteristics and experiences. During the ethical approval process, I nominated features of Pacific people that I recognised as important for my research. Although I tried to keep barriers to involvement to a minimum, there were particular criteria that I acknowledge as important:

1. There is diversity of Pacific Island descent, more specifically there would be participant representation from at least four Pacific nations.
2. There is diversity in the length of time since migration to New Zealand (i.e., some have been in New Zealand for many decades, others have migrated more recently).
3. Participants have migrated to New Zealand from a Pacific Island nation.
4. Participants reside currently in New Zealand.
5. Participants have some cultural knowledge, or memory of their traditional heritage.
6. Participants are willing to be involved in the research and share their experiences utilising visual formats.

These criteria were identified as desirable attributes to gain insight into the diversity of the Pacific consumer, especially as this targeted group are from very diverse settings (i.e., different geographic locations, cultural traditions, etiquette, expectations, histories, spirituality, and, economic climates). My presupposition was that the experiences of consumer acculturation and learning how to become a consumer in New Zealand may be influenced by various internal and external circumstances. Although these experiences may be unique to the individual, they are more likely to highlight universal issues and processes through the diversity of stories and experiences. Therefore, I looked to recruit participants from at least four Pacific nations, with an array of ages and durations of stay in New Zealand. Ideally, I intended to have an equal involvement from males and females; however, gender differences were not a focus of this research. Living circumstances were also diverse as there was, intentionally, scope for family involvement and participation in the research process. Finally, I attempted to recruit participants from a variety of sources.

### ***Participant Recruitment***

I used various recruitment techniques. These included “snowballing” (where each of the people I contacted, make contact with their own networks about my project), family and friend referrals, flyer and poster distribution, presentations requesting participants at student/community events, and widespread emailing via community and educational organisations that targeted Pacific people. These organisations included the University of Otago Language Institute, University of Otago Te Tumu Postgrad Students, University of Otago Pacific Islands Centre, University of Waikato Language Institute, University of Waikato Pacific Cultural Groups, Waikato Management School Pacific students, Pacific Peoples’ Addiction Services (no individual/client contact, just community contacts), among others. In addition to these mass emails, I sent out personally addressed emails directed at self-identified Pacific individuals in positions on boards, committees and cultural groups.

Initially, I had been concerned about the time demands on participants. In particular, I had thought that the length of involvement in recording over a 6-8week period would make recruitment very difficult. Certainly for some potential recruits this time commitment was a barrier; however, many were also very eager to join and be part of the video diary process.

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

Fortunately as I had a good response rate, I was able to select participants purposefully. In total there were over 20 potential recruits for the duration of the recruitment period (between late 2006 and early 2008). I discovered that while recruits were initially excited by the idea of recording, some recruits illustrated early on that they were not able or willing to stick with the process of filming. In some cases I would have successful emails and arrange a face-to-face meeting only to have them not show up, or I would meet with them once and arrange a second meeting to hand over equipment and again be left waiting. With some of these recruits, correspondence would dwindle away and others would decline participation after acknowledging that their workload was too significant to take on such a longterm project.

Nine participants were recruited in total during the course of this project. In my proposal I had originally nominated numbers between 5 and 10; however, I had not anticipated the quantity of footage from each participant, or the depth of insight that I would gain from them. During the course of fieldwork I had one trial participant whose footage did become part of the final project, one participant whose camera was stolen during the fourth week of his video diary process, and one participant withdraw after an extended period of time (over 3 months) with the camera, but with no significant progress having been made.

**Figure 7: Participant Details**

	Name	Country	Age at recruitment	Recruitment	Reason for migration	Living circumstances	Migration age
<b>1</b>	Martha	Fiji	64	Personal contact	Marriage to New Zealander	Hamilton, married, 2 children, working	20s (1960s)
<b>2</b>	Mabel	Tonga	47	Personal contact	Marriage to New Zealander	Hamilton, widow, 3 children, working, studying	20's (1980s)
<b>3</b>	Sarah	Samoa	21	Poster & presentation	Education	Dunedin, single, studying, working	Teens (2000s)
<b>4</b>	Joel	Tonga	42	Snowballing	Education	Dunedin, married, 4	11

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

						children, studying, working	(1970s)
<b>5</b>	Jessica	Samoa	21	Emailing	Education	Dunedin, single, studying	19, (2000s)
<b>6</b>	Ruth	Rarotonga	41	Pamphlet/ poster drop	Education and marriage	Dunedin, married, 2 children, studying, working	15-17 (1980s) for high school then again at 40yrs (2000s)
<b>7</b>	Paul	Fiji	21	Emailing	Education	Dunedin, single, studying	14 (2000s)
<b>8</b>	Melanie	Fiji	41	Snowballing	Job	Hamilton, pulled out of study	35-40 (2000s)
<b>9</b>	Natalie	Samoa	31	Snowballing	Job and Education	Hamilton, married, working	15-17 (1990s) moved back to Samoa, migrating again at 30. (2000s)

***Undertaking a ‘Pacific-peoples’ study***

There are various debates on the appropriateness of undertaking research on a homogenised group called “Pacific people”, more commonly known in New Zealand as ‘Pacific Islanders’. I acknowledge that what I have attempted to do is undertake a broad study focused on the experiences of individuals from collective cultures coming to New Zealand, to understand how being involved in a society that prioritises the individual, impacts on their identity, journey and acculturation process. I deliberately chose to look at three to four Pacific Island nations as I felt that there were significant differences between the nations and that these differences could be highlighted throughout the text through the individuals’ experiences. I worked to ensure that I

did not draw broad strokes over the differences and similarities of the cultures; rather, I worked to identify differences and discuss these where relevant within the context of the participant's wider culture.

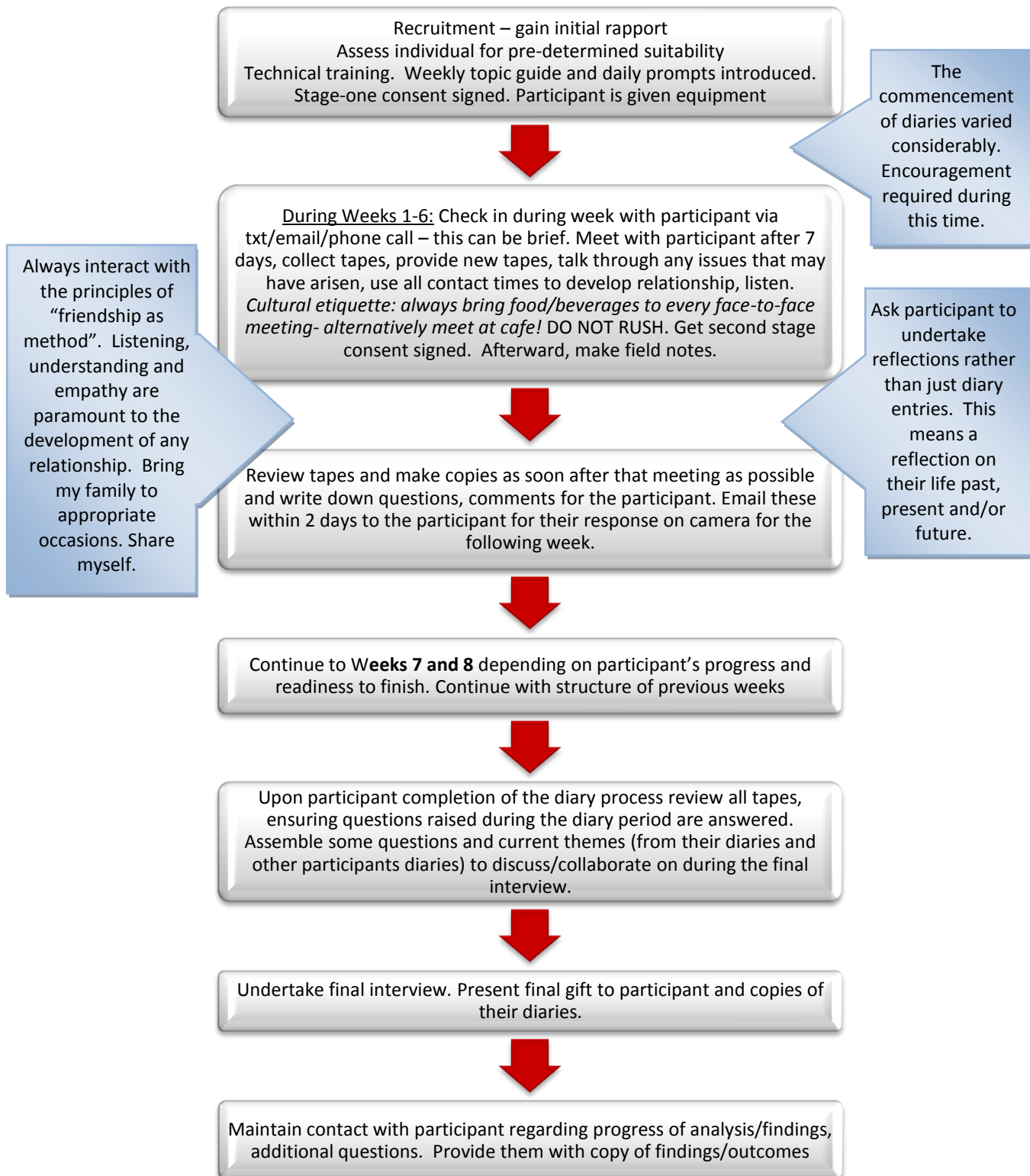
### ***Using Pacific language***

Various Pacific languages (Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Cook Islands Māori, and Māori) have been used throughout the video diaries and text. A glossary has been provided at the beginning of the thesis for easy reference.

### ***Identifying "Pacific People"***

I collected the video diaries of nine participants from four Pacific nations: Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, and the Cook Islands. Most of these participants identify with more than one Pacific nation, for example, Ruth identifies as a Cook Islander but acknowledged that she also had a Samoan father and, therefore, was Samoan also; Sarah was Samoan but had a New Zealand mother; Mabel was Tongan first, but had Niuean heritage and had lived many years in the Cook Islands so she felt drawn to that culture also. Even more interestingly, however, I noticed that when I spoke to some of my participants about what or how they identified themselves, I would usually get a variation or hybrid of cultures: Sarah: half-caste; Mabel: Pacific islander; Ruth: Fruit salad; Jessica: fia-palagi; Martha: New Zealander, which emphasised that many Pacific people felt part of and aligned with other Pacific nations. They favourably acknowledged their diverse heritage as part of who they were, not as a negative, but rather as a matter of fact. Nearly all of the participants recognised that they had mixed identity. However, the country and culture that they most closely identified with and were born in was the nation that they identified that they were from for the purposes of this research.

## Charting the Video Diary Method



**Figure 8: My Video Process**

### **Capturing the Everyday: How did I use video diaries?**

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The way that I adapted video diaries for use with Pacific participants closely followed my intention to keep myself as the researcher “written into the text”. I had read about the use of this method with other minority groups (primary school children, asthma patients, homosexuals, physically impaired male patients) and felt that the adaptation of video diaries, tailored to the sensitivities of my group, would aid in gaining the depth of insight that I knew I needed to achieve participant buy-in and the possibility of emancipation. This section details my use of video diaries. In its final metamorphosis there were three stages for my video diary process. These stages and the timelines for undertaking my version of video diaries are charted in Figure 8: My Video Process, and described further.



### **Stage One: Recruitment and initial interview**

Stage one was recruitment. Initial assessments were undertaken during the first meeting. Participants were asked if they were able and prepared to commit to at least 6 weeks of video recording. I ran through a description of the overall PhD project, the participant information sheet (Appendix 1.1), both stage one (Appendix 1.2) and stage two (Appendix 1.3) consent forms, daily prompts in the video diary participant guide (Appendix 1.4), and the weekly topic suggestions (Appendix 1.5). The daily prompts were intended to encourage participants, especially at the start of the diary process, and to assist the participant in thinking about what to talk about and how to start. Prompts included: your wants and needs; your family's wants and needs; achievements; challenges; upcoming events; remembering how things were in your past.

In addition to the daily prompts I took on Rich and Patashnick's (2002) suggestion that video participants often need topic prompts to assist in the documentation of information relating to the phenomena being studied. To assist participants in staying on track, weekly topics were provided. The participant could choose to undertake themed discussion during each week for video diaries, including capturing common daily activities. Weekly topics were also to encourage participant regularity of recording, keep them on topic and avoid procrastination. They included describing changes in your life and that of your families post migration; interviews of family members; recording a lunch; identification of prized possessions; recording a church service, or other event.

It was also during this meeting that I probed into the participants' lives to ascertain their willingness to share and considered how I could encourage this further. Finally, after gaining the required consent I would provide the participant with the camera equipment - show them how to use it, and arrange a meeting for the following week.

### **Stage Two: Doing ethnography and making video diaries**

As the main data collection stage, stage two was the longest and most meticulous. During this stage, participants could choose what they wanted to share on film but were guided quite closely by me during the first 1-2 weeks. Traditionally in solicited written diary methods, the collection period of participants entries is around 7-14 days (Pauls, 2000; Patterson, 2005). For video diary collection, some video diary researchers have maintained shorter timeframes (e.g., Gibson, 2005); however, this period has been extended by many researchers to a 1-2 month period (e.g. Holliday, 2004; Rich & Pataschnick, 2002), providing the participants with more time to reflect on their experiences. I decided to go with a longer timeframe to allow for more engagement with the participant.

A single video diary entry ranged from 2 minutes to over an hour in length. This depended greatly on the content of the participants' entry and how frequently (or infrequently) they had undertaken their diary entries. Participants varied greatly in how much they shared and how personal their entries were. Content varied from discussing the mundane, i.e., household chores, to in-depth personal reflections that participants may have mulling over for many years prior to my contact with them. Diaries gave them the outlet to be able to evaluate and assess their lives.

Building a level of rapport and trust with the participant during this stage played a significant part in terms of the depth and insight each participant was willing to both try to give me and trust me with. This stage was a very difficult period and, upon reflection of my time with each participant, I could see the moments of trust weaving in and out of each relationship. Although I worked hard to maintain contact and a balanced communication of both personal and study related issues, I was still aware that I could sometimes end up chasing participants for meetings, weekly tapes and even ending their involvement (i.e., past the 8 week timeframe; others wanting to start recording; no progress being made). This involvement obviously had some level of strain on the relationship but was a necessary and unavoidable part of my continuing progress.

### ***Fieldwork Regions***

Most fieldwork was completed during the period December 2006 – March 2008. Any fieldwork outside of this period consisted of final interviews. Video diaries were undertaken in

two major cities in New Zealand. The first of these, Hamilton is located in the North Island of New Zealand. The second city is Dunedin, situated in the South Island of New Zealand. I intentionally located my research outside of Auckland, the major city of New Zealand and home to the largest pan-Pacific population in the world. Because I wanted to understand experiences of Pacific people who have had to adapt to New Zealand society, isolated from their wider culture. Auckland has many areas that mirror the Pacific in their visibility of Pacific communities and in the extended families that live there. However, all but two of my participants had lived in Auckland for at least some of their time in New Zealand. They noted that Pacific people in Auckland had changed and stated that their reflections had become clearer to them as they stepped away from Auckland. Participants described being able to watch the changing nature of, or, the absence of, cultural protocol, obligation and custom in their family members who lived in Auckland.

Whilst undertaking video diaries I needed continual access to and contact with my participants. To have this I ensured that while they were in the process of creating their video diaries I would live in the same city and that I would make contact at least once a week. There was only one participant who had a camera when I was not living close. However, I maintained regular phone and email contact and visited frequently when I was in the city.



### ***Regular Contact***

Over the course of the 6-8 weeks, there were regular weekly/bi-weekly meetings with each participant to gauge his or her progress, change tapes, and run through any concerns, comments or queries that participants may have had. Regular contact with participants, and on occasion their families, increased their trust in the recording process and gave them additional

motivation to complete the entries. Contact times became a point for me to bond with the participants and develop a more intimate understanding of their wider life and personal goals. On many occasions the video diaries were not discussed. I encouraged the participants to talk about things that were on their mind, issues that they may have had with children, relatives, or friends, anything that they wanted. It was not until later in the fieldwork process that I began to appreciate the significance of this time for the participant and also for me. These meetings could take from 10 minutes to 5 hours depending on the issues raised and the development of the relationship.

At the conclusion of the weekly/bi-weekly meetings, I would review the newly acquired diaries and respond to the participant regarding any questions, comments or further issues that I may have had. The content of diary entries varied considerably from cultural events captured to mark the significance of their country (e.g., Samoan Independence Day Celebrations), to sports days, weddings, family BBQs, supermarket shopping, present purchasing, or just lounging around with friends at home. Most participants worked towards recording at least one diary entry every day. However, with busy lives, participants were rarely able to achieve this regularity. Rather than stressing over this, as I had done during the trial participant phase, I asked if participants could summarise any days they had missed. Alternatively, if they had been unable to reflect on a particular event, I asked if they could return to this topic and reflect on it later. Often this approach would result in multiple reflections of an event and provide rich and in-depth insight into how a participant thought and experienced an event. This wide diversity in each participant's interpretation of the guidelines I had given them on day one appeared to be one of the greatest benefits of video diaries. Each participant illustrated unique initiative in translating his or her life to camera.

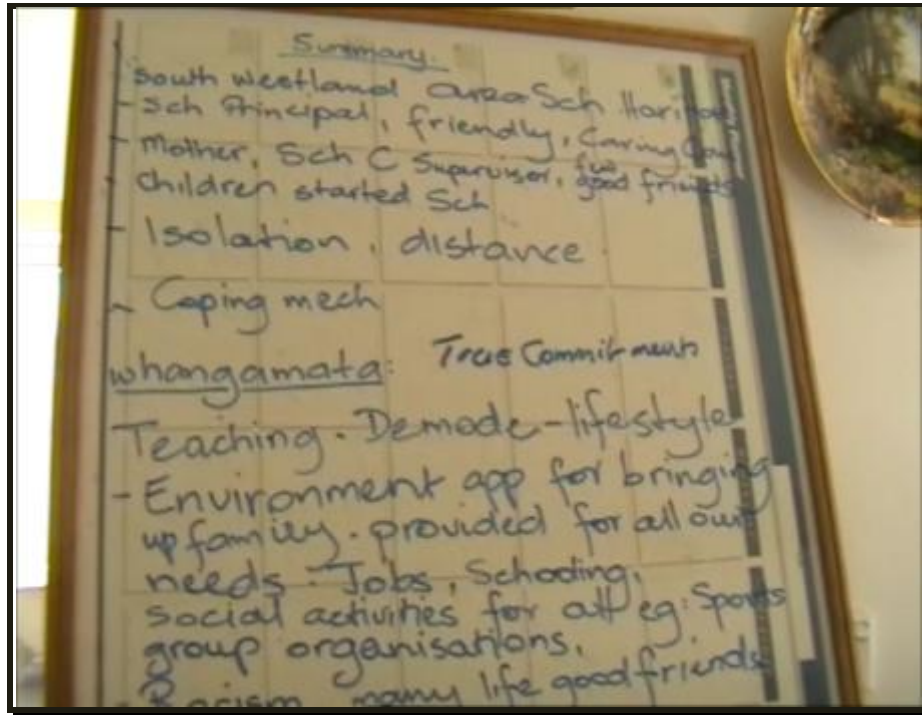


Figure 9: Some participants were more prepared than others.  
White-boarding a lifetime for video diaries (Mabel)

The fieldwork stage was continually refined to better enhance the experience for the participants and engage them in order to make meaningful reflections. This was a time for flexibility. In the case of one participant, the camera remained with her for over 8 weeks. Her diaries had become marked with life changing reflections and epiphanies that had surpassed even my own optimistic expectations. This medium had allowed her to look inwards and her naturally intuitive personality had equipped her with the skills necessary to critique parts of her life. While I knew that I had to move forward with other participants, I felt a much bigger need to remain in the life of this person rather than chase a timeline. I decided to leave the camera with her and see if she would move to her own conclusion. This conclusion came after 1 year with the camera and even though her entries were sporadic during that extension, she was still resolving issues that were raised during the course of her involvement. Flexibility for her to tell her story and in her own time was paramount in this situation.

At the conclusion of each personal contact time, I either wrote a brief note to myself or more often would record a brief summary of the meeting on to dictaphone. The field notes compiled became a great resource for writing up. I realised that many of the small components of meeting with participants and the building of trust and relationships were marked by little

steps in the revelation of experiences and feelings. These intimacies during personal contact times were extremely significant in the development of the relationship.

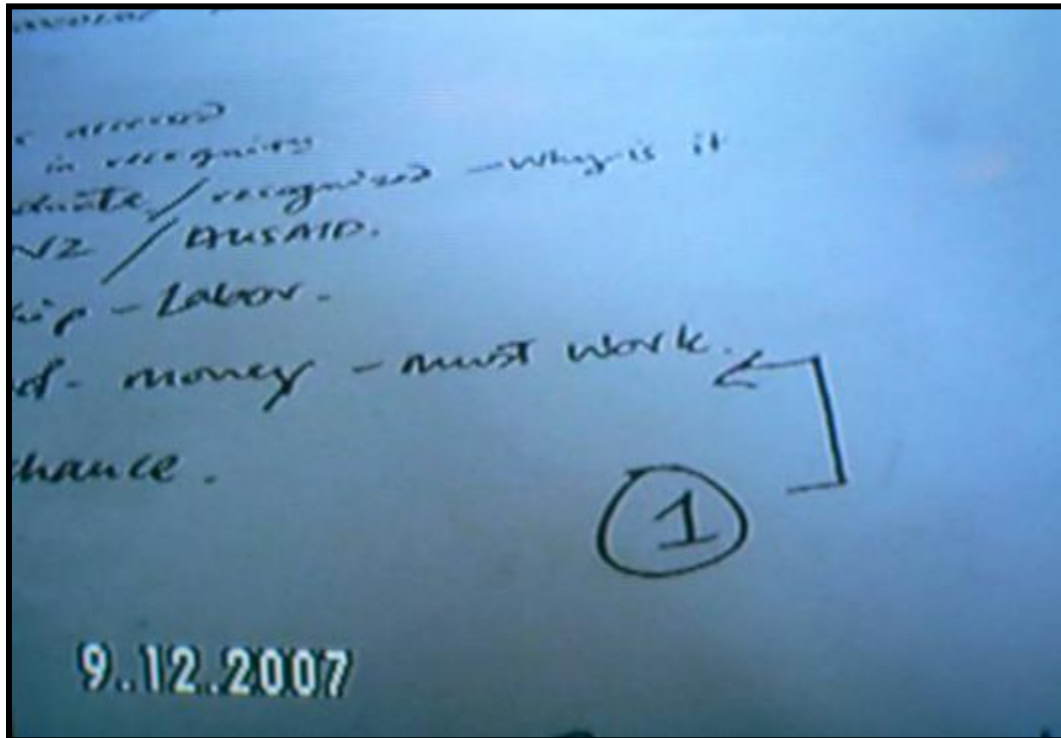


Figure 10: Script for diaries (Natalie)

### ***My Reflection***

*I had already become aware of the negative effects of oppressive structures, particularly harmful consumption (excessive, compulsive, and addictive) on Pacific people during their move to New Zealand. But in taking a critical stance I sought to gain deeper understanding into why these were recurring issues, and, into how individuals could change the outcomes of their involvement in these structures. For example, to encourage participants to understand their migration to New Zealand and the impact of that on them, I requested that every diary entry be a reflection. Reflections could be on the day, on the past, on the present, on themselves, on their family. These reflections probed hidden memories of the past triggering insights driven by participants and became the catalyst for future change and undeniably, in some cases, their own emancipation. Only when participants pulled at the threads of connection and experienced “epiphanies” at their own pace did I begin to discuss with them the implications of their insight. On the occasions where I had already reached my own conclusions on their issues, I would refrain from discussing my opinions. Instead I looked to draw out a participant’s own understanding of his or her life. As they were emerging from their oppressive structure I too was learning to shake off the shackles of the traditional rigid researcher and become invested in the well-being of the individual. I was experiencing my own emancipation.*

### ***Dealing with procrastination***

There were two main barriers to keeping participants recording. The first of these was getting participants to start recording and the second was keeping participants motivated. Predominantly, participants were consistent with making progress. However, I would continually encourage movement forward if a participant’s entries were dwindling. Getting participants to start recording was sometimes a slow process. Therefore, I would allow for a “buffer” period so that they had time to ease into the recording process. Doing the first entry usually resulted in “breaking the ice” and starting the diary process going. However, this was not always the case. One of the final participants struggled immensely and put up barriers to recording. Even though I had tried on many occasions to encourage her involvement over a 3 month period, I reached a point where I realised that she was not interested in being involved at all. My recorded reflections illustrate my futile attempts to move forward:

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

*It's the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2008. Friday. I had a meeting today with Melanie, one of my final participants. I've been struggling since December to actually get her to do diaries, start her diaries, but she's been putting up a lot of barriers to starting. And I've tried to work her through this with encouraging emails and supplying questions which are quite specific, almost like I was sitting there with her prompting her. I find it really hard to get her started but she had finished a tape and I was going to collect that today. I had an appointment with her at 8.30[am] today, this morning, but to my disappointment when I got there, of course, she didn't have the tape and wasn't organised and there were more excuses and I felt myself getting quite annoyed, but these are busy times I guess. So I just have to be patient, but it's just been, she signed up on December the 5<sup>th</sup> 2007 and it's now February the 15<sup>th</sup> [2008] so we're looking at nearly three months of absolutely nothing. So that's quite disheartening. But what can be done about it? I mean I can't be rude. So that was disappointing. I just spent \$10 on morning tea for her whole office' cause she was at work. But I have arranged to meet with her at Frankton markets so I'm gonna go there and collect the tape that she has completed and then this week after I review it, I'll try and do that Sunday night, I'm going to email her immediately questions so that she can get moving on them and also remind her of the weekly topics so that she can use those for inspiration to start filming. I'm really interested to see what she's done and how she's progressed with everything, but, like I said, it has been quite disheartening, just the lack of progress, continually. (Charis, Field note 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2008)*

When I met her at the markets later that week I did pick up the tape. Unfortunately the tape had only one brief recording of her daughter's church performance from December lasting only a few minutes. There were no further entries. I picked up the camera from her on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2008, with no further involvement from her.



### **Stage Three: Final interview**

The final stage of the process involved two phases. First, I would review collected participant footage and note and draw out any themes present in the diaries. This process was difficult with the first participants as I had less insight into the bigger picture. Secondly, I would undertake a final semistructured interview with participants to collaborate on themes, ask any additional questions, and clarify issues that I had confusion with. This meeting was in many cases the last time I would have the opportunity to see my participant in person.

The interview was arranged at a time that was most suitable for the participant. I attempted to hold the interview in an environment that was comfortable and where I was able to provide refreshments. Predominantly interviews were held in the participant's home or my own home and lasted anywhere from 1 to 3 hours. On the occasions when it was not possible to be in our home, I arranged private study rooms within the library at Waikato or Otago universities or within the participant's office at their place of employment. I used both a video camera on a tripod and a dictaphone to record the interview. During this time I asked participants questions that I may have noted on the final review of their collective tapes, invited them to add to the dialogue of their diaries, and talked about ideas that were common amongst the diaries. Themes like survival and sacrifice were coming through early on as significant emotions in their experiences. At the end of the final interview, participants were provided with a copy of all of their video diaries and given a gift as a token of thanks for their involvement in this project.

### ***My Reflection***

*Initially I had not wanted to transcribe the video diaries. I had hoped that the research would be able to be presented in a documentary style film. I felt, however, that much of the content of participant's lives that was shared with me had moved past the point of being able to be shared with an audience that I did not know and the showing of lasting images that they may not want in the permanence of the public sphere. I found that working through footage can be an extremely slow process and I realised that I needed to have their words on paper so that I could grow more familiar with their words and their experiences. Transcribing allowed me to relive their experiences intimately and I was so familiar with their diaries that I could recall experiences relevant to my project whenever I needed to.*

### **Finding Consumer Acculturation**

The knowledge gathered from participants in this research was achieved through video diaries and in-depth interviews. I understood that I would find aspects of consumption and adaptation to New Zealand society within the everyday experiences of participants. However, I was not sure exactly what this would look like. In looking at aspects of consumer acculturation, I needed to take a step back and look at the wider picture. With little research undertaken on Pacific consumers in New Zealand, I was not sure where sites of acculturation would occur. So rather than limiting participants to consumption venues, (like a marketplace), or specific activities (like cultural events), I broadened their opportunities for capturing consumption in the everyday.

Capturing everyday experiences of consumption provided the opportunity for revealing hidden processes of consumer acculturation and the power implicit within the consumer lifestyle. In this manner I was able to view sites of consumer acculturation occurring within the home; within social activities; within cultural events; social occasions; and people and relationships. What I found was that participants were acculturating as consumers not as one easy to segment strategy, i.e., solely through integration or assimilation, but through an interweaving of strategies. Being able to capture a broad array of consumption practices was advantageous in learning more about the Pacific consumer experience. I began to observe the hegemony present in the burden of consumption as a means to becoming part of the new country and culture whilst still maintaining links to the past.

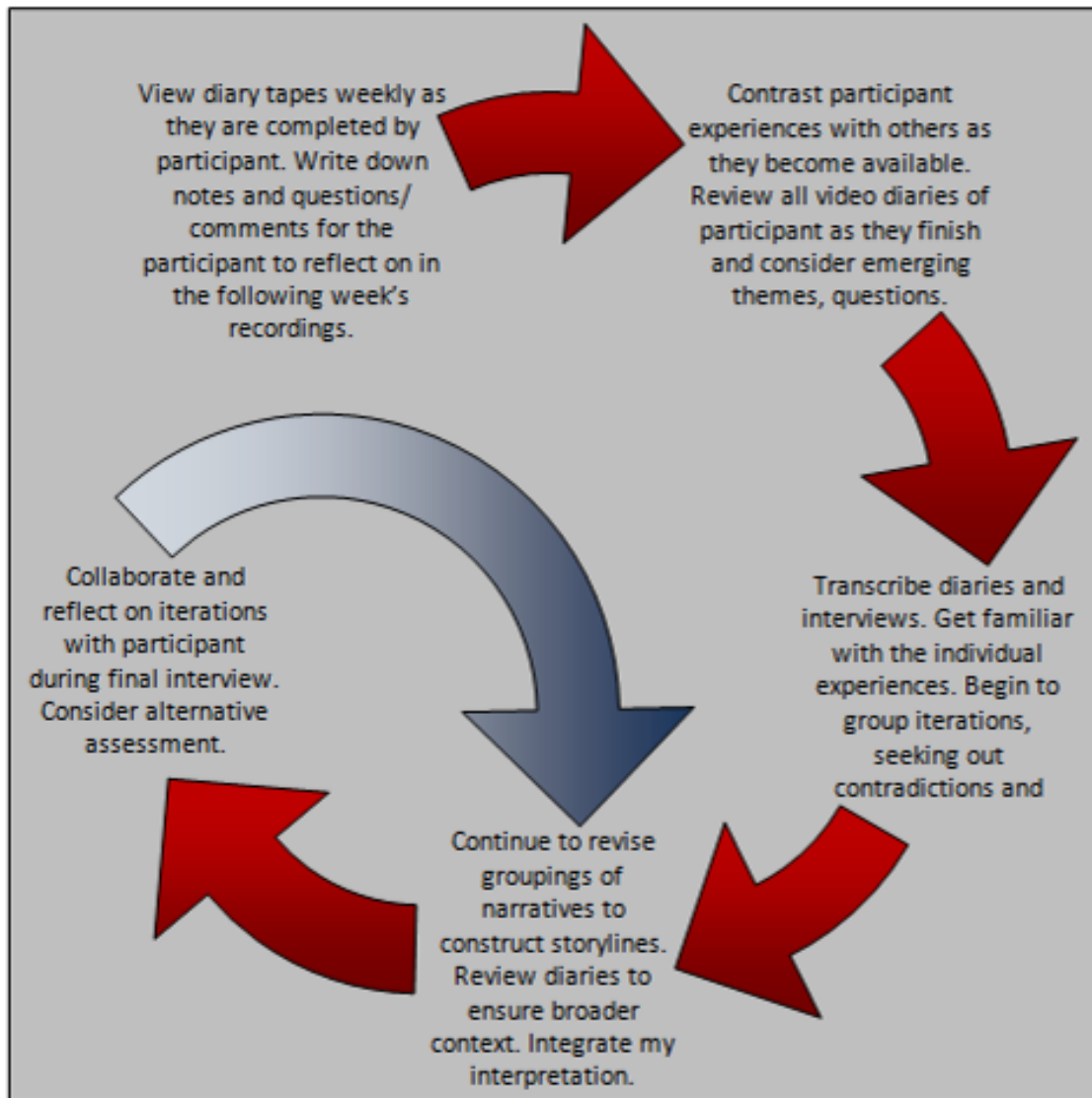
### ***Seeking Meanings***

Finding meaning and insight within participant diaries was a journey. Initially it was difficult to ascertain patterns and structures within the diaries. However, I found that the more I became acquainted with the diaries, the more I could quickly reference a scene in my mind from completed diaries and use those insights as the start of a collection or group of narratives. I realised early on that I had multiple layers of experience to decipher. Primarily, I was hoping to see manifestations of consumer acculturation - ways in which each individual was adapting to, rejecting, adopting New Zealand culture through their consumption experiences. Secondly, I was seeking to reify hegemonic discourse within the diaries. Although these were not mutually

exclusive categories, it was necessary to view the diaries and interviews and read the transcripts, developing a familiarisation with the each participant's experiences and manifestations of consumer acculturation. Existing literature identified various manifestations of consumer acculturation expressed through changes in behavioural patterns e.g., in ways of speaking, dressing, or eating; cultural identity and expression of this (Berry, 2003); acculturative stress (i.e. uncertainty, anxiousness, depression) (Oh, Koeske, & Sales, 2002; Berry, 2003) which can happen internally to the individual (psychological) or the sociocultural (e.g., in competence in the activities of daily intercultural living) (Peñaloza, 1989; Berry, 2003); as social constraints on behaviour (e.g., norms, opportunities, discrimination) (Berry, 2003; Oh et al., 2002); as active/passive copers (Berry, 2003, p. 32; Jun et al., 1993) of change and adaptation throughout the consumer acculturative process. These manifestations were what I started looking for in the diaries.

### Analysis to Interpretation

**Figure 11: Charting the Analysis through to Interpretation**



Analysis began with a search for repetition within the transcripts. Continual reflection on the gathered knowledge was undertaken. This reflection was focused on searching for images and metaphors that reoriented the familiar and framed both the consumer and consumption in a new light (Thomas, 1993). I began to see contradictions within participants' experiences as I rendered stories down to passages of their life. These passages were tentatively grouped into "themes" so they could be discussed with participants during the final interview. With their input I was steered away from, or was directed to, alternative insights and perspectives on the gathered themes. Through this collaborative search for meaning five storylines were developed

that focused on the experiences of Pacific people around the following: premigration expectations; expectations and the reality of family in New Zealand; becoming an individual; focusing on consumption; and, maintaining culture through obligation. The individual passages became parts of a whole in the storylines and then later they provided an insight into the bigger picture of consumption meaning.

The process of analysis (Figure 11) started from the moment that I picked up the first week's diary recordings from each participant. I was framing their experiences in relation to other diaries, collected literature and contemporary social concerns. This was a tentative period where I was attempting to build up awareness of iterations, contradictions, anomalies, and remove my own biases. I was also working closely with each individual to seek out his or her reflections and understandings of a given event or attitude that he or she may have had. My interpretation of their diaries, although churning alongside the analysis, was evolving with participant insight and opinion. Their interpretation was a regular component of my weekly feedback and communication with them. My interpretation, therefore, does not stand alone. It is shaped by participants and their families/friends who also offer their insight into events both on and off camera.

Collaboration or partnership in the analysis and interpretation stages was on-going. Participants were analysing their own experiences both within meetings and during diary entries. Sometimes they were with others, sometimes they were by themselves. Each situation provided different ways of sharing or reflecting, particularly if they included family or friends' reflections. Participants would explain or interpret their recordings and could ultimately change their perception of a given event depending on how in-depth their introspection became. Simultaneously, I would become involved in the process of review and ask additional questions around topics. These additional questions were typically a source of a complete diary entry that wandered in and out of my questions, to new areas of understanding and providing new areas for questions. This multilayered analysis enhanced participants' and my own insight into participants' lives and brought about a new level of integrity.

To highlight the input of participants to this research, I have presented all participant words in italics. In this manner, the reader is clear whose voice is presented (even when I am interpreting their words). The representation of participant voice, as differentiated from my own

words is aligned to my methodological stance of being “critical”. I am attempting to balance the written component of my thesis and am acknowledging when I am taking participant shared knowledge and inputting my own personal interpretation on it. Participant texts (stories and passages) have been edited, where necessary, to improve readability (e.g., removal of repetition, or superfluous transitional words), but nothing that altered the original context of their narration was removed or changed.

### ***In Conclusion***

Video diaries provide an opportunity to capture the daily processes of consumption. It offered participants an opportunity to reveal descriptions of their experiences at their own pace and under their own direction. At times, video diaries were emotionally draining, particularly when I was given a family secret, or learnt hurtful experiences that my participants or their family members had encountered. But this was always a rewarding process, especially when I realised that a participant had changed, or was left seeing something in a different way or from a different perspective. In the process, I noticed that I too had changed. I was looking more into my own experiences and reflecting on situations in my own life that would have previously passed without much thought. I could see the insight I was asking my participants to share was also what I was finding myself sharing with them.



**Figure 12: Sharing my family and myself with my friend and participant (Charis)**

## 5. MEETING THE PARTICIPANTS

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All participants had unique journeys to New Zealand. However, there were similarities in many of the motivations for their travel to New Zealand. Most participants migrated to New Zealand to better their education or working opportunities. Rarely was the decision to move to New Zealand made in isolation and opposition from their wider family. Family was a significant driver in each of the journeys to New Zealand. For each of the participants in this study, New Zealand came to mean something. The following passages are these meanings of New Zealand, the promise of what it could be and the hopes that many held in anticipation of arrival. In introducing my participants I looked to share what New Zealand means to them.

## Cook Islands

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*Ruth*



**Figure 12: Reminds me of home (Ruth)**

*I'm from the Cook Islands and Samoa, and my husband's from Papua New Guinea so that makes our two children Pacific Islanders. We've been in New Zealand since December 2006. We immigrated here from Papua New Guinea because my husband is a student now at the University of Otago. I think long term according to our plans we would like to actually keep a house in New Zealand for me and the kids because it's a bit dangerous living in Port Moresby and raising children there and just living there as a woman. So yeah, New Zealand's the place to be for us right now and into the future I guess. Which is funny cause I'm a New Zealand citizen, and I've never really lived here. All Cook Islanders are New Zealand citizens, but I've spent most of my life in the Cook Islands in any event.*



## Fiji Islands

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*Martha*



**Figure 13: Better in New Zealand (Martha)**

*I'd like to see my eldest brother who's the only surviving brother. He's 84 and his wife is not well at all. I think she's one year older than he. ...I've got only one brother left and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 sisters. There's still 5 of us left and there's 2 of us in New Zealand. Two sisters and the rest are in Australia. None in Fiji. There were 11 of us in the family and here only 6 of us still alive so and I'm the youngest. ... I'm just so grateful for the medical care that we have in this country because from Fiji where I come from, my brother, one of my brothers had diabetes and he went blind and his body just wasted away he was put in a rest home and his yes he had a terrible time with diabetes. I'm so grateful to God that I still have my husband and [the] medical system has helped him tremendously in New Zealand.*

*Paul*



**Figure 14: Good food! (Paul)**

*[It] was a bit of a culture shock to me at first because being at boarding school in Fiji and being at boarding school at Wesley college (Auckland, NZ), which was also another boarding school, was quite different and just big changes in my life coming in from Fiji . . . . Boarding school in Fiji, we had to do everything ourselves, wash clothes, do dishes, do duties. It was pretty strict. We studied till late, woke up pretty early and studied some more. Duties, we would probably do duties everyday in the afternoon and the weekends. In comparison to Wesley College, we wouldn't even do any duties. And after school and in the weekends all we did was play rugby and that was about it. The rest of the day was up to you want you wanted to do. ...coming down to New Zealand [I experienced] ... a whole new dimension of rugby. Also...being introduced to rugby has kind of influenced my life quite a bit and has played a major part ...probably the only thing on my mind was rugby. Just rugby and just, cause we have this belief in Fiji I guess that New Zealand is like the rugby capital of the world. So when you're coming here everything's just rugby, rugby, rugby, but then when you're here, your eyes just open up and you see.*

Samoa

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*Sarah*



**Figure 15: Looking after my brother (Sarah)**

*. . . I moved to New Zealand mainly because I made a promise to my grandparents. . . . my mum left home when she was so young and she had me when she was young, she never really got to do university or anything like that and so my grandparents have always sort of done things for me sort of as a way of sort of, you know they weren't able to do it for my mother so they've done it for me. So they actually wanted me to move to New Zealand in third form but I didn't feel ready to leave home and leave my parents. . . . I promised them after I graduate in sixth form because we graduate in sixth form I promised them that I would move to New Zealand and when it sort of came to push and shove and I graduated in sixth form I didn't really have a choice. I mean it's not like I didn't want to move but it was kind of an obligation.*

*Natalie*



**Figure 16: Church is so important (Natalie)**

*Since we've been here it has been you know you gotta know the right things to do for you to be able to save money. But then at the same time you have to be able to provide for your families in the islands. When there's a funeral you gotta send money . . . especially when it's someone that is close to your family . . . but then for me there's heaps of church things that always happens, so you know every now and then we get to send, I think we've sent more than \$5,000 already since we've been here. Yeah because we had to you know its... our parents have been kind to raise us, to raise us up and we are here because of them, we know so much because of them so it's time that we give back and I think that's what's happening to all the people here. There here for one reason and one reason only and that's to be able to help families back in Samoa.*

*Jessica*



**Figure 17: Otago's pretty flash! (Jessica)**

*I didn't really have any problem with moving to New Zealand for studies, because I was raised up in a contemporary environment. So yeah I had my cultures there but I was also raised up in the era of increased technology and fast changes. So when I got to New Zealand I kind of settle in and blend in well. And the reason why I came to Otago was because when the people from here in Otago came to Samoa to promote Otago I changed my mind because my first choice was Victoria university, but I changed my mind when I saw the library. I saw the glass library I was like, oh wow that's pretty flash and so I came down here. But I never wanted to go to Auckland University the reason being is that I don't really like being around a lot of Samoan people in an overseas place. Like different from Samoa. And especially the people in Auckland generally, . . . this is a generalization, but the people in Auckland, they're more vulnerable to criticisms and what people may think of them so, and besides, there's always something that's gonna happen in Auckland relating to a person that I know or a family member and so there's too much distraction up in Auckland so I decided to come down here.*



## Tonga

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### *Mabel*



**Figure 18:**New Zealand has always felt like home (Mabel)

*We came to New Zealand and since then started to live a new life; it was a new journey for me having to move into New Zealand. However I felt quite comfortable and secure because I know my husband was really loving me and looking after me. In 1980 that's when we started family and during those time[s] I had [a] difficult time because my parents were still very much trying to influence my life to maintain and sustain the Tongan culture in me. However I came to the awareness that I realized that it was not going to be very healthy in my relationship with my husband, so I had, I had to make a decision to choose between my family and my husband in order to save my marriage. So that's what I did.*

*Joel*



**Figure 19: We were young (Joel)**

*. . . me and my brother were sent here when we were young. We were, I think my brother was here when he was 11 or 12 and I was here at about the same time so my parents were kind of like, they made a lot of sacrifices that even though they didn't want us to come to New Zealand they wanted us to come for a better education and they were willing to support us and send us away . . .*

*. . . getting sent from the islands to come here to study at a young age I know for a fact I mean, it wasn't a good experience but for me I thank my parents for more like getting me to experience that cause if I didn't then I wouldn't appreciate things how I appreciate them now. So I guess it's, yeah, it was a good experience for me when I think about it, it make me a stronger person. It make[s] me a better person for those experiences. I think it more than anything it really ground me so, so I guess that's a plus and positive for staying, for having those bad experiences.*

## 6. STRUCTURING STORYLINES

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When I started analysis of the video diaries, I was overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of words, visual images, emotions, background noise, multiple conversations, tacit knowledge, and the saturation of participants' lives. Again, as I start to write, I am overwhelmed by the complexities of dialogue, the intertwining of languages and concepts, and of the overlapping constructs of life that cannot be teased apart. On what now feels like my hundredth rewrite, I explain my journey as how and why I represent participant passages in storylines.

Participants' individual stories of their everyday life experiences have been structured into storylines to tell a bigger collective story (i.e., storyline) of their acculturation process into NZ society. These collective storylines report the similarities of the unique experiences and issues of these nine participants. I use the participants' "passages" from their stories to support the constructed storylines. Each individual's journey (both these participants and others Pacific migrants to NZ) is unique with its own idiosyncrasies. As such, these collective storylines should not be viewed as a homogenised, unified "Pacific" experience.

I start each storyline with a poem or quote that I collected over the past 4 years from other Pacific individuals' acculturation experiences. (The authors did not participate in this study). These poems and quotes illustrate the differences as well as similarities in other Pacific individuals' acculturation experiences to those of the participants in this study. These poems and quotes also served as added insight into my own understandings of being an immigrant to New Zealand.

To assist with the structure of this section I have divided collective participant experiences into two main parts. Part One (storyline one) is about premigration expectations and Part Two (storylines two to five) considers the postmigration conflict that occurred (in the table below). The themes in each storyline are discussed at the end of each storyline. They have been drawn from the process of understanding participant voices, listening to their experiences and becoming familiar with their "state of being". These themes are drawn from the journey of the individual consumer. The storylines and themes are as follows:



**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

Storyline	Themes	Reason
<b>PART ONE</b>		
<b>Expectations</b>	Expectations of New Zealand	Participants expressed a desire to meet the needs of their family as well as having a better life in New Zealand. Having access to more became a large part of their expectations.
	Expectations of family	There was a consensus that moving to New Zealand would be like moving to a second home, especially when there was already family in New Zealand. These expectations were hardest to fulfil.
<b>PART TWO</b>		
<b>Loss of Collective</b>	Loss of the collective	Losing the collective and the feeling of being part of a bigger group occurred quite early on in their migration. It was usually one of the first signals that life in New Zealand was not the same as back in the islands.
	Survival	Participants had to adapt to changes and talked about this as a means of surviving in New Zealand. Particularly during the initial stages of arriving in New Zealand, participants had to find techniques of surviving in such an isolating environment.
<b>Becoming an Individual</b>	Becoming an individual	Participants realised that they had to become more “individual”. This was out of choice for some but for others was out of necessity. It was a big part of the process.
	Independence/Freedom	Gaining independence was a side effect of having less

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

		family in New Zealand. It meant that participants were freed up to do more things that they wanted and less of what that was mandatory back home (e.g., church attendance). Participants were able to do things like drink more, attend church less, and spend their own money how they chose to. Participants also talked about it being a difficult situation to leave.
	Thinking of self	During the process of becoming an individual, participants began to think of themselves, although this turned back to something more purposeful (through guilt, obligation).
	Identity	Adjusting to becoming an individual meant that participants had to change who they were. This may have only been incremental changes over time or an extreme resolution of change. However, this created some identity crises, both at an intrapersonal and cultural level.
<b>Consumption Desire</b>	Wanting more	The majority of participants identified that their main reason for coming to New Zealand was to have access to “more”. This was an area of adaptation to New Zealand values and rejection of traditional values, also related to ownership.
	Powerlessness – addiction/excessive consumption	A negative side effect of desiring more was in the powerlessness that it afforded. Some were involved in heavy drinking as they tried to fit into the new culture of New Zealand and bury the loss of their old culture. Others sought out a way to reduce links to the past through gambling (i.e., mourning, alleviating

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

		obligation).
	Consciousness of difference	Participants acknowledged that they were “different” and talked about the realisation of this in their own lives.
<b>Cultural Maintenance through Obligation</b>	Obligation as duty/responsibility/debt	<p>This is a dominant theme throughout this storyline. Participants worked to repay their families, especially their parents. This obligation extended over decades and was more than just financial, e.g., they gave time, possessions, represented family at cultural events. Participants worked at maintaining aspects of their culture and obligation was a large point of acknowledgement. The “circle of giving” was identified as a significant aspect of maintaining culture and transcended generations and countries.</p>
	Personal sacrifice	<p>To meet obligations participants had to sacrifice. Sacrifice was predominantly in monetary form, but may also have been in time and in sacrificing meeting their own needs. This obligation was not necessarily resented.</p>
	Competitive obligation	<p>This is not a new phenomenon. It was possible to see competition appearing throughout the process of giving, and/or in meeting obligations when participants were in New Zealand. Conditions in New Zealand also meant that competition could be increased as participants had greater access to debt, increased access to goods, and larger incomes.</p>

***Premigration Expectations: Dreaming of paradise in paradise***

Within part one I have compiled the passages and stories of expectation. This storyline richly defines the reasons behind why participants and members of their family (particularly parents) were so eager to send their children to New Zealand. This storyline establishes the impression of New Zealand as a land of milk and honey where participants migrated “in pursuit of footpaths paved with gold” (Pulotu-Endemann & Leinatioletuitoga Peteru, 2001, p. 125). Their hearts and minds were filled with the hope and promise of what New Zealand could be and we begin to learn about the journey each participant had to brave to get to New Zealand.

***Postmigration Conflict: The reality of the dream***

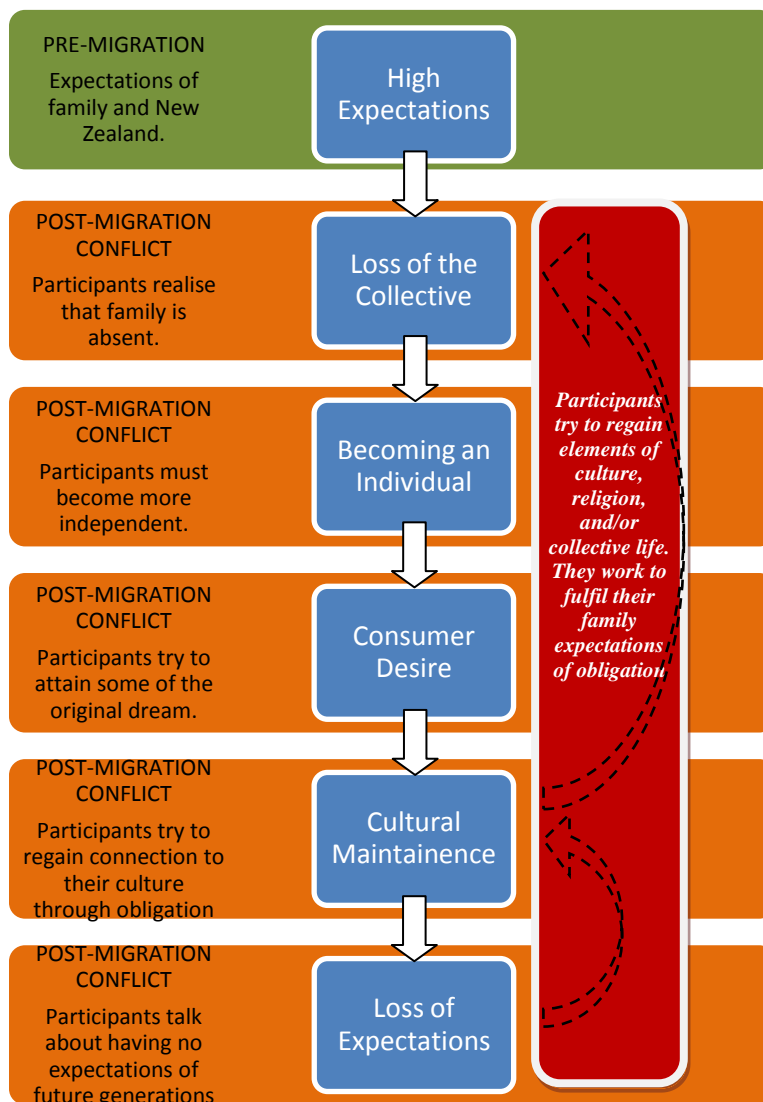
The following four storylines move into understanding the conflict and experiences of the participants upon their arrival in New Zealand. The four storylines are divided into categories: family changes; individual changes; money and consumption changes; and cultural change. These changes contrast immeasurably with part one as participants recount multiple occasions of being letdown, neglected and learning the hard way that they were no longer fixed within a wider network of family, community, religion, and culture. Participant stories highlight the dichotomies of life in New Zealand and the islands and go a long way to illustrating the hardships of isolation from the familiarity of their island lives.

Storyline two and three both contribute to the evolution of the participant into the individual. As a participant realised he or she was isolated from family they increasingly moved toward a sense of recognition that they must learn to cope by themselves and rely only on themselves for their needs and wants, both physically and emotionally. This realisation in turn became a contributing factor to their experiences in the subsequent storyline as they attempt to “fill the void” that the absence of collective life has created with the trappings of Western consumption, and the attempt to attain their original “dream”.

Storyline five considers the maintenance of cultural traditions particularly in the form of obligation. For participants, this served as a compelling force linking them to their culture and their families even when many years had passed between moving from the islands to New Zealand. While obligation is a strong tradition of many Pacific cultures, it is not stagnant and has in many ways been impacted by the values that Pacific people who migrate to New Zealand

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

have been exposed to. This shift has caused changes that are creating ripples within their communities back in the islands.



**Figure 20: Conceptual Pacific Consumer Acculturation Process**

Throughout the storylines, a process emerges (further discussed in Chapter 12). This process (Figure 21) illustrates the stages that participants passed through during their acculturation as consumers and as individuals to New Zealand. Participant experiences revealed a movement from belonging to a wider community and a growing increase in their awareness of needing to become an individual and independent. They worked to adapt to their new environment and acknowledged that they had changed irrevocably during this process.

### **Premigration Expectations: Dreaming of Paradise in Paradise**

The natural beginning of any story is to look toward the conception of the journey. For the video diary participants in this project their journey began long before moving to New Zealand. For most, it was when they were young and impressionable. They listened to stories of New Zealand from family and community members who had migrated there and had travelled home loaded with gifts, money and reports of success. Stories of earning higher wages than was possible in the islands and having access to the best of everything including education, food, and lifestyles whet the appetite of many parents who longed for their children to avoid the toil of their own existence. It was within these stories that many of the participants began their journey to New Zealand. They were captivated by the dream of the “land of milk and honey” and longed to attain the riches that many could not even fathom. They were aware that they wanted more for themselves and their family, but at the same time, they knew that they had to make the sacrifice of moving away from their home. Their “dream” became the compelling reason for them to migrate to New Zealand.

Through participant video diaries, it was possible to identify what individual expectations and perceptions of New Zealand were prior to migration. This understanding highlighted the contrast between participant expectation and later their reality of life in New Zealand. This section “sets the scene” for the reader, expressing the hopes and dreams of participants before they made the journey of realisation and change to New Zealand. This is what many had anticipated life would be like in the new paradise of New Zealand, with streets paved of gold.

## 7. STORYLINE ONE: THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

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### Ode to Mum & Dad

My parents...  
Eager to give their offspring  
the best,  
Moved to another land  
'*Aiga* wooing them to  
a paradise of money,  
Better education & promises of  
opportunity, without  
the drudgery of sitting by the kerosene stove  
doing the saka,  
Life in New Zealand is  
easy, they say...  
Everyone has a fridge  
and a T V  
Freedom from the countless  
*fa'alavelave's*  
Why does my stomach  
ache for Taro, *Palusami*  
in a country where you can have anything you want?  
Why does my heart yearn  
for, a view of our *malae*  
in Poutasi.  
Why do I feel like I don't  
belong, in a country that I grew up in...  
Why do I want to escape  
all the time?

Pacific Consumer Acculturation  
Charis Brown

There's nowhere to run away to,  
I've been sentenced to one thing  
and there's a yearning to be  
Somewhere else.  
Dissatisfied, everything is tainted  
by the feeling...  
What is the feeling?  
Not belonging, yet part of  
Belonging but rejected  
Some say I'm *Fia-Palagi*  
Some say I'm *Fia-Mauli*  
I've been remade & all  
my parts don't slot together,  
my parts slot in sometimes,  
and                    pop                    out                    at                    the                    slightest  
interference,  
it doesn't have to be anything  
Major!!  
A word, a nod, an attitude  
I am shattered  
It takes a long time to be me again  
As normal as I can be,  
...Under the circumstances.

(Excerpt from Fa'amoana, 1994)



Just as the ode recounts, participants' perceptions of New Zealand prior to migration centred on an image of New Zealand as the land of opportunity, a paradise of money and providing the promise of a better education. These perceptions stemmed from the fabled stories of family members who had travelled or lived in New Zealand and made Pacific parents eager to give their children those valuable chances at a "better life". During the course of their video diaries participants described the adventure of moving to New Zealand, the "better life" that they dreamed about and the opportunities they could provide for their families. For some, New Zealand was also where other family members had moved to and migrating there meant the reunion and continuation of not only that relationship, but also of the bonds of youth and culture. Expectations, without doubt, were high and on everyone's mind from the soon-to-be migrant, to their parents, to the extended family.

This chapter shares stories from participant diaries to illustrate the burgeoning dream of experiencing the world, prior to their migration from their home. Their passages combine to flow into a storyline that illustrates the dreams of New Zealand as a way to; change their lives and that of their family, experience new things and, to be part of a world much bigger than their own. Along the way, the hidden desires of Pacific consumers are highlighted to illuminate their interest in participating in parts of Western society.

### *Spirit of Expectation*

Many Pacific people came to New Zealand, *the land of milk and honey, the land of opportunity*, to gain and benefit from the opportunities available here. This image of New Zealand was built on their perception of what New Zealand could provide opportunities, health, wealth and happiness. To understand more about the individual perceptions of New Zealand, I asked participants to reflect on their expectations prior to migration. Ruth richly described her dream of New Zealand and the excitement of possibility:

*New Zealand yeah, the land of milk and honey, the land of opportunity. . . . growing up in the Cook Islands in the 70s where you just don't picture a world outside of your village; you just cannot imagine, you cannot imagine it. You know you look up into the sky and now and again, it was pretty rare in those days a plane would fly overhead and you would never picture yourself on that plane. You just couldn't imagine it. Your world was just like that. So getting on to a plane in the first place was the biggest adventure. And I always had this picture of New Zealand as just being you know a big city, a big city place where you had to be really careful. You know, you could get things. (Ruth)*

Ruth establishes the scene for her image of New Zealand by assembling her expectations as a child: *the land of milk and honey . . . you just don't picture a world outside of your village . . . never picture yourself on that plane . . . A big city place where you had to be really careful . . . you could get things*. She emphasised the distance between her world rooted in her village and the vastness of everything else *outside of your village*. But her repetition of *you cannot imagine it*, stresses her inability as a child to comprehend the stories she must have heard about New Zealand and begins to explain the fantasies of the wider world. Like Ruth, other participants saw New Zealand and its endless possibilities reflected in family members, older siblings and extended family that had moved to New Zealand previously. The stories that flowed back from New Zealand perpetuated the perceptions of milk and honey:

*. . . people that come from Samoa to come here, you know people in the islands usually see it [moving to New Zealand] as an opportunity, you know they usually see them as the richest people out there. Some people they call*

*this place [New Zealand] where milk and honey, where you can get milk and honey from. (Natalie)*

*It's like an ideal thing, like they want to come and they have a saying that oh that's where milk and honey is forever flowing. (Jessica)*

*New Zealand used to be called the land of opportunity and I take that phrase quite seriously too. (Mabel)*

*You know coming from the Cook Islands for the first time, New Zealand was literally the land of milk and honey. And we knew that from all our cousins and families that had come across from there for Christmas. You know they'd come back home for the holidays and we'd look at our cousins and they just looked so big and muscley and well fed and affluent you know and they spoke English different, they spoke it better. You know they just looked so beautiful, handsome and glossy and their teeth were nice and their skin was all rosy and they were fair and it was like wow you know, New Zealand did that to them. (Ruth)*

Stories and experiences of family members living in New Zealand and travelling back home further inflated this dream. Ruth recounted that *we knew* what New Zealand was capable of providing through the changes clearly apparent in the physicality and newly acquired wealth of those migrated family members. Even static attributes such as their skin colour were changed and took on the appearance of being more *rosy* and *fair*. The image of family members reaping the benefits of what New Zealand had to offer resonated deeply not only for Ruth, but was experienced by many Pacific people. However, noticeable in Ruth's recollection is the fact that she does not attribute this apparent success to her family members; rather this success is what *New Zealand did to them*. There is absence of negotiating a new country, the hardships of daily life, and the dramas of unemployment are insignificant, not even warranting a mention in the stories. Although her memories were as a child, there were no significant markers of warning or caution that she alluded to.

Family abroad also engaged in promoting this message of New Zealand having the "better life". They brought presents home for family in the islands and developed a tradition of

flying food back home. These stories and experiences drummed home the message of New Zealand being an ultimate destination, with easy access and guilty pleasures:

*...eating KFC for us, it's kind of like eating cans of corned beef for Samoans, you know the Pizza boy is so strong in that culture too. You know it's not healthy for you. You know it's just choking up your arteries as you swallow it but it's just a celebrated and an appraised part of the cultural foods. So, yeah KFC, islanders are famous for flying it home, you know. They used to call the Auckland to Rarotonga [flight] the KFC express because of the smell of chicken in the cabin from passengers who just boarded. Quick stop at KFC before you go to the airport and bang you're on the plane home. And I was, I was one of the guilty ones I was doing it all the time. (Ruth)*

Ruth talked on several occasions about KFC and even described it as a *cultural food*. The lack of KFC outlets in the islands was no obstacle for those that wanted to spoil their families back home. Paul and Ruth described the anticipation of New Zealand and the rewards there as ready for the taking. For Paul, stories of food captivated the imagination. For Ruth, the variety was significant:



Figure 21: Wider variety of foods (Jessica)

*I imagined the food to be more [and] better than I ever had at home, but yeah heaps of fast food and stuff like that. And I was looking forward to that, cause before coming up [to New Zealand] people were coming up to me and telling me stories of how when they were in New Zealand doing this and that . . . (Paul)*

*So just this whole thing of discovery and expecting and knowing that New Zealand was going to offer you all these different things and that all these things were there for the taking you know, whether it be clothes, or food, or education, or you know nice shoes, or bus rides. Anything you wanted you could have. And of course that perception changed over time but there was just this whole spirit of expectation and I see it still. I see it you know on the faces of people who come across for the first time [to New Zealand] from the outer islands or they come from Raro [Rarotonga], young children come for the first time, they have the same thing. (Ruth)*

Ruth's reflection on the *discovery and expecting and knowing* of New Zealand centre on the acquisition of things, *whether it be clothes, or food or education or you know nice shoes or bus rides. Anything you wanted you could have.* This perception marks a clear distinction between the idealised New Zealand and the reality of living in the islands, where product choice is limited, public services are minimal and there is considerable poverty. Ruth links these feelings of the *spirit of expectation* that she had experienced during her youth and eventual migration to New Zealand in the early 1980s to the faces of the new Pacific migrants coming to New Zealand today, full of hope and great expectations. Ruth also states that *of course* her *perception changed over time*, implying that she now had clarity, insight and understanding into the reality of the situation. She signals that it was only a matter of time before one became aware that the fabled versions of New Zealand as the land of milk and honey were erroneous. Yet for many that still hope to attain the dream that New Zealand offers, their expectations remain unwavering and obvious.

Access to education was also tied into the dream. Education was a primary reason for parents to send their children to New Zealand. It was a means to reaping the benefits of a higher income, more security and greater opportunities at the end of it. Many parents wanted more for

their children and had hoped that in sending their children to get a better education in New Zealand they would be expanding their opportunities for not only themselves, but also for the future of their country. Jessica identified and discussed the benefits for Pacific people of gaining a New Zealand (or Australian) tertiary qualification, usually in relation to what she could potentially do for her family, in particular her mother. Later it became clear that her expectations of this giving had changed, but during these initial revelations her entries were more politically motivated:

*. . . so getting a job out there in Australia will not be as difficult as if I have only a BCom degree. If I get, so I get money, money will come you know my way easily and if converted into Samoan dollars it will be like twice or three times bigger than the money I would get in [Samoa]. And then I'll just move, the only, the only, reason I just want to go to Australia to get a degree and to get money to go back to Samoa and to contribute to the economy. Cause that's one of the things in the islands, like in Samoa, especially, they send out students, they send out people to get degrees and to go to university overseas and unfortunately most of us don't go back to Samoa to contribute to the economy and so we have this human power, you know human knowledge but because of the lack of money and the low salaries back in the islands you know we just don't want to work there, we want to go overseas and utilize that degree there 'cause we know we're gonna get more money and so in the island if you want to, like we want our economy to grow but the human power is not there. And so it's still in that same spot. It's not growing. And what I'm trying to do is to go back and contribute, like to help out the economy, you know. Like we're not gonna grow if we don't go there and do something. We are the ones who are going to change the poor conditions in the islands and no palagi will just come in and do it for us. Yeah, we are the ones to do it. (Jessica)*

Gaining recognised tertiary qualifications was a big part of the dream for Pacific parents. They had the fortitude to look to education as an answer to many of the challenges that faced island nations. For the majority of participants, their parents and extended family were integral in the decision to migrate to New Zealand. For some participants, they did not have a choice

about this decision, it was made for them. Jessica recognised that gaining qualifications was a necessary part of making any significant contribution to her home economy in Samoa. She realised that many of the overseas educated Samoans were not returning to the islands with their skills and this failure was something that she didn't want to perpetuate.

Overall, expectations were of New Zealand being the utopian paradise of desirability. It had become the answer to the drudgery of life in the islands that for many was exciting to escape. New Zealand offered higher wages, greater access to commodities, better education and more of everything. Participants revelled in the notion that not only could they help their families, but also contribute significantly to their local economy. Most importantly though participants felt that New Zealand was going to offer and provide them with a better life, better than the life they had and better prospects for the future.

### *Expectations of Reuniting with Family*

Family were great motivators for potential migrants. They were integral in the decision to move to New Zealand. Participants identified that when family members were already in New Zealand their resolve to come here and join them was considerable. Their expectations of being with family meant that many of the anxieties of moving to a new country were buffered. Joel identified his reconnection with his family; his brother in particular was of utmost importance:

*And I mean to me I didn't care how life is gonna be in New Zealand. All I wanted, all I wanted was to come here to New Zealand to be with my brother.*  
(Joel)

*So I was kind of looking forward to staying with family because these are families like uncles that and aunties that you know, where your parents used to help them. You know and you're kind of thinking oh yeah my parents helped them to get to where they are so it's kind of ok, you know they'll be able to look after me well, because of what my parents have done for them. You know you're kind of, I shouldn't have thought like that but it was kind of for me that was the kind of mindset that I have. . . . It was and I was kind of expecting it. You know, that's how we live in Tonga, you know reciprocity. We do things for you; you do things in return. As a family that's how we work. And I think I was expecting that. Not to the extent of you know bending over backwards for us, more like just allowing us to be who we are and allowing us to concentrating more on school work . . . (Joel)*

While Joel was only 11 years old when his parents sent him over to New Zealand, he was focussed on reuniting with his older brother who had arrived 2 years earlier. Joel described what many participants felt prior to migrating to New Zealand; the expectation that people they had known, especially family members, would be the same as they had been back home and the same as they remembered. Joel points to *reciprocity* as an expectation of a strong Tongan cultural value that he perceived would be continued in New Zealand. He explains his expectation - *they'll be able to look after me well* – on multiple occasions throughout this passage; . . . *your parents used to help them, my parents helped them to get to where they are, because of what my parents have done for them, we do things for you, you do things in return, as a family that's how*



*we work.* Joel's experiences within the Tongan culture as a child and the consistencies of his parents' adhering to cultural practices, such as reciprocity, formed the foundation of his expectations of living in New Zealand with family members. He emphasises also that this was his expectation; . . . *that was the kind of mindset that I have, I was kind of expecting it, I think I was expecting that* and goes on to point out that, *I shouldn't have thought like that* indicating that he is now experienced with the process of change that occurs for many of those that move here. Other participants also identified that they were excited about moving in with family when they moved to New Zealand and had other expectations of what to expect:

*So when I was seven years old, yeah when I was seven years old all my sisters moved to New Zealand and there was only one sister back home. So it was like oh I just, you know, really wanna go to New Zealand with them and spend some time with them and you know being young. And ever since then I always told my mum, oh do you know what, I'm gonna go to New Zealand. I don't know how but I'm just gonna go. I'm gonna do it myself. And then when I got up . . . to form seven, I was 17 years old, it was like 10 years later and then I was told by the scholarships office like back in Samoa that I'm coming to New Zealand with a scholarship. I was like, told you mum. I was like, told you, told you I would go to New Zealand by my own. I'll just do it, yeah. (Jessica)*

*I felt great about coming to New Zealand. It meant being closer to family, access to better living conditions than I had been experiencing, and free TV, better food, and a chance to be kiwi for a while! There was a feeling of sadness at leaving my home, and that has never gone away . . . but this is surpassed by the excitement of moving to the next level and as Cook Islanders' have passports for New Zealand, a feeling that we are coming to a country we belong to as well, even if it's not the homeland. (Ruth)*

Ruth and Jessica both longed to be reunited with family. For Jessica, she was determined to get there under her own steam and by age 17 she had achieved that goal. Ruth on the other hand looked forward to more than just family. Her journey was also about *access to better living conditions, free TV, better food* and as she describes it, *a chance to be 'kiwi'*. The lure of New

Zealand for her became about being able to have access to those things that she could not have in the Cook Islands and also in being part of the New Zealand culture. Ruth appears to link the increased access she was about to gain in moving to New Zealand with part of the entitlements of being *a kiwi*. Having more and expecting more were inextricably linked to her perception of what being *a kiwi* meant. She reiterates this when she describes her feelings of sadness at leaving behind her country as being *surpassed* by her excitement of these possibilities and her chance of *moving to the next level*, again another implication of attaining the things that she could not have in her own world. She describes having a sense of *coming to a country that we belong to*. This sense of belonging strengthened the excitement and bond she felt in being linked to New Zealand and suggests a feeling of familiarity or expectation of “sameness” in her impending migration.



Figure 22: Sense of community (Melaine)

For brothers and sisters of participants that had moved to New Zealand previously, there was an expectation that they could earn more here and provide more for their family back home. For some Pacific people, living in their homeland was no longer feasible with widespread unemployment. They had to make the decision to move so they could provide for their families. These people were part of massmigrations to both New Zealand and Australia. Money and the

possibilities that money afforded were a wide expectation of Pacific people wanting to come to New Zealand:

*. . . I think the biggest thing that New Zealand has provided and continues to provide is the chance of better money. Like, you could work in a factory; you could clean toilets or clean floors or clean offices like my sister and still earn more money than the head of a Ministry back home on an hourly rate. So there was always that. New Zealand has provided good money no matter what your educational background as long as you're prepared to work hard you could get money. And then there was this whole thing of "on the dole". We joked about it being, working for the Government, where you just signed up and then you got paid while not working. It was the weirdest expectation of all. Man, I can get paid for not working? So that was weird for a lot of Cook Islanders I knew, to get their heads around, particularly young men who didn't have the will to work in factories and things like that. (Ruth)*

*. . . the interesting thing is when I was living back in the Cook Islands and during my days as a journalist in the late 90s, we had huge transition, we had the Government sacking a lot of its public servants. About 3000 of them lost their jobs and a lot of them came to New Zealand and Australia and brought their families with them, simply because the Government couldn't afford to keep them on the pay role. And so there was that whole, you know we called it like the "second wave" because we had the first wave in the 70s . . . when the airport started, opened. And my dad actually was one of those that built the airport. The first wave of Cook Islander migrant labourers was whatever, they're citizens of New Zealand, but they're migrant labourers from where we sat. And they went and sent money back home. And then the second wave was in 97, the late 90s. They left because they had no choice and they had to send money back home to pay bank loans and bills they had defaulted on because they didn't have work. (Ruth)*

Throughout Ruth's recollections not only was there a recurring statement of being able to earn more money in New Zealand, there was also a strong contrast in understandings of how a

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

migrant could get that money. First, Ruth describes the possibilities in working; *New Zealand has provided good money no matter what your educational background as long as you're prepared to work hard*, but then moves on to the expectation of getting money for nothing; *We joked about it being working for the Government where you just signed up and then you got paid while not working*. Potentially one of these expectations may have been formed postmigration; however, the contradiction is exposed – one that assumes working hard achieves a desirable outcome, while the other adds to the dream of the land of milk and honey, “a paradise of money” “without the drudgery of sitting by the kerosene stove” (Fa’amoana, 1994).

### **In Closing: Expectations**

Without exception, New Zealand was framed as a land of opportunity, primarily because of the fabled stories of New Zealand from family members. This was particularly the case, prior to the mass migrations of Pacific people during the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and later in the 1990s when many came to achieve their dream. This myth continued to be compounded by the remittances and giftgiving of those already immigrated family members back to the islands. In this storyline participants have shared this dream - the focus on what can be had - but nothing about the cost of this to the individual. There appeared to be a consensus among participants that they were in New Zealand to improve the lives of their families and of themselves. Many felt that the route to this improvement was through work, but predominantly they saw that it was through education. Accounts of “opportunity” were almost exclusively focused on the fulfilment of consumption desires, better education, improved transport, better clothes, more variety, and greater access to foods, wanting and having more, better access to more, and the money to be able to acquire more. Consumption related issues were accepted by all participants as the major contributor to both the desire to live in New Zealand, and later, as a factor in the isolation and alienation of each experience.

There is little in the perceptions and expectations of New Zealand as *the land of milk and honey* that stress that success is born from individual effort. Absent from participants premigration recollections of what life would be like in New Zealand was the identification of hardship. There were no reflections or memories of how difficult life was in New Zealand, just the emphasis on symbols of success in the form of remittances and giftgiving. Moreover, the attribution of “success” was as a result of an almost gift-like notion of New Zealand “doing it to them”. Participants observed that in contemporary migration other potential migrants still hung on the idea that New Zealand could provide them with all they needed. Even at this early stage of analysis, it is possible to foresee the potential for disappointment.

Family was a significant component of participant expectations. Participants were aware that reuniting with family was an important part of their decision to move to New Zealand. Many had depended on the stability of these relationships to ‘buffer’ their transition to life in New Zealand. Many even anticipated that this relationship would be unchanged and would make life in New Zealand more familiar. For many participants this was the hardest

acknowledgement to make, as they realised that it was not possible to have and maintain the same relationship. Previously immigrated family members had often already irrevocably changed. Recognising this change for participants was significant in understanding their loss of the familiar; culture, surroundings, support networks, and, the compounding isolation that resulted. For some participants the realisation of this loss triggered the resolution that they would become a self-contained monad. From this resolve, the development of individualistic traits began to grow.

High expectations of *the land of milk and honey* led into disappointment for participants when they finally arrived in New Zealand. These expectations were established by an array of stories by family and community members that perpetuated the myth of having everything with little acknowledgment of the heavy costs involved. Participants were in many ways unprepared for their journey. This was certainly not intentional; however, the migrating individual had to make the realisation that his or her life had to change. This change started with the recognition that their migrated family members had already undergone a transformation of their own.

### **PostMigration Conflict: The Reality of the Dream**

Participant expectations led to conflict with their reality. When we consider participants' expectations of New Zealand, we can begin to understand their feelings of excitement about the possibilities and opportunities available. Participants held the belief that they would be able to "have" more. They also believed that their life and their cultural values, based on the importance of community, reciprocal relationships, and dependence, would remain the same in New Zealand. This was particularly the case for those participants that already had migrated family living in New Zealand. Very few, if any, of their premigration expectations were concerned with being in a foreign environment. Moreover, many positioned New Zealand as being part of their "home".

Having established in the previous storyline that expectations of New Zealand were high, we turn now to the reality of their experiences. Life in New Zealand was in sharp contrast to the expectations participants had formed. New Zealand society holds very different values, those of individualism, materialism, personal accumulation, and individual ownership based on a monetary exchange system (Desmond, 2003). Even participants with family in New Zealand were faced with the sometimes harsh realisation that their family's values had changed dramatically to fit into their new environment. These differences contributed to participants experiencing a range of intra and interpersonal conflicts as they navigated between the dichotomies of New Zealand and their own Pacific values. Conflict existed in everything from the mundane to the extra-ordinary, from everyday routine to cultural behaviour. Participants discussed conflict prolifically, highlighting some idiosyncratic areas of adaptation within the consumption process. In order to continue their journey of migration into New Zealand and in order to fulfil those dreams inherent within the stories of loved ones back home, each participant travelled through situations of conflict by withdrawing, adapting, or compromising to a given situation.

Even with the obvious changes around them, some participants felt that change was inevitable. Joel, in particular, emphasised during diary entries that changes occurring were not only in his journey to New Zealand but would have occurred regardless of where he had chosen

to live. He did not want the changes that occurred in his life to be pegged solely to his move to New Zealand:

*You know the there's heaps of change, you know the values and the society, values in New Zealand and Tonga are very, very different you know. Living in a different country and the time change you know. You know in Tonga back in the 70s and 80s, the way you do things back then was different. So moving to New Zealand in the 80s and then living here from the 80s, 90s and the 2000s now, I mean 21<sup>st</sup> century, man there's a huge change from you know, I'm a different person from 2000 onwards to me in the 90s and to me in the 80s. So I have changes and I think for me every decade I change. (Joel)*

Even with this acknowledgement that change is boarderless and occurs as a natural transition and evolution of time, as part of the world “growing-up”, it is still possible to discern participant experiences of change within the New Zealand context. The next four storylines explore participants’ experiences of living in New Zealand and look at the reality of the “dream” Participant experiences allow us insight into the shedding of expectations and the emergence of the importance of money, independence, and, survival. Experiences both positive and negative are compiled to illustrate the extent to which participants were affected by the perceptions that they had of New Zealand prior to migration.



## 8. STORYLINE TWO: DREAMING OF FAMILY

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### **Being a Polynesian**

Thinking of New Zealand as a paradise of work and money,

Eating corned beef, taro and tinned fish.

Having only one bed for three people and sometimes no bed, just the floor.

Saying kia ora, kia orana, Talofa, fakalofa lahi atu, nisa bula and malo e lelei to everyone you see.

Sending bad children back to the islands so they won't get into any more trouble.

Pinching from the rich and selling to the poor at half price.

Being good-looking and chasing all the girls in sight.

Being scared when a man in a suit visits the house.

Having an argument and letting the whole street hear about it.

Being called a coconut and pretending to be happy about it.

Being called an overstayer in our own part of the world.

Being hassled by the Police when walking alone at night.

Working in a factory to be with one's mates.

Being communist long before Karl Marx.

Being bilingual.

Having your name mispronounced by people who don't care or won't try.

Having untold fathers, mothers, uncles, aunties, cousins and relatives.

Being exploited as a cheap labour force by the government.

Welcoming a lavalava in the middle of a crowd.

Wearing only a tee shirt and pretending not to be cold.

Knowing that somewhere out there in the Pacific is a place called 'home' when racism gets too heavy.

Being a Polynesian is hard, being a Polynesian is to laugh, being a Polynesian is to cry, being a Polynesian is forever.

(Walker, 1982, p. 15)

Family is undeniably a central component of life for many Pacific people. Within the Pacific, which we know values collectivism and dependency on family and community members, the contrast of life in New Zealand deviated starkly from premigration ideals. Participants struggled with the increased isolation even when family were living in New Zealand and became aware that they had to depend more on themselves daily. This storyline shares the experiences of participants surrounding their first realisations of change, centred on the change within family.

Changes in family reflected the changes in the culture of New Zealand. New Zealand values prioritised the individual and his or her nuclear family. This priority excluded the collective whole that Pacific people had been brought up in. This change had the greatest impact on pushing the individual into taking on more independence, individual values, and in becoming self-reliant. Once participants had developed this awareness, they began to prioritise themselves, even if only temporarily and only later attempted to move back to their cultural values.

“Pacific family” differs from the traditional version of a Western, nuclear family. Before sharing excerpts on the changes that participant’s noticed in other family members, it is imperative that the value and importance of family is understood. Family and the collective are the cornerstones of life in the islands. This means that, predominantly, Pacific people treat members of their family, whether they are parents, grandparents, cousins or aunties, the same. There is little or no separation between the nuclear and extended family, with sometimes many members of a family living with multiple branches of their own family under the same roof. Here we already see a decisive point of conflict between island and New Zealand life. However, these changes were further aggravated from the participants’ point of view, as they realised that their relatives had also adopted many of these new values, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously.

### *Changes in the family*

Participants quickly realised that their migrated family had changed in multiple ways. One of these changes was in the sharing of responsibilities in bringing up children. In the Pacific, family played a substantial role not only in providing for each other, but also in child rearing. Child rearing in the islands is rarely a parent only job. This was for many one of the most difficult aspects of island life to leave behind, particularly when the lifestyle of open doors and vast backyards was how many participants were raised and was certainly part of the norm. Ruth was raised by her grandmother, a custom that was, and, still is, often practiced by Pacific families. Within her grandmother's home she was raised with her cousins and felt a sisterly connection with them, even more so than to her own immediate family:

*It should be noted though that I was actually raised by my grandmother. So I also grew up . . . in the extended family house, in like the tribal family house with my grandmother and I was raised as a sister to a first cousin of mine, before I became a teenager and got exported back into my birth family. So that was the, that's just pretty different for me. I actually have a sisterly relationship with some of my first cousins that grew up in the same house hold. And I just had a very different relationship with my birth parents because we weren't as close and I don't recall as much of them as a child.*

*My childhood memories are really centred around growing up in a huge family house with my grandparents there and the sense of comfort, the memories of comfort and laughter that I have, tend to be with my grandma. And only later in life as a teenager and beyond that do I recall having the affections of my mother and then really just loving her as a friend and then very late in life just so much appreciation for her as my mum, before you know, she passed a few years ago. (Ruth)*

The lifestyle that Ruth experienced as a child was extremely commonplace in the islands. Grandparents and other members of the village would often assist with parenting duties, and unofficial adoptions were commonplace. Ruth talks about her experience in the "tribal" home of her grandmother and would often recall during personal contact times that her grandmother and she had a wonderful, close relationship. She also felt fortunate to have had her cousin to grow up

in that house with. The feelings she had toward her mother, especially during the years prior to her migration to attend high school in New Zealand were strained and she admitted that it was a good time for her to leave her parents' home. Other participants also talked about their upbringing with the lead caregiver being someone other than their mother and father:

*So I am actually the first grandchild. But my whole family never see [that], hear that or even think like that. My brothers and my sisters are actually my uncles and aunties which explains the big gap in age[s]. This adoption process is very common in the islands and there are no formal papers and that. Altho[ugh] those are the facts, I still feel as one of their sisters. My relationship with my bio [biological] mother is that of a sister-to-sister, and I am very uncomfortable when people who know about our relationship talk to us as mother and daughter!! (Jessica, email correspondence)*

*. . . so I had 5 brothers, and 3 sisters. I feel I was a very special child because I was a grandparent's child. I opened my eyes to the world under the care of my grandparents. And my grandparents were missionaries and that's what they did until they die[d]. And they nurture me until, until I reached the stage that I had to return back to my . . . parents. (Mabel)*

Both Mabel and Jessica were raised by their grandparents. Mabel returned later to her parents, but Jessica still recognised her grandmother as her mother and her mother as her sister. So the significance of extended family becomes visible as an integral component of child rearing and as support for the parent/s. Even within a village, community members would participate in the support of other parents. Mabel recalled the community involvement she experienced while raising her sons in the Cook Islands, even though she had no family there:

*All the mothers in Atiu [Cook Islands] were so lovely to all of us and at anytime they were so genuine. There was just no such thing as you and us, it's always we, and what's mine is yours and what's yours is mine but with great respect. They borrow but they bring it back. But especially when it comes to nurturing your children; yes they gave all their best. (Mabel)*

Mabel had a diverse upbringing being born in Tonga, raised in Niue and then moving with her New Zealand born, palagi husband to the Cook Islands. However, Mabel felt accepted

in all of these islands. Not only did she experience the support of her immediate and extended family in Tonga and Niue, but she also had the support of her community when she was a migrant in the Cook Islands. Her experience in New Zealand was not the same. Changes in the structure of the family had a significant impact on the individual. Participants realised that the family and community feeling that they had known in the islands was now absent from their new lives.

*The absence of the family and the collective*

Participants acknowledged that community support and being part of a wider collective was largely absent from life in New Zealand. Upon arrival in New Zealand, the loss of the family and the lack of integration into the wider community became evident to participants early on. The loss of the collective meant that, for many, life became harder. Sarah noticed the changes in her family contact in New Zealand. Even though she had palagi family already in New Zealand and acknowledged in her diaries and personal contact time with the researcher that she was close to her family here, especially her grandparents; she pointed out, her contact with family differed and became about particular occasions like *when things go wrong*:

*I think I've always found it interesting because like when I moved to New Zealand like, true, I have cousins and you know I have uncles and aunties in New Zealand, my palagi side . . . people just go and do their own thing and then come and get together once something goes on. Whereas in Samoa it's a daily thing and you're always catching up with family and you're always places and it's not only when things go wrong when people get together. I think that was one of the major changes I found when I moved here, I found it really hard not seeing everyone, not sort of having that contact and those support networks. (Sarah)*

In New Zealand, participants noticed that it was more difficult to make contact with the wider community and other Pacific people. Even when they searched out people that were familiar, it was not always possible to recreate the depth and regularity of community that they had known in the islands. This was certainly the case for Ruth, a mother of two young children who quickly noticed how isolating New Zealand could be without family close by, and neighbours whom she felt she had nothing in common with. Connections were difficult to make and her longing to be back in the Cook Islands was made more intense as she watched her son grow up without the benefits of her childhood:

*First of all with Tom going to a play school at his age it's really because we're on our own here. We're pretty isolated in terms of networking not just with the neighbours. The neighbourhood is really an older retired white demographic and I haven't had a lot of time to go out and meet other Pacific*

*Islanders, especially Cook Islanders, with children that Tom can play with.*  
(Ruth)



**Figure 23: Paying for childcare that is free in the islands (Ruth)**

Ruth was feeling isolated from her community and at times she was overwhelmed by the prospect of parenting without family. To resolve this reduced community involvement Ruth searched for other avenues through which to mix and mingle with her new local community. She went on to describe the sacrifices she and her husband were making so that their son could join in through active involvement with others his age:

*Yeah, so that's why Tom goes to preschool. Cost issues; we can't really afford it. It's full time. It's four dollars an hour, forty hours a week, four weeks a month and we just make the effort to cut and save here and there and put in what for us is pretty much a huge amount of money, but for something that we feel is really special and important in terms of our family budget. So it's something I wouldn't even think of back home. He would have all the cuzzies back home, the neighbours would have their doors open to him and their children would be able to just run through our home as well. The yard is just big playgrounds in themselves. It's just very, very different. And if we go home, I hope that he goes home and experiences that kind of special*

*unique setting. But for the time being we're in the first year of a PhD programme for my husband so I can't see that happening, I can't see that happening. (Ruth)*

Ruth's identification of the financial investment that she and her husband were determined to make for their son contrasted with her recollection of living in the Cook Islands. Leading into her memory, she summarises childcare as *really special and important in terms of our family budget* and goes on to state that, *it's something I wouldn't even think of back home*. Although she was still a stay-at-home mum with her new-born daughter, her decision to access childcare was prompted by the lack of contact her son had with other children in the community. Ruth's sadness at the absence of the family and community was emphasised by her acknowledgement of her son's loss of this very *special* and *unique* aspect of her childhood life in the islands. Jessica also identified with this child-rearing difference and regarded this as part of palagi culture:

*I was babysitting today for one of our friends, my flat mate's relatives and she's doing a post grad in uni and I looked after her five year old, five years old daughter. She had some assignments to do and I was just babysitting for her for free though. We're not like palagi's who pay for everything, maybe that's a generalisation but yeah. (Jessica)*

Jessica acknowledged, as Ruth had, that in New Zealand the community was no longer involved in the childrearing process unless it was paid to do so. They both felt that this was because of the culture of looking after only members of the immediate nuclear family.



*Increasing obstacles to closeness*

Joel noticed increasing barriers to family. His observations were linked to his family and the way they treated him when he had migrated. Joel's sole focus in moving to New Zealand had been centred on the reunion with his brother and moving in with aunties and uncles living in Auckland. When he finally arrived, however, his experience differed greatly from his expectations, impacting considerably on his early years in New Zealand:

*I never really think seriously about it until lately when you asked me to think about these changes. I mean I knew it was there, but it's not something that I would think about. You know there was a change. I always know that there was changes from when I moved from Tonga to here. I knew that there were changes in how I lived my life in Tonga and how I live my life here, over here. It was pretty much you know you have a tight family in Tonga you have that tight family unit thing where you know it's very close, close to your cousins and close to your extended family and even we were still close in New Zealand but it was not, it was like a one-off. We only get together in New Zealand if there is something happening like a birthday or you know. But in the islands you get to see them almost every second day or something like that. So it was tight back then. But in New Zealand everybody's doing things, so that tightness wasn't there when I moved here. (Joel)*

Within this excerpt Joel points to recognising differences between Tonga and New Zealand; *I knew that there were changes in how I lived my life*. He points out that he had not acknowledged what these differences were, until now. Joel emphasised the nature of the relationships with family back home; *you have a tight family in Tonga, it's very close, close to your cousins, close to your extended family, in the islands you get to see them almost every second day*. Comments like this resonated throughout all participant diaries. Joel acknowledged that, in principle, things changed when he arrived; *we were still close in NZ*. However, he follows this comment with a definition of the changing nature of "closeness" and signals that while the feeling of closeness remained, the nature of the community, particularly the frequency of contact, had been irrevocably altered; *but it was not, it was like a one-off*. The contact was now limited to events like *birthdays*. Joel explains this change as *in New Zealand*

*everybody's doing things so that tightness wasn't there when I moved here.* Joel's reflections went on to reiterate his expectations of family in New Zealand and stressed the perception that Joel really believed that his family would be the same:

*I think here staying with a Pacific Island family it's what you want to come to, especially coming overseas to New Zealand. . . . I think for me it was just the shock of getting used to different values. . . . so I was expecting to have that kind of you know coming to a Tongan family of course they would understand things . . . but it didn't . . . They came here from a Tongan culture and how to do things and values and all that. They come here, they work and they find out that it's all about yourself. It's all about how you do what you do to survive here. . . . I was expecting to come here and experience the same thing that I get in Tonga. Well I didn't 'cause these people had been here for a wee while. Their lifestyle had changed. They've adopted the different sets of values . . . there was a clash there. (Joel)*

Within this narration, there is a sense of Joel's understanding and acknowledgement that family members and their lifestyles had *changed*. He was beginning to see that they had *adopted different sets of values* while in New Zealand. He mentions his thoughts on wider societal values in New Zealand, *that it's all about yourself, how you do what you do to survive here*. He also briefly summarises the contrast between the cultures, *there was a clash*, but doesn't elaborate on the binaries that he has identified. Joel talked frequently of changes in the family structure and identified distance as a significant barrier to family connection:

*The change . . . that I felt when I was in Auckland was that I was no longer close to your cousins and stuff because you're so far apart you hardly see them. Everybody's doing their own thing, because a lot of them are either at school or working. So everybody is doing their own thing. So I felt we were all drifting apart just because of where we are living. (Joel)*

Joel signals a change in the geographical distance of family members as hampering access to each other. These distances were an even bigger hurdle for Joel because he was so young when he first migrated. Of the many reasons for family change, the feature of distance became significant. Coming from a small island nation to a much larger country, participants

found that contact with family was reduced by the travel necessary to get people together. He discusses this during other diary entries:

*The other change would be you know just the cultural shock of not having your many friends and many relations. Everybody's living far apart from each other so you can't just get up and walk to all your cousins' house or whatever, you gotta wait for a lift or you gotta catch a bus. So you tend to rely on other people to do that for you. The distance that you travel is far apart so you're gonna have to use a vehicle to get from point 'A' to 'B'. So when you do have to travel that long distance it cost(s). So cost come(s) into it. (Joel)*

Joel found the isolation a *cultural shock*. He observed that there were substantial hurdles for continuing to meet as a family. Joel talked firstly about the geographical distances that separate closeness and created difficulties in maintaining relationships with family members. Later he talked about the growing distance between family members because of time and other commitments. This hurdle was particularly significant when Joel discussed his brother and the distance that he tried to bridge. He attempted to maintain the ties to his family, especially his brother who had gone on to live at a hostel:

*So for me the whole reason for me, like I didn't care what life is like in New Zealand as long as I'm there to be with my brother and then when I got here it was different. My brother had been here for a couple of years by himself, you know he, he's got different groups of friends and he's more like independent because he's been here for two years. So he wanted to do his own thing. He'd play a lot of sports and then he was away almost every weekend. So again because of that experience that I had by myself in Tonga I have to do that here, when I got here. So I came here and once I hit . . . 5<sup>th</sup> form my brother left for varsity so I was there by myself. And then when he went . . . into varsity he went straight to a hostel. He went straight to . . . hostel and he stay there. I always make the effort like every weekend I go up there but then for a wee while I kept on doing that; but then I said to myself one day you know I always go over there and my brother is always busy*

*studying or he's going to Tongan volleyball or basketball and why am I going? I should just be focusing on what I should do for myself. You know so I slowly understand that you're here, you're not back in Tonga to be in that closeknit support network that you're used to, but you're here you're gonna have to get used to the individual and what you do as an individual. You know it's all about yourself. How you're gonna look after yourself, how you're gonna do things for yourself. Then maybe after that you can, when you need it you can use it. That was a thing that I wasn't ready for when I came here. I was just like you know you come from a background where that support network was really strong and you pop in here expecting that those things will still happen and you come here and it didn't. (Joel)*

Joel clearly struggled with trying to hold on to the same type of relationship that he was familiar with in the islands. He admits that he recognised after time that the relationship was very one sided and recalls the questions that plagued him when he decided to think more about himself; *I said to myself one day you know I always go over there and my brother is always busy, why am I going? I should just be focusing on what I should do for myself.* Joel's realisation of the changing relationships that he valued so dearly was his introduction to the changed social climate, one that valued independence and self-satisfaction rather than the needs of others: *You know so I slowly understand that you're here, you're not back in Tonga to be in that closeknit support network that you're used to, but you're here, you're gonna have to get used to the individual and what you do as an individual. You know it's all about yourself. How you're gonna look after yourself, how you're gonna do things for yourself.* Even though he was not ready for the imposed changes, he was aware that there was little he could do to maintain the traditions of his youth and culture, and felt that it was inevitably time to adapt. So even though he was within the environment of living with family from the islands, his reflections exposed the value changes of family members:

*I did have a rough idea of what, what to expect really because before that we'd been to New Zealand twice before that . . . with my parents. But then the part that I didn't really get was, I didn't really understand because my parents was not gonna come with us, so it was gonna be me. So the whole experience of me being with my relations [I] didn't know what to expect from*

*that relationship because of course it's good to go to your family, but you're tied to one person so you don't really know what the other person is like. So I didn't really know how to deal with that. That's one thing; the other thing was the shock of being so young and having to make your own decisions. And pretty much like at 11 you know, you're still too young to say, manage your money, say, buy clothes you know, you're pretty much still a kid, you still you know need your parents to help you out. So I was made, . . . well I wasn't made, my parents wanted me to experience that because even though they didn't really want that, they knew that's gonna make us better people when we get older. So I guess that's the whole thing. I didn't really know the whole dealing with other people than my parents, so that was the biggest problem that we have, is that when I stay here we stay with people that I'm not related to. You know even though I'm related to one person, the other person I'm not related to. So it's their actions that really affected my whole experience going through studying over in New Zealand. (Joel)*

Over the course of Joel's diaries he had recalled some distressing experiences about the treatment that he received from family members in New Zealand. He had moved into their house during his initial migration period with family members from Tonga. His brother also lived there. Joel discovered that because he was only related to one of the family, (i.e., Uncle and not his uncle's wife), he was subjected to nasty experiences. He felt that the partner of his blood relative did not like him and was intentionally out to create struggle in his life. He expressed this emotively during personal contact times.

Although not to the same extent, Ruth also experienced changes in her family situation. However, she empathised with extended family that had come to New Zealand. Ruth had some understanding that family members and their attitudes had to change to fit into their new, adopted society. The realisation by participants of the great hurdles that migrated family members had to overcome in surviving New Zealand was not made by many:

*My family in New Zealand were not the same as I remembered and the change in them was really all about meeting a change in lifestyle and circumstances, pressures both social and economic and living in a new skin .*

*. . .so relating to them as family was the same. But it was easy to understand that they were not so easy going or in holiday mood because their money had to go on bills rather than spoiling the poor cousins all the time. I did have the odd relative who remained unchanged in their mood and attitude to spending and care for the family, but these relatives didn't have their own homes and other things associated with material wealth to the same extent as families who had to change to meet the new lifestyle demands of this country. (Ruth)*

The changes and growing absence within family contact and that of the community were the biggest factors in turning the participant to more individual tendencies. This was a difficult realisation for participants to make and for some the realisation came as a reflection rather than a conscious choice or decision. Ruth points out that the family members had little choice but to accept the changes and adapt to them. They could no longer maintain the lifestyle and mentality of island life as they had to reframe themselves in this new individualistic and sometimes hostile environment; *the change in them was really all about meeting a change in lifestyle and circumstances, pressures both social and economic and living in a new skin, they were not so easy going or in holiday mood because their money had to go on bills rather than spoiling the poor cousins all the time.* Ruth also recognised that while she had relatives that remained the same as they had been, this was because they; *didn't have their own homes and other things associated with material wealth.* Therefore, they had less urgency in adapting to, and adopting, New Zealand values.

### **In Closing: Loss of the Collective**

Loss of the collective was the biggest impacting factor on the individual. Unanimously, participants identified changes in the way their family were when they came to New Zealand. Many described how they no longer existed as part of their “traditional” collective. Some participants regained their sense of being part of a greater whole, while others reflected on difficult and sometimes painful experiences of realising that they were in a country that favoured an individual outlook rather than seeing each member as a part of a bigger community. This reality was one of the most difficult for participants. Their recollections of their journey were rife with emotions of hurt, displacement and isolation. While many participants were very young when they moved here, the experiences were similar for those that were older – losing their place as part of the community exposed them to traumas that they had not anticipated.

I want to point out here that many family members wanted to assist or “buffer” the newly migrated family member into New Zealand society, but they had already adapted to their new environment and these changes were primarily unconscious and subtle changes. Those family members in New Zealand already had to deal with a new environment and work their own way through a new and different value system. So the isolation participants experienced although not geographic, became apparent as participants realised that family now had different values than when they were in the islands.

### ***Survival***

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Participants adapted to the changes they observed in their family members by adapting to the values inherent within New Zealand society, primarily individualism. Participants described life in New Zealand as “survival”. They survived New Zealand by adopting some of the host culture’s new values, like individualism and by becoming reliant on self and forcing themselves to take responsibility for all aspects of their lives. They worked to support themselves financially and later worked to develop their own network of people to form their own “community”. This task was not always easy and certainly in some instances, dependencies developed. However, in most cases participants just got on with getting used to their new environment once they were over the initial shock of losing the collective. Participants survived by learning to support themselves financially and worked toward developing a new sense of community, although this stage usually came later.

## 9. STORYLINE THREE: PEELING THE BANANA TO BECOME AN INDIVIDUAL

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I am – a Samoan, but not a Samoan  
To my aiga in Samoa, I am a Palagi  
I am a New Zealander, but not a New Zealander  
To New Zealanders I am a bloody coconut, at worst,  
a Pacific Islander, at best,  
To my Samoan parents, I am their child.  
(Anae, 1998, p. 106).

Be firmly planted in the ground, trees, leaves, and branches, brown  
Something that is real, something you can feel  
Now tell, we looking, getting sick of being kicked around  
Trust me check your family background  
The key to the future's in our past  
(O.P.C., 1998)



One of the most significant changes for all participants was learning about becoming an individual. Participants spoke of realising a need to become more independent, following their acknowledgment that their family had changed and there was no longer a structured “collective” community. There were also many external changes, within the family, within their surroundings, and within the new society. Change was also occurring as an internal process, both consciously and unconsciously. Individual change came as a strategy of fitting into the new environment, of hardening to the disappointments of expectations that were never fulfilled, and as a matter of course, i.e., they no longer had the ability to live the same way that they had. Participants experienced memories of their transition to New Zealand throughout various diary entries, usually triggered as they regressed into stories of “how things used to be”.

This section is about becoming an individual. When participants realised that they were isolated and that their family was no longer the same, they changed who they were to reflect their new environment. This changing meant that they were in conflict at an intrapersonal level and were changing to fit in with their new perception of “normal”. Some did this reluctantly, others did it and enjoyed some of the advantages of being an individual, but all came through this stage changed.

### *Becoming an Individual*

Money, consuming and family were not the only points of difference between perception and reality. As the layers of dream fell away participants were faced with a “loss of self” as they noticed family members, friends and others from their culture had changed irrevocably. Confronted with this prospect, some hardened to the new climate, whilst others were resolved never to let it affect them again by adapting to their new environment. Mabel summed up her movement to New Zealand and the tumultuous events of her life here during her final diary entry:

*That was the scary part of it. I think the biggest thing that I noticed is that it's like a skin that peeled back, like a banana. My family had peeled back to the distance; my family had peeled back away from me. That sort of left me naked, vulnerable and it was a scary journey and being in a foreign country [made] it even worse. (Mabel)*

Her description of her experience being like peeling back the skin of a banana is apt for many of the participants' experiences. Many participants related to the layers of their life, what they know and what they are familiar with being stripped away, section by section. Inevitably this exposure had an effect on the individuals, one that disoriented them, creating the need for adapting to their new environment. Ruth felt her self-confidence fade as she substituted being popular in the Cook Islands with trying to fit in by buying “the latest” things in New Zealand. As talked about in the previous storyline, she faced many of the difficulties of peer pressure but fortunately had family in New Zealand to guide her:

*. . . the personal change took place on so many issues. It wasn't all good, I was still a teenager trying to find my identity and place in the world I was comfortable in, and in that context when I moved to New Zealand, there was so much that challenged that space as well. I think my grounded upbringing and family support helped me to stay off the drugs and other temptations of the time. I became very shy and unsure of myself and had very few friends in New Zealand as opposed to being the popular leader with many friends at my local college in Raro. I grieved deeply for my great-grandmother who died a*

*few months after I left the Cooks. I had no hope of returning for her funeral and no closure on her goodbye. (Ruth)*

Ruth struggled with fitting into New Zealand and recognised that the changes occurring at a personal level were not always good. The difficulties she experienced were compounded by her stage in life (i.e., being a teenager) combined with being in a new environment. She acknowledged that her upbringing, and the family support she had, enabled her to get past the enticements of life in New Zealand. But Ruth also expresses the personal doubt and insecurities that altered her identity and closed her social circle. She realised that she must be strong as an individual and achieve what she had to do by herself especially when she was living in Dunedin and became isolated from her other family in New Zealand:

*In New Zealand you've really gotta structure your life around getting the bills paid, getting the food on the table, getting from A to B on time, making sure you pick things up, organise the kids and blah, blah, blah and this endless litany of mindless things that you need to do, just to keep the treadmill turning, simply because no one else is there to do it for you. There's no network, no support you gotta do it because you gotta do it. Yeah life here is totally different and I do hope, expect too that it's gonna change; that things are gonna just get organised in a different way so I don't feel so overwhelmed and so mentally just weighted down with the sheer detail of everything I've gotta do with my life just to get through a day. I've never really experienced a day organising myself that way, always had a lot more freedom with my time. So yeah just an appreciation of time and I feel a sense of being displaced. I feel a sense of displacement and we've been here since December. I've been here many, many times before but I've never been here with . . . a sense that this is it, this is home. I've really gotta make the most of it and chin up and you know get on with it girl. Just get strong and get organised and things like that. And I've really gotta just think positive and make lemonade. (Ruth)*

As an adult Ruth identified that in New Zealand she was focused on different things, like *getting the bills paid* and structuring or organising life. She was overwhelmed by the details of

paying for everything and having no support network around her for assistance and comfort. Her discussion of feeling displaced was emphasised by the fact she now lived in New Zealand and knew that her prospects for returning home to live, at least in the short-term, were not likely. This was one of the hardest things for Ruth to reconcile as she felt that her children would miss out on the lifestyle that she had experienced and treasured with her collective family in the islands.

Like Ruth, Joel also had a hard time with the transition from Tonga to New Zealand. He was only 11 when he migrated and as discussed in storyline two he was following his older brother who had come a few years earlier. While we know that Joel had a very different experience than the one he had expected, especially from his brother and extended family that had held (in his mind) so much of the promise of what New Zealand could be. He also became aware that family units had reduced to those that lived inside their own four walls:

*Then the other thing was how people are so into things for themselves. Rather than like working as a whole, like as a whole family . . . it was more like you know what you need to do to survive as an individual or you know it just focus[ed] on that little family. The focus is pretty much on that whole house. You know and anything out there, nah it's not your business. . . . that was the biggest shock for me. (Joel)*

Joel's experience of New Zealand was the journey that highlighted the greatest divide between expectations and reality. He was living with family and yet his was the most isolated transition of all the participants. He recognised that life in New Zealand had changed greatly from Tonga, but also became aware that the concept of family had shrunk. Now "family" meant only those members within the nuclear structure. He became aware that his entry into that structure was out of the question. Learning to become an individual came at a great cost for Joel; however, he was not alone in this aspect of the journey. Other participants experienced this recognition and had to face up to the hardships and, in some cases, benefits that this carried with it.

*I had my grandparents in the first year I moved here, but after I moved away from them I had no family down here. I had to look at myself and find out how I was going to survive being here and doing work . . . (Sarah)*

*I think that was one of the major changes I found when I moved here, I found it really hard [was] not seeing everyone, not sort of having that contact and those support networks. (Sarah)*

*Dunedin, New Zealand has a much faster pace you know sort of everything's fast. Samoa's much more laid back. . . . I think the biggest thing would be the collective and the individual differences in that. (Sarah)*

*Everybody's living far apart from each other so you can't just get up and walk to all your cousins' house or whatever, you gotta wait for a lift or you gotta catch a bus. (Joel)*

*My family in New Zealand were not the same as I remembered . . . (Ruth)*

The isolation that participants experienced became a trigger for their awareness that they needed to become individuals. Becoming aware that family were not as available as they were in the islands and that they had changed were strong motivators for moving to the next phase of adapting to New Zealand. Joel struggled greatly with his transition to New Zealand and described learning that he could rely only on himself. There was no longer the support network that he had grown up with and his family, even immediate family, had become so concerned with their own lives that there was no longer room for him to fit in:

*Joel: For me it was more like I've gotta do things for myself. I'm not gonna rely on anybody. I'm not gonna trust anybody. Everything I do is for me.*

*Charis: So this was completely contrary to everything you had learnt in Tonga?*

*Joel: Yep, it was a total '180' (degrees) . . . You guys suck man I'm just gonna do whatever is good for me to survive. But yeah so I decided to while I'm here I'm gonna test out what it's like to grow up here. 'Cause you know I wanna make sure I cover everything like if you drink why are all my uncles and stuff are telling me that it's not good for you to drink. If you smoke, if you smoke dope. I tried everything the only thing I never tried was heavy drugs. But I was exposed to all of them. I seen what it's like to be affected by that but I live on the street I know people sniff glue, what it does to them, but*

*I never try it cause I always wanted to make sure that I never affected anything in my head. Because I know for a fact that one day even though I'm doing all these things I am going back to school. (Joel)*

Joel was driven to become an individual. Throughout his narration it is possible to feel his determination to survive without any family contribution; *I've gotta do things for myself, I'm not gonna rely on anybody, I'm not gonna trust anybody, everything I do is for me, I'm just gonna do whatever is good for me to survive.* His resolve to be self-reliant came from the sense of betrayal at not having the same family that he had experienced back in Tonga. Unlike Ruth who was able to *resist the temptations* of New Zealand, Joel was resolute in experiencing all of them as he had witnessed others doing; *I'm gonna test out what it's like to grow up here, why are all my uncles and stuff are telling me that it's not good for you to drink, I tried everything.* Throughout this, however, he kept his mind open to the possibility that one day he would participate in the original dream; *I am going back to school.*

Unlike Joel, Mabel felt that to keep her marriage she had to enforce the separation between herself and her parents. Although she had moved to New Zealand there were still parental and cultural demands being made on her and her new family. This was difficult for her in a crosscultural marriage:

*In 1980 that's when we started [having our] family and during those time[s] I had [a] difficult time because my parents were still very much trying to influence my life to maintain and sustain the Tongan culture in me. However, I came to the awareness, that I realized that it was not going to be very healthy in my relationship with my husband, so I had, I had to make a decision to choose between my family and my husband in order to save my marriage. So that's what I did. I decided to distance myself from my mum and dad and their teaching and supporting me from home, mainly because of the reasons some of the things they say that didn't quite go down very well, I didn't see it was going to be accepted by my husband, so therefore, I stopped answering their letters I stopped ringing them up because of that reason. Because I believed time heals and so, therefore, putting that gap, the space in between us, and me and my parents, actually helped to sort of give me more space to spend more time with my husband and so there, from then on, we*

*actually developed our own little culture, as [a] family and I think it was very beautiful. (Mabel)*

Mabel made the decision to isolate herself from her family. She felt that her parents' imposition of Tongan culture into her marriage was not sustainable for her new marriage and made an intentional decision to sever contact and focus on building a relationship with her New Zealand-born Palagi husband in New Zealand. She felt that at that time it was necessary to be an independent family unit that existed without the input of her parents. Jessica's experience contrasted with Mabel's; she struggled more with leaving her close knit family. She recognised that New Zealand required a lot of independence on her part:

*The only thing that was hard for me was moving away from home. Because I came here by myself and at the time I didn't know any of my families that I've known this time. But when I first came I was home sick really bad for two weeks. I used to cry myself to bed every night for the whole two weeks. It was just the feeling of missing families and friends and being in an environment where your mum is not there, where your sister's not there, where you have to go to places by yourself. [It] requires a lot of individualism. (Jessica)*

Jessica found being away from family extremely distressing during the first two weeks of her time in New Zealand. Later she explains that she developed a new kind of "collective" situation, but based very much on the New Zealand tradition of flatting:

*And living here at our own flat is really different from when we were back in Samoa, 'cause in Samoa we live with our parents and our whole extended family. So we're not used to doing our own washing, well, some of us are not used to it. We're not used to working as a group to live together under one roof. It is very different. Very independent and on the other hand it's very good for us to learn our independence. (Jessica)*

Jessica accepted the changes that she faced in New Zealand and adapted to some of these changes well. It became clear through the course of her diaries, however, that she was recreating her environment of community in New Zealand and had established a "Samoan family" with whom she lived, studied, socialised, attended church, joined events, spoke Samoan and sang. All

of these links to her culture were a buffer between her and the countless differences in New Zealand. Sarah also used culture as a link to her country as she found that family here would not or could not support them in the same manner:

*. . . even though I know my parents are there if I need them, my grandparents are there if I need them, I know that the responsibility falls on me. And post migration I've learnt to take responsibility too. If I make a commitment to something it's my responsibility to keep it. Whereas in Samoa its more you make a commitment to something your whole family will help you keep that responsibility; if you'll be here, be somewhere at a particular time your family will make sure that you're there. In New Zealand if you say you're gonna be there then you have to be there and you're gonna have to find your own way there. And I definitely don't think that's a bad thing. (Sarah)*

So with this new found "freedom" came responsibilities. For Sarah, while her family provided assistance in transitioning to New Zealand culture, she realised that her independence was a significant responsibility. She became aware that to fulfil the commitments that she had in New Zealand she would have to rely on herself and ensure that she could achieve the things that she needed to, without family input.

Jessica also talked about having more freedom. She knew that New Zealand was a society that required independence and recognised that *it's very good for us to learn our independence*. She liked that she could experience things with her friends:

*And we're gonna take one of our friends, well, birthday boy out tonight to check out the clubs in Dunedin now . . . he's legal. But frankly we wouldn't be doing that back home. Our parents [would have] scolded us and we'll be grounded if we do go out. (Jessica)*

As with Joel, Jessica identified that there was a societal change in the culture of going out and *after match functions*. Having this freedom meant that participants enjoyed things that they were unable to experience in the islands. Many participants talked about relishing the opportunity of being able to do what they wanted. Not surprisingly then, when participants were asked what aspects of New Zealand and island culture they would "take" and use in their own lives, individualism was categorically recognized. Sarah felt that individualism was something she would hold on to about life in New Zealand:



*Palagi culture, now this is going to be a contradiction, but I think the two can be symbiotic; and that is individuality. Having your own identity, having your own culture, having your own place I think is important. So I'd definitely take individualism. I don't know that I would take anything else from palagi culture. It's just that a lot of palagi culture can tie into Samoan culture and so a lot of it can work out and you'll find that most people who talk about palagi culture will condemn individualism and condemn the idea of looking after number one before anyone else is looked after. But I've always, always believed that you have to look after yourself before you look after other people. Which is why I've spent so much time here. You know if I go back home I can't give them anything. I mean what is a politics degree gonna do? In all honesty you know it's just, if I'd done something like science or law or I don't know medicine or something you know something that has a clear cut job description then great. I would have been home in a flash and just you know screw the student loan. But I honestly don't think with what I've got that I can contribute to the greater wellbeing of the family and so in there comes a bit of individualism. My dad has wanted me to go home but it's really the first time that I've really sort of stood there and said no. I'm not gonna do what you want this time. I'm going to do what I feel is right for me and I need to keep studying. (Sarah)*

Strongly tied to Sarah's desire to be an individual is her desire to provide for her family adequately. So while she feels she is being independent, she also recognises that her motivation to stay in New Zealand is so she can take something home; *if I go back home I can't give them anything, I honestly don't think with what I've got that I can contribute to the greater wellbeing of the family.* She highlights an interesting point within this passage centred on the conflict of collectivism versus individualism; these dichotomies are not opposing constructs that need to be mutually exclusive. Rather they can be symbiotic, a harmony of looking after the individual whilst at the same time providing for the collective. Indeed this is something that participants did try to point out as they struggled with the notion that being an individual is not always a bad thing.

*Being Religiously Independent*



**Figure 24: Sacred church (Melanie)**

Not all perceptions or expectations of New Zealand were wrong. Independence was readily available for the taking in New Zealand, where the strict rules of attending church, following religious protocol, parental, cultural and family restrictions were gone or subdued. Independence was long sought after for some, but harder to live with for others. Church had become absent in many participants' lives post migration which was a major adjustment from the culture they had come from. This defection unavoidably had some impact on each participant as he or she realised that there were fewer and fewer aspects of the community that they were tied to. In particular, it was possible to see the growing independence of participants as they became separated from those aspects of the culture that were most confining back in the islands, i.e., family and religion. For Joel, the change in the requirements of church attendance was significant:

*It [church] wasn't as strong. You have a choice you know and if you do go [to church] you're not fully involved it's your choice if you wanna involve in the youth or involve in the pathfinder. . . . it was a choice really. (Joel)*

The significance of church for Pacific people who reside in the islands is undeniable. It is certainly one of the key differences, particularly in the social structure, that participants talked about. When they arrived there was less encouragement to attend church, fewer people to enforce living a religious life. Jessica also identified that in her everyday life church was now not as important:

*I was back home in Samoa a very active member of the Sunday school, of the Sunday choir, of the church choir and of the church youth. And when I came to New Zealand because the church is almost 10 minutes ride, or 15 minutes ride, you know it takes us 10-15 minutes to go to church by car so we find it really hard to go there on time for our Sunday school. But in the first three months of my first year when I moved here in 2004 I still went to Sunday school. But then I decided not to because it was taking up my morning and I started to wake up late, I started to wake up late and it just felt different from back home. Back home it's compulsory. All the kids from the village are supposed to be there on time you get bitten up, if you don't, if you're not there on time. The discussion and subjects that we discuss during our classes are really interesting and exciting. We do debates and speeches in Sunday school. Singing, competition and such and prize giving as well. So there was motivation as well. I don't go to, to the church choir over here because I need all the time for my studies and besides, I can't be bothered learning new songs. Because they have their new rhythm and their new tune, and their different tune. Same words from the same hymn books, but just different rhythms and beats. But in our Otago Samoan Students Association, Christians get together, at the beginning of this year, we got asked, we got asked the questions whether our religion is a routine or a spiritual thing. And my answer was well most of the students that were there said it's kind of a bit of both. It's kind of like a routine, but then it just develops to being only spiritually oriented. And what I mean by routine is that we're raised up in a Christian environment in a very religious country so, therefore, we are accustomed by our parents to the church and attending church is every Sunday. Try to not miss church and when we're in church try to be quiet,*

*even if you're young, even if you're a baby, like if a baby cries in church they just come outside to make sure there is no disturbance. And yeah the voice pollution is kept to a minimum, like people just respect when, they enter the temple or the chapel, they respect it as a holy place and it was a routine for me when I was young, it was a routine for me because like sometime I didn't want to go but 'cause I had to go, like I'm told to go and I have to go, otherwise I'll suffer some serious consequences, for example beating me up or for example not eating. (Jessica)*

Wanting to keep in-line with religious protocol in Samoa, but without the watchful eyes of family and wider community, Jessica found that she was able to make her own decision regarding attending church or getting involved in church activities. The consequences that Jessica outlines; *I'll suffer some serious consequences, for example beating me up or for example not eating* highlight the regimented approach to church involvement in the islands, in her case in Samoa. New Zealand clearly contrasted to this and, void of these severe consequences, many participants chose not to attend church, or did so on an irregular basis. Many of the participants found that this behaviour was a surprising development in societal expectations and acknowledged that they now had the freedom to choose whether or not they wanted to be part of religious activity. However, the freedom that participants alluded to was not always without consequence:

*So everybody's busy doing their work so on Saturday morning the change was that we used to have Sabbath on the Sunday in the islands, and in New Zealand we, we had Saturday as our Sabbath day. So that was a huge change there. So every Saturday we, we went to church and I find that . . . was a huge clash in my whole upbringing cause on a Saturday back in the islands I used to play rugby or on a Friday evening. But over here it's our Saturday so I couldn't compete. I couldn't play any sports so I used to skip church 'cause I wanted to play rugby or play sports 'cause normally all the sports in high school in New Zealand is on a Saturday. So I used to skip church; and that had a huge impact on myself because your peers at church, and your community that you're used to, [were] very judgmental. They used to judge me for you know going and playing on a [Saturday] and you know*

*what kind of Seventh Day Adventist I am? You know playing on a [Saturday] and because you're into that scene playing rugby and stuff you go to after match functions and all that. So all these people who are in the church used to be, used to be, I'd say jealous. (Joel)*

Even though Joel had to play sports on a Saturday, doing so was another point of exclusion for him. He became involved in the lifestyle of sports and indulged in the culture of rugby in New Zealand through attending aftermatch functions. Joel felt that his neglect of church became an issue for others within the church - *very judgmental, they used to judge me, used to be I'd say jealous*. The change in the days that his church was run in New Zealand meant that he had to make a choice and in doing so he faced the judgement of others within his culture who maintained the rigidity of religion from the islands.

Ruth's reflections were more focused on the change in formality. She was stunned by the relaxed nature of dress in New Zealand. Gone was the formal wear of the islands and instead casual attire was more prominent:

*You wear the hats in church and you're dressed in your Sunday best and you know the White Sunday is literally a White Sunday. You know your verses and everything off by heart, not that I really picked up any of that. But to this day I'm just very mindful of that and keeping traditions. Things like you don't wear shorts on a Sunday and that was just bang into a new world to come here and see people you know wearing jeans. Women wearing jeans and long pants and very casual and for me, like walking wear, sweat wear, it's the kind of clothes you wear to clean the house. To wear that to worship?! (Ruth)*

Ruth had very different expectations and experiences about church being much more formal in the islands. But regardless of these changes, religion still played a major part in her life and the lives of other Pacific migrants. Their devotion and acknowledgement of God working in their lives was a routine component of many participant diaries. Jessica recognised again that church in Samoa was a massive part of life there and that this importance continued to New Zealand:

*Religion is [a] very important part of my life. Yeah for a country like Samoa I don't, I don't know the exact numbers but there is a tiny probability of people that do not go to church and some people like do not go to church but they do believe in God it's just that they do not want to be literally there in church due to some maybe some unsettled situations. But yeah religion plays a major role in my life. (Jessica)*

Jessica acknowledges that the norm in Samoa is to attend church. However, even though Jessica acknowledged that religion was an important part of her life she went on to admit that her attendance, like that of others, had dropped since being in New Zealand:

*I didn't go to church. It's funny how I didn't go to church today 'cause back at home I wouldn't miss church. The only reason I would miss it is because I'm sick or because I'm away from home or I'm going to some other relatives. So well I missed church today because I slept in and I was exhausted. (Jessica)*

Church was for some participants a way to link back into their culture. All participants acknowledged that there was more freedom regarding choosing religion and church attendance in New Zealand; however, there were consequences for not remaining within the fold of the church. At times, participants discussed aspects of their religion as part of their culture and Ruth identified this mixing religion and culture was a growing trend, particularly in gender roles and in sports. She contemplated that the intertwining of culture and religion was precarious:

*I think . . . culture and religion if you're not careful can become intermingled and confused and you stand in danger of confusing religious artefacts for cultural and giving them cultural meaning and that's dangerous especially when it comes to things like, well for me personally with my issues, especially when it comes to the support . . . of women and their role in the home, their role in the family. (Ruth)*

Despite the choice that participants now had, many agreed that God was still at the centre of their lives and they maintained a relationship with God in their everyday lives. This relationship was still factored into the choices that they made in New Zealand and assisted in providing a sense of guilt and obligation.

In Closing: Becoming an Individual

*I think overall for me being in New Zealand has, has changed me and it will continue to change me. It'll change me in good ways and probably in not so good ways but I'm concentrating on the good ways . . . If I have to pick a top three, I think it's gonna make me a stronger person, yeah it's gonna make me a stronger person. It's gonna make me appreciate my family and where I'm from more and it's just gonna help me see things. It's gonna give me new ways of seeing things and I think that's good for everyone. It's gonna expose me to new ways of seeing things whether I like those ways or not. And I think that's really that's really that's a big plus for shaping me and how I understand the world. It's a big plus. So [I] think I come out of it much better off at the end of the day. (Ruth)*

I wanted to close on Ruth's quote as it was indicative of the Pacific spirit of getting on with life in New Zealand and becoming stronger as an individual. Finding out that "becoming an individual" was essential in New Zealand was a process that all participants recalled at some stage of their diary entries. This realisation occurred in varied ways and for differing reasons. For some, it was the catalyst for a series of negative experiences and signalled their movement into undesirable activities. For others, it became the start of strengthening their resolve to become completely self-contained. Most participants did not dwell on the negative experiences they had while in New Zealand with many admitting that they had not considered how they had arrived at where they were until I had asked them to reflect on their lives for this study.

Participants were not all condemning of individualism. Having more independence granted participants the opportunity for more experiences and less parental and cultural restraint. Each participant worked hard on finding and integrating the aspects of their cultures that were important to them into their lives and that of their families. More encouraging was that each had succeeded in attaining his or her notion of "the dream" that their parents had instilled in them years before, even though their journey to it had been marred by difficulties and disappointment.

Throughout each participant's passage they highlighted that New Zealand was an undeniably different country with different social values, sense of community and priorities. Some participants chose to adopt more individual traits, while others had it thrust upon them, in a

“sink or swim” situation. While participant experiences differed, in each case regarding the realisation and processes of change, all were affected both negatively and positively because of this change.

### ***Independence/Freedom***

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Gaining independence was a side effect of having fewer family in New Zealand. It meant that participants were freed up to do more things that they wanted and less that was mandatory back in the islands. Participants were surprised by the significant differences surrounding church values, from formality of clothes to the rigidity of attending church. This independence also meant that participants were freer to participate in other activities that were frowned upon, like drinking alcohol, going out, spending their money how they chose to, or not attending church.

Participants found this freedom difficult in the initial stages of migration as they were so used to the input of the collective to their decisions, both public and private choices. However, even though there was isolation in becoming an individual, there was consensus that having independence was a good thing, particularly as participants had to rely only on themselves regarding choices and commitments that they made. As time went by, they felt that this change was a beneficial consequence of being in New Zealand.

### ***Identity***

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Within the diaries there are clear links to how becoming an individual impacted on each participant's identity. Adjusting to becoming an individual meant that participants had to change who they were. Primarily these were changes in not only the physical environment but also in the social sphere, moving from collectivist to individualistic. This shift was damaging initially but as participants realised that there were benefits to this way of life, they gradually adapted to these values. This movement may have only been incremental changes over time or an extreme resolution to change; however, this change created some identity crises, both at an intrapersonal and cultural identity level.

### ***Thinking of self***

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During the process of becoming an individual, participants began to think of themselves. Thinking of self appeared throughout the diaries. There were participant iterations of being or



feeling selfish related to independence and individuality during the consumption process. Participants categorised the realisation of individuality and independence related to being selfish into two groups: (1) other people thinking of “themselves” and (2) realising that they were thinking of self. Later, at some point, participants would return to thinking of others (e.g., through guilt, obligation).

Within their stories, participants on many occasions equated being independent or having individual characteristics with selfishness. Joel saw members of his family as being selfish as a matter of what they had become: *in New Zealand everybody's doing things; they find out that it's all about yourself; everybody's doing their own thing; he's more like independent.* He resolves on multiple occasions to be personally more independent: *I should just be focusing on what I should do for myself; it's all about yourself,* and he is not alone in this resolution. In becoming more independent, he puts himself first and reflects the changes that he sees in his other migrated family members.

Ruth thought more about herself and became concerned about her fulfilling her desires more than ever before. Her sister provided the tools for her to buy more than she could afford; *my older sister was only too happy to get on her Farmers card paying up to three times more than what we could afford . . . just so I could be happy.* Ruth readily admits that she was thinking only about herself; *I became a new kind of selfish* but acknowledged that she was *allowed to be that way.*

Thinking of self was one coping mechanism that participants used to avoid the disappointment of unmet expectations. They struggled with finding a place within family structures and found that the traditional social networks and values had been replaced with Western ideals. Participants all moved through the stage of becoming more individual by thinking more about themselves and prioritising their needs. However, this was typically a temporary stage and inevitably participants returned to thinking of others. This stage was, however, pivotal in their understanding of being independent.

## 10. STORYLINE FOUR: DREAMING OF 'MORE'

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Consumed by a new (*or is it renewed?*) interest in dollar signs, and the acquisition of everything that screamed Affluence to the world.

*Not knowing that Affluence (without direction, without purpose, without focus) equals Emotional Poverty.*

*And you end up surrounded by nothing but other equally impoverished Affluent couples D.I.N.K.S. they call themselves. Double Income No Kids people.*

*Which have become your people in many ways.*

*Living in posh houses.*

*With posh things.*

*Dining gourmet, yet starving all the same: constipated by what we've acquired, yet famished all the same because of it.*

(Figiel, 1999, p. 26)

A large part of the dream for many Pacific migrants coming to New Zealand centred on the possibility of opportunity. There were three main aspects to this dream: being able to earn more money; being able to provide more for their families; and having access to greater choice as consumers. However, participants realised that, as with other perceptions of New Zealand, the access to these dreams was congested by the realities of everyday living, that everything costs, and that their ideals around certain values, especially around ownership, were changing. This storyline considers participant excerpts focused on changes in the New Zealand consumption environment reflecting on aspects of their new life in New Zealand which were out of their control. These changes were both good and bad but all had to be navigated to aid in transitioning to their new country.

In addition to the external differences in migrating, there were changes that occurred within each participant. Participants realised the need to be more financially independent and acknowledged that in New Zealand money was needed for everything. This specific realisation had a significant impact on all the participants as they became aware that they would require money for even the most mundane of things, something they did not experience so intensely in the islands. Participants also became conscious of difference during their settling in to New Zealand. This perception led to changes in behaviour as they navigated having access to more.

### ***It's a Rich Man's World***

Undeniably one of the primary reasons for migrating to New Zealand focussed on the opportunities of earning more money. While there were alternative paths to this end, either through immediately entering the labour force or through gaining a tertiary qualification, both routes led back to the primary goal of earning a higher wage and having better opportunities and conditions to work in. This possibility was empowering for many migrants who wanted to provide for their families and create a better life for those still living in the islands. For Sarah this was a big change. She noticed large increases in her wageearning capacity and in the opportunities available to her:

*Bloody hell. Yes I did notice the difference. From earning the money and buying my own things, that's mainly because back home you don't really work part time. It's not really worth it. I mean minimum wage in Samoa is what \$2.50. When I was in high school it was \$1.50 (Sarah)*

Ruth like Sarah noticed the considerable increase in pay rates when she observed her sister migrate. She found that incomes were so low in the islands that even official white collar jobs could not beat the pay rate of a blue collar wage in New Zealand:

*Like you could work in a factory, you could clean toilets or clean floors or you know clean offices like my sister and still earn more money than you know the head of a Ministry back home on an hourly rate. (Ruth)*

Both Ruth and Sarah point out the very large differences in earning potential between their island nations and New Zealand. Their emphasis on even part-time jobs getting paid better than government officials back home illustrates that the priorities of moving were tied up with the expectation that New Zealand would provide better wages and indeed a higher standard of living. However, greatly underemphasized in all of the initial expectations of participants were the realities of everyday life, especially the cost of living in New Zealand. It was not long before participants identified this as a vital concern. Moreover, earning enough money was a perpetual struggle as Pacific immigrants realised that everything in New Zealand came at a price; nothing was free as it had been in the Islands. This was one of the changes that participants were most

surprised with. Joel felt this was one of the biggest changes between life in Tonga and life in New Zealand:

*So I guess for me the changes that happened to me was . . . how things for example if you go to school it costs money, if you buy anything it costs money . . . One of the biggest change(s) for me was that everything that I do or everything that I get or want to get will cost money. (Joel)*

Joel had not anticipated that *everything* would cost. It was not just that buying goods was expensive, but everything that Joel wanted to *do* and everything that he wanted to *get*, including schooling cost money. Jessica echoed this sentiment on multiple occasions:

*. . . everything requires money. (Jessica)*

*But I hear people say in Samoa they struggle but . . . when you come to New Zealand you pay [for] everything. You need money for everything whereas in Samoa you don't need money for everything. In terms of food you just go to the plantation and you know get the taro or you go to the sea and get the fish, you know? (Jessica)*



Figure 25: My main hang out for shopping (Ruth)

Jessica points out the irony of the situation, questioning why so many Samoans want to move to New Zealand. Jessica was surprised at the perpetuation of the myth that New Zealand was void of *struggle*. She explains that the struggle in New Zealand is that *you pay for everything*. In Samoa, money was not needed for everything and people could survive off the land and the sea. Day to day life in New Zealand meant having continual access to income to pay for the necessities of life that were free for the taking in Samoa. More poignantly, Jessica alludes to what many think; without money life in New Zealand can be extremely difficult almost unbearable:

*Yeah, inability to get funding when you run out of money, from our allowance. For my situation I'm good because if I run out of money I'll just dial the phone . . . and call my sisters in Auckland to put some money in my account. So it's really good to have families here like I don't know how people who do not have family can handle living overseas 'cause overseas, like here in New Zealand when you're broke, it's like you're dead, like the world is over and you have to go out of your way to get some money to pay like, for example, your bills, to pay for your power, your telephone, your rent, like everything requires money. (Jessica)*

Jessica has captured the notion of a society so involved in itself and consuming, that the absence of money can be likened to a catastrophic event such as the world ending. She has observed that there is so much power in the accumulation of money and what it can provide, making it a necessity for all. For many participants they did not have the luxury of knowing that they could just *dial the phone* and call a relative for money like Jessica. When other participants ran out of money, there was no one to call. As Jessica described it, living in New Zealand without money, *it's like you're dead, like the world is over and you have to go out of your way to get some money to pay like, for example, your bills*. The reality of New Zealand is that it is very difficult to survive without money – even to make enough money to pay for the necessities of life. Like Jessica and Joel, Sarah also frequently noted the need for money in New Zealand and worked two jobs in addition to studying fulltime to meet her expenses:

*Kind of getting sick of working at the supermarket but it pays the bills, I need the money. (Sarah)*

Sarah's *need* for money was not unique, nor is it surprising for those who live in New Zealand, however, if we consider that money was not required for many of the everyday living expenses in the islands, it is understandable why so many of the costs associated with living in New Zealand appear so excessive. Rent was another expense of living that recurrently featured in diaries as a point of difference between life in the islands and in New Zealand.

*We'll I can't really complain about the rent you know we're paying right now as compared to Auckland, but then it's very different from home where you have your own house and your huge backyard. . . . it's really hard over here.*  
(Natalie)

Natalie had initially migrated to Auckland but moved to Hamilton with her husband when she had secured a job. In addition to financially providing for her needs, she was also supporting a family friend and his two children who had moved to New Zealand from Tonga in the hope of finding employment. She was acutely aware of the hardships of moving to New Zealand and was always willing to help others from the Pacific with settling and setting up in New Zealand. Natalie notes that the changes are significant, not only in the increased financial burden but also in not owning property, and in the amount of freedom there was in having a *huge backyard*. Jessica agreed with Natalie about ownership in Samoa. She deliberated during many entries about the differences between the countries on issues related to money:

*And you don't pay rent, we don't pay rent. Because we own the land we own the house. We don't pay that.* (Jessica)

In New Zealand, Jessica flatted with three other Samoan students, but back in Samoa her roots were firmly with her family. She had obviously discussed this issue with friends on other occasions but her theory on staying with the family was more about maintaining ties and closeness than just the functionality of paying bills:

*Back home you don't have to pay rent. You own your own land; you own your own house. You don't have to pay rent to anyone. And we still live in extended families. My friends in my first year, even now my palagi friends they don't, they still don't get the idea of like, for example, me I'm 21 years old, but when I go home, I'll still be staying at home. . . . they can't grasp that idea of me staying home when I'm 21 years old. Because generally in*

*the palagi world, this is my knowledge . . . when you're 18 it's kind of like it's time for you to move out of the house. So for us back home I still have my brothers who are 30 something and we still live together under the same roof. And going away from your family back home, like moving out of your family is kind of like isolating yourself and rejecting your family. And yeah, everything is easy because like my brothers and my sisters didn't have to pay rent because it's our land, it's our house. And for food and electricity and telephone bills it will just be divided amongst you know us. Well not that I pay for anything 'cause I don't work so yah luckily. But all the wage earners in my family put something in. It's not compulsory. It's like a donation. It's what you give in and there's no complaining, I mean maybe sometimes I'm the one who complains because yeah I see the unfairness in things. But everything's smooth. And when I try to tell my palagi friends that they're like what, that's a bit weird you're still gonna stay home with your mother and your family and you know like we move out when we were 18 or 19 and live on our own. (Jessica)*

Jessica starts with a clarification of things that “we” pay for in New Zealand and do not pay for in Samoa. She leads with this to establish the contrast between the culture of her palagi friends and introduces their viewpoint of her Samoan way of life; *they still don't get the idea, like they can't grasp that idea of me staying home, that's a bit weird you're still gonna stay home*, all issues that point to a dramatic difference in lifestyles. She continues with her understanding of traditional palagi culture, where *when you're 18 it's kind of like it's time for you to move out*. Here Jessica explains why this is such a departure from her own experiences back in Samoa *going away from your family back home, like moving out of your family is kind of like isolating yourself and rejecting your family*. Unlike the New Zealand way of moving out at an early age to gain independence, Samoan culture is more focused on keeping the closeness of the family and maintaining relationships. Even when one family expands to include partners and children, they still remain in the home. But even more than this, moving out of the home is seen as a rejection of the family and becomes isolation for that member from the collective. Paul discussed the same elements of difficulty in his experience:



*Yes I think it's more stressful in New Zealand, because you have to worry about rent and there's always a lot of things you have to worry about, whereas in Fiji everyone's pretty carefree. (Paul)*

Participants identified that money difference was huge between the islands and New Zealand. Many had not experienced paying rent as land was usually passed down through family lines and in New Zealand there was no longer access to family plantations. Jessica pointed out that there was a different pressure in New Zealand and this sentiment was loudly echoed throughout all of the participants' diaries; *if you buy anything it costs money, one of the biggest changes for me was that everything that I do or everything that I get or want to get will cost money, you have to worry about rent, it's really hard over here.* Ruth also talked about the difference in the cost of living in New Zealand, and elaborated on many occasions the kinds of expenses she had never been faced with in the Cook Islands:

*That's something that has really come home for me being here and the nature of the bills. I mean my goodness, insurance on this, that and the other, housing rates that you know, they just sound as exotic as the money we have to pay for you know it's calculated on percentages, it's calculated on water, its calculated on council fees. All kinds of things and these things you don't even have to worry about at home. You know the government takes care of all of that through your taxes so yeah that's been a big learning curve. (Ruth)*

As a homeowner in New Zealand, Ruth quickly became aware of the added costs of having a mortgage and applicable expenses but later mentions her shock at paying for water and the collection of rubbish . . . *and knowing that you're gonna be paying water bills on top of everything else and then actually paying people to take away your rubbish.* While she felt that this gave her a strong sense of civic responsibility she also identified that these are expenses *you don't even have to worry about at home.* Ruth believed that this was not something that would ever cross over to the Cook Islands, describing her process of migration as *a big learning curve.*

More than just added expenses, Ruth highlighted an even more disturbing issue. In her time as a young woman in New Zealand her experiences highlighted the distress that some Pacific people went through as they tried to replicate the cultural values they knew so well in the islands. Clearly it was a struggle to survive collectively in their new environment:

*In the 70s it was more like taken for granted that you would have big families in a house. And I've lived that way too; I've lived in a house in Mangere where there were about 40 of us and one or two families per room. And then you had families parked outside in caravans and everyone was using one bathroom and one toilet and it was just chaos. It was a cacophony and awful things happened. Awful things happened to children, to women. Just the bashings and things like that. People just could not be expected to live like that and get along day after day after day. And a lot of them not working too so it's just really, really different and I understand when people don't want to live that way here anymore. Yeah, I understood also when I did the coverage of the wave of migrants in the late 90s and how they came to their senses a lot earlier. How a lot of them actually branched out and just started living on their own and not, you know overcrowding in homes and things like that. But there was that issue of overcrowding. (Ruth)*

This deprivation was for many the harsh reality of New Zealand and the new existence of their lives for themselves and their families. Ruth described the expectations of living in New Zealand as being the same as life in the islands; it was *taken for granted that you would have big families in a house*. She experienced people living in caravans with up to 40 inhabitants and although she does not detail the extent of “awful” she lets us know the conditions of life there as *chaos, cacophony, bashings, awful things happening to children, to women*. She experienced first-hand living in an environment that pushed its inhabitants to the limits, an environment that, while based on a collective structure, was in an alien country that did not support their cultural system. Ultimately, Ruth identifies that migrants from the Pacific in the 1990s realised a lot earlier that they needed to get out and be on their own. The awareness of being independent appeared to be more evident.

### ***Consciousness of difference***

Throughout their diaries another experience the participants talked about was becoming conscious of difference. Becoming conscious of difference appeared sometimes in the awareness of skin colour and searching out sales people in retail stores who were either the same or a different colour than themselves, or the realisation that they may be perceived as “becoming

palagi” by others in their own culture. Some participants held the perception that they were different because of the changes that they had made to themselves. Jessica was extremely conscious of the differences that she felt daily. She spoke not only about the incidents that physically identified her as “different” but also talked about her feeling of difference, highlighting a kind of class consciousness that many participants felt also. During her diaries, Jessica recalled an experience of feeling conscious of difference when I discovered that she did not shop at Kmart and asked her why:

*I just went to buy some stuff ‘cause we were going to Samoa the following week and that was when we were here last year and so I bought a lip gloss and then I came out that day with the lip gloss, then got home. I threw out the receipt and then the following day we went back to Kmart to buy some more stuff from Kmart and then yeah at the cashier till I pay for what I bought that day. Then I was coming out and then there was a beep then everyone looked at me and the lady told me to go back and come out and go out again and I did and it was the same thing. And then they just asked me if I had anything that I had bought you know before at Kmart. Then I told them honestly that I have lip gloss in here that I bought yesterday and then they said oh do I have the receipt and I said no and so there were many palagi there and they gave me the evils. You know they have that suspicion look on their faces that you know maybe I’ve stolen it because I’m brown. And so they told me that I should come in the next day with the receipt and then I’ll be off the hook and then I got home and looked in the bin for the receipt that I threw out and we went back the following day and I think she was the supervisor. And she came down smiling and said oh we’re terribly sorry for what happened yesterday but yeah, we know that you didn’t, that you paid for it. So it was the cashier’s fault, she didn’t de-stigmatise the label and they, they review the tape from the previous day and saw that I did pay for it. So they gave me a box of chocolate and apologised to me and my friends. One of my friends was going to give them a huge something to tell them off (about) what has happened. But I just told her no. I was really mad. I was embarrassed. It was very embarrassing and mad at the same time to the*

*cashier and to the supervisor for the treatment that she gave us and just her look on that face. You know she had that look, you're guilty. You know the guilty look. Yeah and it was, it was really bad and ever since that incident happened I kind of don't go there to Kmart anymore because I fear you know that its gonna happen again and I don't want it to happen again. Hopefully it's gonna be the last thing to happen to me. (Jessica)*

Jessica distinguished herself as a victim of a false accusation. From her point of view, she was subjected to this negative experience because of her colour; *there were many palagi there and they gave me the evils. You know they have that suspicion look on their faces that you know maybe I've stolen it because I'm brown.* She felt that this was their main justification for not believing her and because of that she felt *embarrassed and mad*. She describes the supervisor as having already made her mind up; *she had that look, you're guilty. You know the guilty look* and Jessica was determined not to have the experience repeated by returning to that shop. But this was one of Jessica's first experiences of feeling negatively aware of herself and certainly one of the most extreme. It became clear, however, that for her in particular being different from palagi was of considerable note. Jessica later contrasted this incident when she identified her preference for shopping involving avoidance of shops where there were *brown* employees serving her:

*I prefer to go to a shop where there's no brown person serving me because I don't know. If you, like for me if I go to a shop where the sales person is brown, you just have that feeling like she may be like what are you doing here? Like you know you have no size here or this is so not your fashion or you know? Yeah so I like to go to a shop where I don't see any brown person serving, I don't know why. . . . I just have that like feeling in me. I don't know. It's like they're judging me you know? 'Cause I'm brown. . . . But that is here, in New Zealand. But not in Samoa . . . you know in Samoa you just walk in, cause everyone is brown. Whereas here, I don't know. (Jessica)*

Jessica felt that she was being judged by *brown people* just as she had been judged by palagi, but for different reasons. For her, *brown people* may feel that she was out of place in their shop and ask themselves *what are you doing here?* She goes on to identify that this is just

what she feels in New Zealand and it is not the same for her in Samoa, where *everyone is brown*. Her feelings (whether justified or not) are a genuine acknowledgement of her consciousness of difference in New Zealand. Yet in addition to feeling this she also acknowledged that what she was learning to like about New Zealand culture was also a signifier to others within her own culture that she wanted to be something else:

*. . . living here in New Zealand I am exposed to more things. So if I go back home I surely want to buy cereal now for breakfast. And I think my taste my needs and wants is a mixture of Samoan and palagi things. . . . I'm kind of living in a contemporary society so I'm, I have been called, want-to-be-palagi. I am called you know, so many names and it's because, I think it's because of the lifestyle that I'm living in and I'm very independent, very independent. I'm my own boss that sometimes my mother just wants to kick me out of the house. (Jessica)*

Clearly Jessica was conscious of her difference. She was aware of herself when she was around palagi, when she avoided being served by *brown* shop assistants, when she was identified as liking palagi things. Her experiences pointed to the ways that she was not the same as others. Mabel also experienced feeling conscious of difference both about her skin colour and also her mixed marriage status:

*Being a brown person, mixed marriage . . . there was lots of racism going around I guess that's very human nature having to have a brown person fit in their community, a white affluent community. But I lived and lift my head high and walked tall because I felt proud of what I am, who I am, tough luck if they didn't like it because it was just the way it is and I was there and I was serving the community and I felt that I had a very good purpose to serve over there. However dealing with racisms my children were the ones that suffered because of children at school with prejudiciness and of course they've been you know, giving their name go home to your black mother 'f' something like that it was quite hurting to the children . . . I used to teach my children how I felt in my experience of, feel their worth, walk tall their father is serving the*

*community don't listen to what racism comment and remarks that come about. (Mabel)*

Mabel felt that she was identified in a negative way due to her colour by the wider community rather than solely within a retail environment. She was not too affected by these feelings until it started to impact on her children but, as she had done, she instructed her children to *walk tall* and *don't listen*. But while Mabel and Jessica both felt difference based on their colour there was also commentary made based on perspectives of the way things were done in New Zealand and the way that they would be seen by people within their own culture. Jessica identified some differences between the cultures:

*We're not like palagis who pay for everything. (Jessica)*

*. . . with spaghetti Bolognese all I wanna say is that we don't eat those kinds of food back home. It is so palagi-ish, so we don't eat that (Jessica)*

*And maybe I'll be called a wannabe palagi for it, but it's just the way it is. (Jessica)*

*Oh yeah and back home we don't have a washing machine, most Samoan families don't have a washing machines unless you're rich like really rich or you're half caste. So we have oh we hand wash our clothes. I don't do that. I don't know, maybe it's just me wanting to be a palagi or something, but I don't want to. I like my Samoan heritage. (Jessica)*

Jessica talks about palagi culture in an ambivalent manner. She acknowledges difference between the ways things are and enjoys many of the benefits of the new society; however, she also relegates any aspect of palagi culture that she has picked up as detracting from her own culture. She acknowledges that others will call her names; *maybe I'll be called a wannabe palagi, maybe it's just me wanting to be a palagi*. Even ownership of a washing machine implies values of palagi culture i.e., that they are *rich*, or that the owner is *half caste*. It is possible to see that palagi values in the islands are easily identifiable and this continues into New Zealand.

Becoming “conscious of difference” appeared as participants realised that they were no longer surrounded by family and located within a community, but isolated and independent. At

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

this point participants started to become aware of their perceived differences to those around them.

### *A New Kind of Selfish*

With the encompassing exposure to consumption and the increased availability of goods and services that were difficult to access in the islands, inevitably the individual had to adapt to the change surrounding them. Ruth found herself swept up in the new culture of wanting for herself and meeting that desire at the expense of her sibling:

*New Zealand also exposed me to the new peer pressures of dressing in the latest shoes that everyone else had, not the most sensible and cheap brand. Shoes which my older sister was only too happy to get on her Farmers card paying up to three times more than what we could afford . . . just so I could be happy. Looking back now, I became a new kind of selfish, allowed to be that way by a sister who could afford it, simply to encourage me to stay at school and carry on the achievement associated with an education. (Ruth)*

Foremost on Ruth's mind was her desire to fulfil the new wants she had developed since her migration. She talks about the peer pressure of having "more" and not just any kind, but the things that were *the latest*. Not even the costs of these items were deterrent enough for her to stop getting carried away. She describes herself as *a new kind of selfish, allowed to be that way by a sister who could afford it* and surprisingly it was all to encourage her to finish her education. Sarah also adapted to the new culture of consumption and, as with Ruth, it was around buying what she perceived to be the best available:

*. . . in Samoa there may be four or five different sorts of shampoo and that's it whereas here you know you have a whole row . . . I always find it interesting when people talk about what they're buying and a lot of them are focused on price and sort of like oh no it's too expensive we're not getting it we'll go with Budget but I can't stand Budget. I hate having to get things because they're cheap. And so I think sort of my own challenge has been to get to a place where I can actually choose what I want and take it because I like it and not because I have to. Why do I buy what I buy? Yeah pretty much cause I like it and it's just a choice thing and its quite funny 'cause my brother's starting to cause I buy all the stuff at home like he'll come shopping maybe every third week and he'll sort of come and say oh no can you get this,*



*oh why, 'cause I like that one I don't like the one you get. And so now I'm having to buy two different things 'cause I don't want to compromise with mine so I just buy his for him and then yeah. (Sarah)*

Sarah was the older sibling that assisted in providing for other family members who migrated to New Zealand. Even though she had this commitment to her family she felt that being able to buy what she wanted, rather than what she needed was a priority in her life that had come about due to the increased selection that she had in New Zealand. Sarah also talked about the growing wishes of her younger brother who she was supporting when he first arrived in New Zealand; *I hate having to get things because they're cheap . . . my brother's starting too; he'll sort of come and say oh no can you get this; now I'm having to buy two different things 'cause I don't want to compromise.* But as she goes on to admit, rather than denying either wish, she buys both so neither has to compromise.

Ownership had also become a point of contention for many participants. For those that were living in New Zealand, they saw any investment of money into family property or land as a kind of stake in that property. This assumption was not universally acknowledged out loud; however, it became apparent that participants felt “more ownership” or “entitlement” than their siblings when they had, or were actively involved in, providing money. These views contrasted sharply with the traditional view of collective ownership and posed potential questions for the future. Jessica had many diary entries regarding ownership and the dreams of owning her own house. She had talked about spending a lot of money on her mother's home, but she had never made it clear about what she thought this would mean for ownership, until the final interview:

*Charis: so when you spend a lot of money on the property, for example, in years to come, and your mum passes on, who do you see that house as belonging to? Do you see that as yours then since you've made such a big investment in it or do you see that as your brother that lives there. How does that work?*

*Jessica: Yeah, that's a tricky one aye. So for me I think, I think it's my house, since I'm the one that contributed the most or going to contribute the most but it's going to be the house of the person that's living there so whoever is living there at the time, that's the person who owns the house. But it's not so*

*much that, it's not so much he owns the house it's that, it's just that it's more like he is looking after the house. (Jessica)*

Jessica talked frequently about her desire to spend money on the family home back in Tonga and renovate it for her mother. When asked about the ownership of this property if she did spend large quantities of money on the property she struggled; *that's a tricky one aye. So for me I think I think it's my house, since I'm the one that contributed the most or going to contribute the most.* But as she finishes, *it's not so much he owns the house . . . it's more like he is looking after the house.* When Jessica talked about ownership away from the context of her own family she acknowledged that there were significant changes in how younger couples saw owning their own house and land, away from their family:

*Jessica: It's different in Samoa. It's a family affair. Everyone, there are people in Samoa who own their own homes, but they're mostly young people, yeah young people that are just living in this new era, so, but most people in Samoa the house is a family house . . . So immediate family only. . . . So they divide it into different lands and give this area of the land to maybe the eldest child. But like some other families, they have one house, like one house and everyone lives in it. That one house, so everyone lives in that one big house. Like no matter how many children. And even if those children migrate overseas, like come to New Zealand and (Australia) and then go back, they just go back to that house, that same old house. They've been brought up mostly yeah the same house. But now this new generation, most of these new people they're trying to make a house you know, of their own, by their own money. Move out of the house that they were brought up in, the family house. So they move out of that house and get their own house yeah and it's very modernized and you know, trying to get used to New Zealand or overseas idea of getting your own house and then, yeah, just that. Ownership, do savings for your children, so when they grow up and they have money and security for them. (Jessica)*

Interestingly Jessica refers to living in the family house with *immediate family only*; however, immediate family constitutes a much bigger circle than the traditional New Zealand

nuclear family. In Samoa, this is extended to include siblings' partners, children and inevitably parents and grandparents from whom the land is passed down. She describes this family composition later as *the house I was talking about before upgrading the house that we have now, that's the house where my mother is staying at and one brother and wife and three kids and sister and a brother. So we all stay in that same house.* Jessica explains the family entitlement to land and the normality of living with family members is part of the culture, but she also acknowledges that changes are occurring both at a societal level within Samoa where *this new generation, most of these new people they're trying to make a house you know, of their own, by their own money* and within herself as an individual; *So for me I think I think it's my house, since I'm the one that contributed the most or [is] going to contribute the most.*

**Access to ‘More’**

Participants identified gaining access to “more” as a big expectation of living in New Zealand. “More” variety, access, choices, opportunities, money, “things”; there were many possibilities of more. But within the process of gaining “more”; there was also more change, so although participants were able to experience having ‘more’ they were also faced with having to navigate a system of change that was foreign to them. The consumption of food was one such area identified by participants as a domain of expectation and change. Change appeared in all stages of the food consumption process, from preparation, to purchase, to consuming, to sharing. As such an important part of Pacific culture, the change in food consumption held many emotions and became a trigger for other meaningful reflections, from reducing communication at meal-times to the role of women in the home.

### *Dreaming of food*

The different style of cooking, increased variety and access to food was a significant part of expectations that were largely based on reality. Paul focused on food as a point of “more” and embraced the New Zealand style of food, while other participants saw that this change was both positive and negative:

*Back in Fiji my diet consisted of rice, curry, curried dhal which is basically peas without meat and food was not that big. Wesley College food was quite good here and [we] had quite a lot to eat. Big breakfast, big lunch and massive dinner which had chicken, heaps of meat, while in Fiji there wasn't really meat or potato. Everything was basically based around rice 'cause I think rice was the cheapest thing back then to buy. (Paul)*

In Fiji, Paul lived on a restricted diet based predominantly around foods that were cheap and accessible. He emphasises that food was *not that big*, and talks about food improving when he moved to New Zealand. In later diary entries he spoke more about the importance of food to him back in Fiji and how the increased availability to food in New Zealand impacted on his weight:

*Like for me in comparison from when I was back in Fiji probably [the] thing which I would hold precious to me was something, for example, would be when I was in boarding school in Fiji was probably food particularly 'cause in boarding school in Fiji food was something that was very hard to come by; hence the 75kgs before coming to New Zealand. But yeah food is always cherished. A packet of cookies could last you a week if you plan it out real well. But yeah it was pretty good, but sharing was not part of the deal. You used to have your own lockers where you could hide your stuff, hide your food. But yeah like back then I didn't really have a lot of treasured items, just the basics back at boarding school just foods and stuff, but nothing too trivial or nothing too important (Paul)*

Paul illustrates the contrast between living in the two countries vividly. As a school boy he explains that *food was something that was very hard to come by, food is always cherished.*

His experiences differ from what other participants pointed out about coming together over food; that is, in his experience as a child *sharing was not part of the deal*. He had to hide the food that he had so that it would last as long as he could *plan it out* and when asked what was his most “prized possession” in Fiji he identified that it was food. The difference from other Pacific cultures around sharing, in this instance, may be related more to the financial hardships of life in Fiji rather than a change in cultural values. Paul went on later to explain that he piled on the weight during his time in New Zealand especially when he was in boarding school and had his meals made for him. It was not until he regained his focus on rugby that he shed the extra weight gain. Jessica also identified food as important to her and had developed a taste for New Zealand cuisine, but suspected it wouldn’t be well received back in Samoa:



Figure 26: Spaghetti bolognese (Jessica)

*We had that spaghetti bolognese yum and pasta. Yum. I've already eaten so that's cool, so yeah with spaghetti bolognese all I wanna say is that we don't eat those kind of food back home. It is so palagi-ish, so we don't eat that but it's funny and really weird, when I first came and I used to live in Studholme Hall and those were the types of food that we used to eat and I got straight in. I dived in and had fun eating it and it tasted so great that I instantly fell in love with the food and it's one of my favourite meals and yeah so good, but I'm telling you that if I go back home and prepare that for my family no one's gonna eat it. Which is good 'cause I'll just have the whole thing for myself.*  
(Jessica)

Jessica's passage identifies that there are not only differences in food choices but also in how these new forms of food would be received in Samoa, specifically with her family. Her assessment of spaghetti bolognese as such a foreign food *we don't eat those kind of food back home, it is so palagi-ish* hints towards a feeling of stigma about the adoption of palagi culture. She raises this insight into Pacific consumption of foreign foods and identifies this as a site for cultural maintenance or rejection of Western foods and culture within the islands. So even though she admits her feelings about the food *tasted so great, instantly fell in love, my favourite meal* she hesitates in making that food for her family when she goes back home. She "knows" they will reject it; *no one's gonna eat it*. Joel also considers that the types of food have changed, but focuses on how this fact has created disharmony when considered in relation to the new sedentary New Zealand lifestyle:

*. . . the whole lifestyle was changed, from ah, I'd say back in the islands it was a lot more healthy. The lifestyle than when you are here, cause you used to do a lot of walking, used to go to the bush and weed a huge garden or something you know. And the food is real basic you know real basic food and your diet is real basic. Whereas over there, there were a lot more variety of different types of food that you're not used to like you know, for example, you're exposed to the McDonalds, KFC, Chinese food, so I guess that's one other change. (Joel)*

Joel raises an interesting point in his passage regarding the changing nature of food and lifestyle as a union. Not only is there physicality involved in the collection of foods in Tonga from plantations *used to go to the bush and weed a huge garden* but the range of food in the islands is substantially less than in New Zealand; *your diet is real basic*. This also reflects Paul's previous statement of diet being basic in Fiji. Upon coming to New Zealand, there is a vast array of food choice and, good or bad, those choices are easily accessible and comparatively cheap. Joel mentions many of the favourites of Pacific people: *McDonalds, KFC, Chinese food* pointing to the decline in his involvement in the creation of food and reflective of many other changing Pacific lifestyles. Ruth extends on Joel's comments and discusses the effect that the changes in lifestyle and increased food choices are having on the health of individuals:

*. . . food is such a pivotal point of our lives. I know that we've got this whole big obesity epidemic going on amongst Pacific people. We've got cultures really, our Cook Island culture is just so based around food and being in New Zealand I mean it allows you to do it even more so because food here is so cheap, so plentiful. It's all the good stuff, it's all the bad stuff, it's all the really oily stuff like KFC, and we just tend to go overboard on it before we even get all those messages on health that are coming out, but you just gotta be watchful of all of that I guess. So everything we do revolves around food and I think it's an appropriate way to start my video diaries. . . . I hope you know a little bit more about me by the time this ramble is done and a bit more about one of our favourite pastimes which is eating! (Ruth)*

Ruth emphasises the centrality of food in Pacific cultures; *food is such a pivotal point of our lives*. She specifically acknowledges that food is important to Cook Islands culture, but it is clear that food is important to all Pacific cultures as a significant process of sharing, an expression of wealth, a sign of respect and even love. Food is central to events not just formal events, but in everyday informalities such as family gatherings, interactions and giving; *everything we do revolves around food, one of our favourite pastimes which is eating*. She goes on to describe the importance of food, linking it to the church and culture:





Figure xxx: Everything your guests could wish for.

*Every little thing that starts [and] closes in the Cook Islands starts and closes with a prayer. Every little act or meeting or whatever you can do. Whether if it involves people gathering, dressing up and a little bit of food. The pastors gonna be there, his wife is gonna be there, if you're lucky some of the apiianga. Apiianga is the people who are like training to become pastors so that they will be there and you can count on them walking out with all the food when it's all over so it's all good but yeah that's definitely a part of our culture. (Ruth)*

Ruth describes prayer as starting and ending events but also present is food. Food represents more than just a bodily function. It is alofa, caring, a sign of prosperity, joy, grief; anything can be an occasion to share food. Ruth also talks about giving the food away; *you can count on them walking out with all the food when it's all over*. Participants also tried to bring techniques of their culture regarding food to New Zealand with them; however, much of the

methods of food preparation and technology had changed. Joel put down many of the changes in food preparation to the “times”:

*. . . for example, back in Tonga I would, I'd go maybe once to the supermarket. Over here it's pretty much at least two times a week that you have to go to the supermarket. That's one change, the other changes, is that how you are back in the olden days, before fridges and stuff and freezers were available I'm talking about the technology, the changes in technology. It was a huge difference, cause I remember as a kid when I was maybe well 2, 3, 4 my parents used to do, like I said before about buying bulk stuff. You know meat and how they used to store meat for a longer period of time. I remember they used to put them in containers with a lot of salt. And [that] meat would have to last for months like you know the longer that they want it for, the more salt they add in. (Joel)*



Figure 27: I still buy in bulk (Joel)

Refrigerated storage was not available for Joel and his family in the islands in the 1960's and many Pacific people still live without these facilities. Limited access to utilities such as power, in addition to low wages and the high cost of fridges, ovens, televisions and washing machines, mean that even today it is still a luxury in the islands to have such technology, as opposed to New Zealand where it is abnormal not to have these facilities in every home. Jessica

described her love of cooking back in Samoa and how cooking was more of her father's job. The "boil up" of food was the dominant method of cooking while the umu was also part of the outside kitchen:

*I used to do chores but chores like doing the picking up the rubbish. I like going to the kitchen 'cause we have kitchen, not the palagi kitchen but back in the island we have those kitchens outside where we do our umus. Like the, it's the underground oven, oh underground thing that's Māoris (sic) do. Forgot what it's called. Yeah we have an umu 'cause I was really close to my dad 'cause I really like going back there and do the boy stuff. But I'm not a tom boy but I really like doing the boy stuff. I used to, but not anymore. (Jessica)*



Figure 28: Cooking house in Samoa (Natalie)

The facilities for cooking and preparing food for the majority of people were and remain significantly different from the islands to New Zealand. The process of cooking in the islands was more physical and predominantly in the outdoors; *we have those kitchens outside where we*

*do our umus.* Ruth also enjoyed the traditional methods of cooking and tried to bring this island style over to New Zealand in the form of an adapted umu but met with potential opposition:

*These two drums at the back here we are going to set them up, or we're going to set them up to be a umu, an earth oven, which in Papua New Guinea is called a Mumu. But we never got round to it I think it's against the council regulations here so we'd get into too much trouble and they've just been resting there against the side of the house since we arrived. (Ruth)*

Her desire to recreate the cooking style of her culture was substantial but while she would have liked to have that option she had already made her mind up that the regulations would be too big a hurdle so she left the issue at that. Joel also noticed the loss of cooking in the umu. When he was younger it was a family tradition and the event gathered family members together; it also meant that the church rules could be adhered to:

*One of the differences were how they prepare food and how you know in the islands how they used to make umu or hangi as they all know it over here. You know so a hangi, a huge hangi on a Saturday evening will last the whole family up until Monday so because we belong to a Seventh Day Adventist we used to do our umu on a Saturday afternoon. So we'll have Saturday evening tea and then we'll leave that until the following day 'cause were not allowed to cook on a Sunday so we'll eat that food on a Sunday and hopefully it'll finish by the end of that Sunday. So the change of preparing food was different 'cause over here everybody is working, you hardly see all your family members. (Joel)*

There was more than the loss of the traditional cooking methods however. Joel started to consider the factors that impacted his changing family structure in New Zealand. In particular, he identified that food preparation was changing due to increased work hours and lack of contact with family members. Food preparation and meaning were changing for many participants in varying ways and undoubtedly brought about feelings of loss at aspects of the culture that were being left behind. Jessica brought up her sadness at the loss of eating together and felt that many of the changes occurring for her and other Pacific people were both good and bad:

*Back then my parents used to eat first and everyone else in the family eats later. Now we're kind of like into the new age, where we eat together or sometimes we eat before our mother. Yeah so things have changed and I do hope they are not drastic changes. I do hope that they change over time. But the things that I don't want to change, I hope that they will stay there forever and the things that have changed I do hope that they are for the good, like for the betterment of that section of our culture. (Jessica)*

Jessica mentions the changing order of eating from the hierarchical system of traditional culture; *my parents used to eat first, now . . . we eat together, we eat before our mother*, but notes that she is not entirely sure if this is for the *betterment of that section of our culture*. While she is aware of the change in meal times, she goes on to highlight her wariness about the potential impact of these changes over time; *I do hope they are not drastic changes, the things that I don't want to change, I hope that they will stay there forever*. After further reflection in subsequent diary entries Jessica later discusses the structure of eating and reduction of communication during mealtimes after her farewell meal at the completion of her studies in New Zealand:

*But yeah from the dinner yeah we just picked our food and then go back into the living room and eat it. And the old people are just eating in the dining room. Back in Samoa and in our culture, we don't eat first. Our parents and the elders eat first and then, and then we have to like prepare just stay near and see if they need something and be there when they ask for something. And we don't eat until they're all done. Which is something that in these days I find, I don't really, I know a few families who are still doing it, because in my own family we all eat together at the same time, but when my father was alive . . . my parents actually eat first with the younger children and then the older ones will just eat after my parents eat. Whereas these days we eat together or we eat whenever, like I eat whenever I wanna eat. There's no particular time to you know all sit down together and eat. Which is in my opinion a downfall of the new changes. Because the new purpose of those dinner get-togethers, or dining at one time is to let the child, or in our culture and in my family especially after our evening service is we have our meal,*



*our dinner and it's through that time where, it's during that time or before that time that we get to, you know, share with our parents what we've been doing during the day and tell them you know something we are not happy about it. Or tell them something exciting that happened. It was like a . . . story-tell time to tell them what we've been through and what was so exciting about it or what was a shortfall of that and nowadays we eat whenever we want to eat. So it's more of like that communication is ignored. And there's no time for the parents to converse with their children. So yeah it's a pitfall of that. But yeah dinner today was really good. (Jessica)*

Jessica talks again about the unwritten rules of the order of eating. She points out that not only do elders eat first, but it is traditional for the younger generation to wait around and assist them if required; *see if they need something and be there when they ask for something*. Moreover, she relates the act of eating to a time when the children get to share and communicate with their parents about the day; *it's during that time or before that time that we get to share with our parents, a story-tell time to tell them what we've been through*. But the reality of New Zealand means that longer working hours and greater distances between families have reduced mealtimes to the function of consuming; *nowadays we eat whenever we want to eat, there's no particular time to all sit down together and eat*.

Ruth also identified various changes in the meaning of consuming food. For her there was a big contrast between her upbringing as a Cook Island/Samoan woman and her husband, who was of Melanesian descent:



Figure 29: Food at any function (Ruth)

*Yeah so there was that function and just in the whole preparation of food again, I just find that it's kind of moved away from you know, how I grew up at home where the men are almost as involved in the cooking as the women and in the case of my father, even more so. My dad is part Samoan and he used to cook the most delicious meals, in fact we kind of looked forward to it when we knew dad was in the kitchen cooking because he just knew all the taste come out of meat and he could do inventive things with just a bag of flour. He could turn it into home-made noodles and things like that and I don't know too much about my fa'aSamoa because we were raised in the Cook Islands and dad had to come to Rarotonga to you know to get mum but from what I know the men or at least my dad was not afraid to be in the kitchen. It wasn't something that was kind of taboo or effeminate. So we just got used to seeing that and I think it shows comfortably in my brothers. They're all able to fend for and care for themselves unless, of course, there's a woman standing by keen to spoil them and then they'll just sit back as men do and let it all happen. (Ruth)*

Ruth's observations and experience of a man's role in the home had been based on a mixture of Cook Island and Samoan values. She had expectations that this would remain the same, however, she noticed that the values were not the same as her husband's:

*So that's interesting watching the roles of people that prepare the food. It has been quite an experience in New Zealand because I got it on tape, I mean that you know it's, it's the 'done thing' now you know the women I guess are the ones who prepare all the food and who do the kitchen stuff and things like that. So that's been a bit of an eye opener for me and just the fact that I think that it shows that being in New Zealand, being married across cultures it impacts on the way you were brought up, it impacts on the way you live your life and how you pass on those practices to your children and I just hope that despite the very strong Melanesian influence in the house that I'm in that I'll be able to pass on to my son here with me that need for independence or at least to know how to boil his own water for coffee and cook a few eggs and*

*say can I help you when he's around women whose obviously got a lot on her plate literally got a lot of things to do. (Ruth)*

Ruth's observations of women's role in New Zealand were based on her two-fold experiences, one as a new migrant to New Zealand, but also as a woman in a cross-cultural marriage with two different expectations of the role of women within the home. Although this is the "new" norm in their family, her reflections are only tied to New Zealand through the fact they now live here. During her reflections and learning Sarah also found that the women's role within the home was actually not tied to the kitchen:

*But cooking I know it's not the traditional Samoan women's role, like I know I mean I've been researching and I was actually quite shocked to find out that cooking was the men's job but it's always since Christianity came to Samoa has always been the woman that have cook and done everything in the kitchen and the house. I've always seen food as you know sort of it's my time to catch up with my brother and sort of we always make sure he's home at a certain time if I'm cooking. And I think that's just sort of my way of making sure he's ok and there's always food around so I mean it's not like but I've always seen cooking as quote an important part of living with family and going through the whole process of teaching my brother how to cook. (Sarah)*

Sarah made mealtimes a point of catching up and communicating with her brother about how things were in his life. She has attempted to retain the traditions of mealtimes as Jessica discussed earlier and found this a successful method of connecting with her brother and teaching him, as Ruth was trying to do with her son, the basics of cooking and job-sharing within the home.





Figure 30: Learning and teaching how to cook (Jessica)

Food brought together family and was an important communication tool. In the islands participants talked about the significance of food as a conduit of social custom and signifier of respect and alofa. It was present at all events from the everyday to the special. Food meaning changed in New Zealand however as participants realised that family was more difficult to access because of time and distance. Some participants felt that this change was good, but others felt that this was a loss of a very significant aspect of the culture. Overall participants noted, that although they achieved access to more, the way they used food had changed irreparably.

### *Dreaming of Drinking*

While I was not looking to find addiction issues within my participant selection process, excessive consumption was unavoidably a big part of some of the participants' experiences. Three out of the nine participants talked about either excessive or addictive consumption. Paul talked about drinking as part of his weekly routine and while Joel had reflected on his own experiences of home brewing in Tonga when he was only 10, it was when he arrived in New Zealand that drinking was normalised as a part of his migration experience. Even if participants did not personally have contact with drinking they knew of others who had struggled with

controlling alcoholism. When questioned about the type of drinking they were doing in New Zealand, neither Paul nor Joel felt that this was “normal” behaviour back home. Joel experienced first-hand the kind of new cultural norms in New Zealand, specifically around sport:

*But for me it was a learning experience, whereas back in the islands there was no such thing as after match function or you know go to someone's house for a party. I was exposed to like drinking alcohol because everybody does it at that age. It's like a culture that you belong to. You go play on a Saturday then you go for a few beers afterwards. So that was a huge change. (Joel)*

Joel identified the differences of drinking in New Zealand as opposed to Tonga: *it was a learning experience; (in Tonga there is) no such thing as (an) after-match-function; I was exposed to like drinking alcohol because everybody (in New Zealand) does it at that age; It's like a culture that you belong to.* Joel begins to date his drinking experience not only to his arrival in New Zealand but also to his links to sports, in his case, rugby. Furthermore, he ties drinking to the “culture” of New Zealand. For Paul his exposure to alcohol in New Zealand had seen him commit to routine drinking that had become a way of life:

*It was sort of like Wesley College but we were given just a little bit more freedom. In the sense that alcohol consumption was just a few blocks away, Liquorland. And being 18 also made it quite possible to push this treasured water. (Paul)*

*. . . it's more of a way of life down in New Zealand. They do drinking in Fiji but it's normally just limited to a Saturday night but down here it's practically on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday . . . 'cause being in Dunedin, being a scarfie you're supposed to drink on a Wednesday, Thursday, Friday so I think that's why I drink that much. But back in Fiji I wasn't really a drinker. I [had] never drunk alcohol it's just since I've been down here that I've discovered a taste for it. (Paul)*

Paul also makes the same connections and mirrors what Joel is saying about the culture of alcohol consumption in New Zealand: *alcohol consumption was just a few blocks away (from Wesley College); it's more of a way of life down in New Zealand; I never drunk alcohol it's just since I've been down here that I've discovered a taste for it.* Paul talks about alcohol as *treasured*

water and adapted to this aspect of the sporting culture, just as Joel had done when he arrived. As a result of their experiences, both men make the distinction between private and public drinking. Private drinking in their home nations (Fiji and Tonga) had given way to a new culture of public, social and acceptable drinking within New Zealand society. This social-acceptability coupled with the reduced social requirement to attend church meant that there were fewer barriers to participating in drinking activity. In fact as both of them point out, it was a way of life, part of adapting to the culture of New Zealand. Ruth also noticed the reliance of young men on alcohol:

*And then there was this whole thing of “on the dole” you know. We joked about it being working for the Government where you just signed up and then you got paid while not working. It was the weirdest expectation of all. Man, I can get paid for not working? So that was weird for a lot of Cook Islanders I knew, to get their heads around, particularly young men who didn’t have the will to work in factories and things like that. I found that they turned to alcohol very quickly and yeah, turned to alcohol, smoking and now we have the new alcohol which is the casino in Central Auckland or casinos anywhere. (Ruth)*

While both Paul and Joel were involved in the same sites for drinking (sports-related), Ruth made the connection between excessive and compulsive forms of consumption more broadly to “young men” who had migrated to New Zealand. She identified that, once they found that life here was not what they had expected, they began to fill their lives in other ways; *they turned to alcohol very quickly and yeah, turned to alcohol, smoking and now we have the new alcohol which is the casino in Central Auckland or casinos anywhere (Ruth)*. This, in turn, facilitated the use of alcohol, almost as a way to pass the time. From her observations, she draws a comparison between the addiction of alcohol and the replacement of this with gambling.

### ***Powerful and Irrational Addiction***

Although gambling was an issue discussed indepth by only one participant of this project, it was a large component of her diary discussion. On several occasions Mabel used the camera as a confessional, purging herself of the pain, heartache and frustration she felt at herself for

being cursed with this affliction that she felt she had little control over. One of her most detailed entries on her addiction occurred after a night out in Auckland with her partner and her despair was clearly apparent. He was trying to help her see the futility of gambling and in the argument that ensued Mabel emphasised that they were still single and free to leave the relationship. It was difficult for me to watch this entry on the first occasion and immediately I contacted her under the guise of something else to check on her well being. She had beaten herself up during this entry and was visibly shaken:

*We went to the Casino and then we went back to our hotel and I found that we had a bit of a disagreement there about my gambling problem and everything that he said was right. I feel I'm naughty and this is part of the danger of me being independent and knowing that I'm still single I can do what I like and really doing what I like is good, but then it's no good because I have the addiction problem and yes I did spend quite a bit of money at the Casino. . . . But man, it is a very, very hard effort trying to shake off this addiction attitude, and I'm not saying I'm proud of it . . . but it's getting to the stage now that it's becoming a problem. . . . I'm a bit hard with myself, thinking in that way because it boils down to the end of the line it is me, it is my action, it is my stupidity and the consequence in the long run and yeah I am still walking that journey, discovering myself and I don't find that very comfortable. Yeah, I'm beating myself up, inside me. It's very hard and it's very tough. So at the moment I'll leave it at that, that's the only reflection I could offer you for today. (Mabel)*

Quite clearly Mabel was having a hard time with her addiction. Prior to this entry, I had only a little insight into the severity of the issue in her life and the way it had made her feel. Mabel talked about her feelings of herself and her actions regarding gambling mercilessly, on occasion judging herself extremely harshly; *I feel I'm naughty, part of the danger of me being independent, it is my action, it is my stupidity and the consequence in the long run, I'm beating myself up, I went home beating my head, calling myself all the names under the earth; admitting it I feel shameful; it is my stupidity and the consequence (is mine)*. Although I had some knowledge of why Mabel had started gambling (i.e., after her husband's passing), I became more concerned with helping her understand her own thoughts on this. The day following the entry

above Mabel went into further detail about the extent of her addiction and why she felt it had become such a compelling force in her life:

*I must admit that I spend \$1,000 at the Casino and that to be honest was nothing compared to the first two years when I started gambling. I was a heavy gambler approximately of my gambling in the first 2-3 years. I could say it was over \$100,000 just gambling it away. I guess I had it at the time but I didn't really know what to do with it. Going through grieving [husband's passing away] I guess for me at the time why did I go to the casino? Where did it start from? It start from Australia when I went to visit my family and my brother-in-law and my sister took me there and I guess I had a bit of a buzz there once and when I came back to New Zealand after two weeks of holidaying over there with my children, I think it's that feeling of loneliness, lost, despite living with my oldest sister in Auckland. There was something that was so unsettled within myself and the reason why I went to stay with my sister because I thought the cultural support will help. But it didn't. It felt like I was smothered, somewhat by their over-caring and wanting to know where I go, who I go with, what I've been up to and in that sense I guess I look around being in the city in Auckland there was nothing else to do. So that's what happened, took myself away just to get away from the family and that's where I ended up in either a little club up the road and instead of turning to drinking to bury my sorrow, I found the pokie machine was sort of much more exciting. And the reason of going through that excitement there were quite a few reasons I think . . . when I sit in front of a machine, I sort of lock my mind into it and it just me and the machine and shut the world out. Number two, being within the environment just knowing that there are people around, helps. Socially included but not necessarily interact as much with them or associate with them at all. So I guess that kind of isolation activities and within a social environment provided a comfortable kind of environment to be. And about money it was not about going there to spend, to get money or to win money it was just a kind of pure fun and after a long time I sort of realise, what a mindless fun, because sometimes I would*

*go and spend up to, I think my biggest spend in one night was \$10,000 in one night. I had the money in the bank and I went with my nephew, my sister's second son. I went to the big casino in Auckland and by sunrise in the morning when dawn came that \$10,000 was gone I went home beating my head, calling myself all the names under the earth, what a stupid, you know person I was, but that's what happened. And for me talking about it, admitting it, I feel shameful in some ways especially when I know that my children could do with that money. But then on the other hand, I didn't feel guilty because I gave them five grand each when you know, when my husband passed away, I took them away to Australia for a holiday and I don't know what went through in my mind and you often hear people say yeah I suppose you know you can't take your money with you when you die, so it was all sorts of different information entered my ears and sort of bombarded and left me in quite a confusion and in my way of finding myself losing out quite a large amount of money in that sense and I guess I'm still struggling with that at the moment . (Mabel)*

Mabel suffered deeply as a result of her gambling addiction and had worked very hard to move past this, relying on will-power, counselling and God. She had initially started gambling as a method of grieving the loss of her husband and talked in her diaries of how she got started: *instead of turning to drinking to bury my sorrow, I found the pokie machine was sort of much more exciting; I think it's that feeling of loneliness; shut the world out; just knowing that there are people around helps.* She was aware that it was something that she wanted to take control over. In another entry she describes gambling for her as a compelling force; *it's just the most powerful and yet irrational kind of thoughts that come to my head and it just sort of over power my whole common sense.* Throughout her diaries she referred to the on-going struggles of beating her addiction, which sometimes she was leaving behind and, at other times, she was embracing. Her deep feelings of disappointment in herself served only to perpetuate the feelings of guilt she had. She felt that her addiction had an extremely strong hold over her and although she had experienced some reprieve during the process of filming, she admitted to me later that she still partook in gambling on pokie-machines.

### **In Closing: Wanting more**

The perceptions of New Zealand as being the land of milk and honey were created by stories of wealth and success. There is a persistent image of New Zealand as the land of opportunity and the answer to many of the issues of poverty in the islands. Part of this is true. It is undeniable that in New Zealand there is access to much more of nearly everything that is available (or not available) in the islands. But this is where that illusion ends. The dream of New Zealand is just that, a dream of a utopian society that has access to anything and opportunities for everyone. The reality of New Zealand is far from this fantasy. Here you have to work for every penny and nothing is for free. Potentially many of the negative experiences and feelings faced by participants could have been avoided if they had, had a more authentic understanding of the difficulties involved with attaining the “dream” and moving to such a vastly different culture. The contrast of perception to reality is an on-going disillusion, irresponsible and disappointing

Wanting more became a journey in itself. First, participants learnt the value of money in New Zealand: that everything costs. It was a struggle for participants as they came to terms with realising that they had to fend for themselves and had to learn to save. Once this reality was accepted then they worked toward having the things that they wanted when they were in the islands. But this stage was periodically overrun by feelings of guilt at not spending money on their family. They felt some aspects of guilt as they got used to thinking about themselves and not always their families (or at least not thinking of their families first). Participants would justify their purchases on themselves after a period of deprivation; i.e., wearing something until it was worn out, not buying something they wanted.

### ***Consciousness of difference***

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Participants acknowledged that they were “different” and talked about the realisation of this difference in their own lives. To alleviate this sensation, some participants attempted to transfer their lives in the islands over to New Zealand without much adaption of New Zealand values. This transference proved to be difficult as participants realised that the social, political and environment constraints were too big. Ruth highlighted the issue of Pacific families trying to

recreate the living situation of the extended family in New Zealand. This attempt at recreation led to overcrowding issues and “unbearable” conditions.

### ***Powerlessness – Addiction***

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A negative side effect of desiring more was in the powerlessness that it afforded. Some were involved in heavy drinking as they tried to fit into the new culture of New Zealand and bury the loss of their old culture, and others (Mabel) were seeking out a way to reduce links to the past through gambling (i.e., mourning, alleviating obligation). While I was not looking to find addiction issues within my participant selection process, excessive and compulsive consumption was unavoidably a big part of some of the participants’ experiences. One participant talked about drinking as part of their weekly routine and another had experienced the normalisation and culture of drinking when he/she arrived in New Zealand. Even if participants did not personally have contact with drinking they knew of others who had struggled with controlling alcoholism. When questioned about the type of drinking, they were doing in New Zealand none felt that this was “normal” behaviour back home.



## 11. STORYLINE FIVE: MAINTAINING CULTURE THROUGH OBLIGATION

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### **Bread!!**

Fresh, soft, white crusty bread, sliced and well packaged,  
The knife slices through the butter,  
kept warm through the humidity of the cupboard.  
It oozes caressingly over the bread, as  
this natural dairy product through its  
final action in life and then to be  
demolished and mangled by my pearly  
white enamels.  
I too as the oldest Samoan boy in the family  
like the butter, have been through this process –  
When my father applied pressure from  
his hand onto my body and nearly  
demolished and mangled my pearly white  
enamels – I hope to God I don't make any  
mistakes today.  
I bite! I chew!  
And as I chew my hand reaches tantalisingly  
towards another piece of enamel.  
No! not the enamel of my teeth to  
pick away at the pieces of bread stuck  
between the gaps.  
But the enamel of the tin mug,  
well used as you can tell by the little  
black spots where the enamel paint  
has been chipped away.  
It is the vessel for holding my tea  
Tea with milk  
Strong and Sweet – like my mother.  
Oh Mother! You smile, you laugh.  
All night you hug me and I am warm  
But these nights are lonely now.  
For now you work nights cleaning the offices of  
the palagi.  
For now we see you for two hours every  
night before you must go to sleep and rest  
to start work at 11 p.m.  
Finish at 7 a.m. and go straight to your  
day job to start at 8 a.m.  
You hold back the pain  
But your eyes deceive you,  
And tell me the truth  
Your dreams are now my dreams

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

You are so tired mother  
Yet you keep struggling  
You laugh  
Yet I know your knees are hurting from  
scrubbing the stench of urine from  
around the toilet bowls of the Public Service.  
As the tears well up in my eyes  
The sound of the car brings me back to  
reality.  
I quickly gulp the last of my tea  
and bread.  
Oh my God! I haven't done the saka  
... ah! but wait  
It is fish and chips day today.  
When I get my School Cert and U.E.  
I will stop all this nonsense mother,  
You and father will have everything  
Paid for when I become rich and  
famous.  
I will buy you a car, a dishwasher,  
a colour T.V., um..., aah...  
and anything else money can buy.  
I will..., I will...  
If only I could?  
If only we all could?

(Umaga, 1989, p. 38)

Storyline five focuses on the ways in which participants attempted to maintain aspects of their culture through obligation. This may have included; giving back to their families; sending money home; and looking after and supporting migrated family members. It is about losing the familiar physical environment but still keeping hold of the traditional customs of each culture to ground the individual, keeping him or her tied to the family and working toward attaining the “dream” of New Zealand for those that could not be here and remained in the islands. In some cases, participants felt a stronger urge than others to assist family that were back in the islands but it became harder for all participants to maintain this desire the longer they spent in New Zealand, where they began to develop individual mind-sets and behaviours.

Within participant diaries, obligation, giving, fa'alavelave, reciprocity, and responsibility were all terms used interchangeably as participants talked about the ties to their culture and their families. These concepts were intertwined not only in the complexity of everyday life, but also within participants' video diary sessions when they were retelling previous events. It was so difficult to tease out the individual topics I decided that maybe that was the point: to leave them as participants experienced them – not as distinct categories of culture, but as topics welded together not only within the individual island cultures, but also intertwined with palagi words and constructs. Sarah summed up the meaning of giving in the Samoan context when she talked about reciprocity. Her understanding of giving could easily be translated to other contexts of obligation and to other Pacific cultures:

*Let's say someone dies from my family, another family will come and give us gifts and it helps. Like they'll give food, money . . . and fine mats, it doesn't really matter. But they'll give whatever they can and that'll help cover whatever we have to do. And then the same happens if someone from their family dies, our family goes and gives them you know gifts to help them through and . . . it is kind of a sign of respect for the person who has died, but it's more a sign of respect for the family as a whole. And acknowledging that we all need to work together to make things work, to make things happen. (Sarah)*

From Sarah's understanding, we can see that giftgiving is tied in with obligation. Giving represents a message from the givers' family to the receivers' family. Giving is akin to how

much the relationship is valued. Sarah also talks about reciprocity, the *give* and the *take*. Giving is most commonly thought of as a one-way process where the giver does not expect something in return from the receiver and reciprocity is more about the process of giving as a mutual exchange, where one person gives and the receiver will give back at another time. However, with Sarah's understanding in mind, participant's interchangeability of terms becomes extraneous in the context of Pacific giving. Because, although there are different protocols and procedures for giving, the characteristics from Sarah's definition; *another family will come and give us gifts and it helps, sign of respect, acknowledging that we all need to work together*, run concurrently through other participants' basic understandings of giving.

Therefore storyline five focuses on 'the give and the take' and the continuing sacrifices that participants made to ensure that they were meeting their obligations. Some did so to the detriment of their lives here and gave much more than they could afford, while others received money and support from family members and did so knowing that one day they would pay that family member back when they were in need or grew older. Storyline five also considers how participants felt when they gave or received things, whether there was an air of expectation that they too would receive in return or if they had felt the pull of Western thought toward individual ownership and competition.

### **The Circle of Giving: A System of Give and Take**

For many participants the links to their culture did not end when they migrated to New Zealand. While they were learning the new ways of New Zealand society, they were also learning to fulfil the new roles of their cultural responsibilities, primarily described by participants as “obligation”. Obligations were an on-going commitment for many participants and appeared to be misunderstood or not considered by many New Zealanders. In fact, participants found that New Zealand society differed sharply from the view of many Pacific people regarding obligations to the family. In some cases, this made fulfilling these obligations problematical for Pacific people. Participants described many hardships (e.g., going into debt, over-extending financially) during their own and, or, other’s commitment to meeting obligations. But for many, as Sarah describes and other participants noted, obligation was not really consciously thought about until they were questioned about it:

*It’s inbuilt almost and unless you’re asked you don’t think about the reasoning behind it, which is why I found this a little bit you know a while after the question got asked, ‘cause I just had no idea. I mean it’s just, just something that you do, and obligation is not a bad thing, I’ve never, I don’t think obligation is a bad thing. I think it’s a way of doing the right thing. It can be used as a bad thing but I don’t think in this case it was. So that’s obligation. (Sarah)*

*. . . obligation’s a weird thing in Samoa, its, I mean Samoan culture is made up of obligation, reciprocity, community, family, that kind of thing. And once someone sort of says well you should do this, well you do this. You’re kind of put in to the position if you don’t do it you’re letting the whole family down. (Sarah)*

Sarah felt that obligation was *inbuilt* and found it difficult to describe what it meant to her. She talked about obligation as a matter of fact, tied to her responsibilities to her family yet also ingrained within who she was. She mentions also that obligation *is not a bad thing* and stresses that she thinks that *it’s a way of doing the right thing*. This was a sentiment shared by other participants as well. So while they had recognised that there were some difficulties with

meeting obligations, they justified the process of obligation as a ‘duty’ to their family; *if you don’t do it you’re letting the whole family down.*

Sarah reflected, on multiple occasions, about obligation and what it meant to her. Although she had spent most of her formative years growing up in Samoa, she had a New Zealand mother, held a New Zealand passport, and had also lived on and off in New Zealand during this time. Her observations, although inside the culture, were filtered sometimes through what she described as an external “observer” lens. She would express during personal contact times that sometimes she felt ‘outside’ of the village. She also expressed that idea within the following diary excerpt where she concurred that the collective system did certainly have its merits:

*. . . it’s been interesting as an observer to sort of see how people work and the whole village gets together and does things and you know they all work together to feed the pastor and his family. You know if there’s a funeral everyone comes and brings food to help out with the funeral and just that kind of thing. I think that’s the whole collective that I was talking about like it’s just the whole well networking and I think that is based quite a lot on . . . reciprocity and obligation and all that kind of thing. Like there’s the obligation to help out and there’s also the idea that if you give when someone else is in need they’ll give when you need. And I think that’s why the Samoan system works quite well, is that when people need things; other people provide them and it’s very much a system of give and take. (Sarah)*

Sarah expresses reciprocity and obligation almost interchangeably and suggests later that; *there’s the obligation to help out and there’s also the idea that if you give when someone else is in need they’ll give when you need.* She reiterates this concept, *when people need things; other people provide them*, stressing that within her understanding of obligation it is also about reciprocity, a two-way giving process. This is how most participants viewed obligation, not so much as a “duty-bound” responsibility, although certainly this was the case for some; but it was about the duality of reciprocity, the *give* and the *take*.

Within this exchange that Sarah both observes and partakes of, she communicates the benefits of this system, but also alludes to the burden of it. Clearly when people are requiring

support for hardship or celebration this system aids that individual and his or her family. However, when the receiver of the giving has to return their obligation this could sometimes be met with difficulty, resulting in embarrassment for not only the individual but again for their wider family. Mabel experienced firsthand the “embarrassment” of not being able to fulfil her obligations as an older sister. Although other members of her extended family were able to help her brother, she was not able to contribute to his wedding and felt ashamed because of that. Later, however, when he required financial assistance she was more than willing to help and with the agreement of her husband, they gave toward the purchase of his first house:

*Luke got married. My mother arrived in New Zealand and I was down in the South Island. I lived in the West Coast of the South Island and it was so unfortunate I told them on the phone I couldn't come up. My children were still fairly young, I had three under five. So it is too much, too long a distance to actually come over. So I didn't support them in their wedding, but my cousins helped. And you know they all sorted it. You know just family, family they all helped . . . I didn't feel good about it myself, because I felt that I should have had some contribution. Anyway I let them go through with the process and six months later Luke rang and asked if I can help with the deposit with their house and that's when it was appropriate. I was able to put in two grand to make up for their deposit for (the) house. . . . I did feel good because at least it went direct to him, not gone into a big feast to feed everybody and then he went home empty handed, you know what I mean? (Mabel)*

Sarah also went into more depth about the challenges of obligation, admitting that sometimes being obligated could be stifling but suggesting that this was more about the financial obligation of *fa'alavelave*. For most participants who migrated to New Zealand the requirements to send money home for family were increased; however, for Sarah, the responsibilities of sending money back to the islands were reduced (but not removed) for her:

*It's always the collective; it's always the family, the village. There's always something going on. There's always I don't know someone getting married, someone that's died. It's just, it's a never ending cycle of I don't know*

*fa'alavelave. But yeah how's it different to New Zealand? You get to be an individual; you get to choose what happens in your life. You take responsibility for your actions. Yeah no one else can take it for you. Decision making, money, money is a huge thing. (Sarah)*

Sarah points to the freedom that she is starting to have in terms of having control over her own money and making her own decisions. Her reference to the *never ending cycle* of *fa'alavelave* draws us closer to understanding the length of commitment to the success of the reciprocal system of *give and take*. It is never-ending. In order for the system to continue, it transcends birth and death, becoming intergenerational and spanning obligation over country borders. Here it is also possible to see the strength of this aspect of culture maintenance for those Pacific people who have migrated to New Zealand. They are at once removed from daily pressures of obligation yet inextricably bound to fulfil the requirements of their obligations to remain within the boundaries of their culture. Jessica emphasises this when she talks about the continuation of financial obligation for Pacific people living in New Zealand. When asked about which country had the more stressful environment to live in, she found it difficult to decide:

*I think it's a personal thing it just comes back to who you are, but weighing those two stress levels I think it's about the same. 'Cause in a Samoan culture even if you're living in New Zealand you still have to contribute to the occasion that's happening in Samoa. For example, if there's a wedding or a funeral in Samoa even if you're living overseas you still have to send money to help out. (Jessica)*

Jessica found that life in New Zealand, although abundant with possibilities, was still a site for the cycle of giving. Although she doesn't expand on "who" was perpetuating the obligation, she accentuates the obligation; *you still have to contribute, you still have to send money*. The "who" of obligation must be accredited to the family, both in the islands and also in New Zealand, in particular those members who are steadfast with maintaining and meeting the requirements of the culture. Jessica also highlights the need to keep the cycle going and recognises that she, either through her own means or her family's, must maintain this cycle.

Natalie also experienced firsthand the requirement of continuing financial obligation, whilst working in New Zealand, to her family living in the islands. Although she and her



husband had lived in New Zealand for less than a year, they both contributed to her family, his family and the church:

*. . . people that come from Samoa to come here, you know people in the islands usually see it as an opportunity, you know they usually see them as the richest people out there some people they call this place, where milk and honey where you can get milk and honey from, but you know it's really hard over here. Since we've been here it has been you know you gotta know the right things to do for you to be able to save money, but then at the same time you have to be able to provide for your families in the islands. When there's a funeral you gotta send money especially to someone, especially when it's someone that is close to your family . . . but then for me there's heaps of church things that always happens, so you know every now and then we get to send, I think we've sent more than \$5,000 already since we've been here. Yeah because we had to... our parents have been kind to raise us, to raise us up and we are here because of them, we know so much because of them so it's time that we give back and I think that's what's happening to all the people here. They're here for one reason and one reason only and that's to be able to help families back in Samoa. (Natalie)*

Natalie establishes the demands of life in New Zealand as needing to know what to do, creating a balance between saving money and providing for family back home. She links the feeling of obligation to a bond to her parents and describes their input into her life as a kindness; *we are here because of them*. Further, she reasons that the decision for many to come to New Zealand is tied to their desire to *be able to help families back in Samoa*. But Natalie also identifies the church as a site of obligation, both within New Zealand and in the islands. While many participants talked about the significance of church, she was the only one who was still deeply committed to a routine schedule of church attendance, involvement in church activities, tithing, and sending money back home for family to tithe. Natalie's admission of sending over \$5,000 back home again reiterated the size of the obligation cycle.

But the obligation cycle was not always perpetual. If members of the family did not reciprocate to the other party, then the tradition was not sustainable. This breach resulted in not

only a change in the nature of the relationship, but potentially, its loss. Ruth experienced this first hand when she observed that many of her family's strongly held traditions were being neglected. She noted that the reciprocal relationship or cycle was not being returned from her family, breaking the institution of the *give* and the *take*. Ruth described her feelings of frustration at not being able to pick up where her other siblings hadn't:

*You know it's just part of your breathing and that's something I've kind of, I've kind of had to wince a bit. I really cringe when I see my immediate family especially my sisters and brothers who just don't know any better I think anymore. Because they haven't really lived in the Cook Islands long enough or they've forgotten now or it's more comfortable for them to forget about the issue of reciprocity, that what people give you one day you are going to turn around and give back. And this for me it's not an expectation just so much a part of your being. But you know when you have a funeral and people show up, you make a list, a list is drawn up of what everyone brought, who they are, what their family ties are, how they know you, what exactly they gave and you already know that if someone in their family has a death either in the Cook islands of New Zealand or wherever someone in your family is going to represent you and take back something that is equivalent in value to or more than what they have gifted you. So it's important to just remember these things. Except now my brothers and sisters just they're like, oh yeah, that Aunty or Uncle died last week or you know that person that we knew but we weren't able to go because we had a shift on, or had to pick up baby or some pitiful excuse. Yeah and I can't do much cause I'm down here in Otago and all the dramas and the family, the mechanics of running the family are all happening up in Auckland so that's just something that's made me cringe a bit. The fact that I'm here and I can't be there for my family.*  
(Ruth)

Ruth, like Sarah, describes the notion of obligation as *part of your breathing, so much a part of your being*; a natural part of whom she is. She identifies that the tradition of reciprocity has changed since migrating to New Zealand and suggests for her family that it may be due to the length of time her siblings have been away from their country and culture; *they haven't really*

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

*lived in the Cook Islands long enough or they've forgotten now.* Ruth details the lists that are *drawn up* to remember those who gave and who they have a debt to in the future, linking the families together and continuing the process of the cycle of giving. Ruth's "cringing" at her siblings not continuing on the traditions of her culture was increased because of her inability to fulfil those obligations herself and the frustration of this is clear.

*Family give and take*

Obligation came in many forms. Predominantly there was some form of financial assistance which was mainly headed from New Zealand to the islands. However, there were other issues also of time, support, attendance at events, and, in many cases, these were more important than just the financial obligation. There were also varying directions of obligation. In the parent/child relationship, this was more often than not the child supporting his or her parent; however, some participants also described the continuing assistance they received from their parents as “on-going”. All participants acknowledged that with this support there was a tacit debt to be repaid at some point in the future. Participants expressed various acknowledgements of this debt to their family. There were many similarities regarding debt and obligation between the cultures:

*And our cultural belief is a debt that no one can ever fully repay[ed] from birth to death. No matter how far afield we journey, but it has its ways of revolving back, full circle. (Mabel)*

*And yeah I guess in the future we, we're talking about how my parents never wanted us to pay a lot of things or reciprocate with what they've done and stuff you know my parents never really think like that but I know for a fact that when I do finish my study and I work if there is anything that I can do to help out with my parents I will, you know I will be able to help out. (Joel)*

*And the reason I want to upgrade it and make it bigger is because it's the house where my mother is living at and I want to give back to my mother by building a bigger house for her. (Jessica)*

The strength of this obligation to parents by their children is deeply ingrained in their belief system. Mabel openly expresses the debt as one that can never be fully repaid, while Joel emphasises that while his parents do not want him to help them, it is something that he intends to do in the future. Jessica's career choices for the future were based around her ability to build a bigger house for her mother and included the possibility of moving to Australia to earn a higher salary to allow for greater access to funds for that. Participants exposed the lengths that they

would go to to provide for their parents over the course of the diaries and for some this desire to repay ran deep.

Mabel epitomised the image of the giving daughter. Although she had moved to New Zealand over three decades earlier, whenever her parents or siblings asked for monetary support, she was always willing to oblige if she had access to the funds. But the financial support, although great, was not sufficient for her. She continued to support her family by giving freely



of her time and anything else that she had at her disposal. A large component of her video diaries centred on the event of her father and mother moving back to Tonga from Australia and building a new house on their family land there. Her reflections on the day the container was getting packed for shipping from New Zealand to Tonga detailed some of the many things she and her younger brother were providing:

Figure 31: Giving to parents (Mabel)

*Good morning. Peter and I have rented a truck ah to bring all our little bits and pieces from Hamilton and we now have arrived in Lincoln and this is Auckland. And this is the container . . . It's a 20 foot container and here is my Dad standing and supervising the boys working, loading the container and this is the housing materials part of it and still a lot to go in, plus the little stuff that we brought from Hamilton. And this is the stuff we brought from Hamilton, the little fridge freezer here. There's a*



*washing machine, couch, bags full of linens and everything else. There's a microwave and TV, drawers, all the stuff from the bedrooms and of course our table and chairs. I thought I'd give that away as well.*

*That is Thomas' big TV. He gave it away for mum and dad and I think he's,*



*he's parted with his prized possession that he had brought nine, ten years ago and, because he has bought himself a new one. And I think all these goes down very well to my father and my mother. Most house contents for their house, so that they don't have to buy too much . . .*

**Figure 32: Loading the container (Mabel)**

*Th[is] red stuff here are the roofings and as well the kitchen and hand basin and there's another door over there to go in. There's more windows to go in. I think there is more timber under there in that big pile over there, or something. There are some more windows over there and huge double door. It's a beautiful door actually . . . There are some more corrugated iron roofing and more timber over here. I think these are for the inside of the house. There's plywood and everything else, more housing material. There are the boys, loading the roofing and that's the, the shipping container. Owned by Reef Shipping and the container was found in something, close to \$6,000 all together. Just leasing it to send their stuff and then returning it after, after a month I think. (Mabel)*

Although there were a lot of items given by both Mabel and her brother their obligation did not end there. They were committed to setting their parents up with all that they needed. In Mabel's case this meant that she no longer owned a dining table and chairs, and other items of household furniture as she had given them away. In addition to the financial support Mabel

gave, she also gave her time. She spent time in Tonga with her partner Peter helping her parents set up their newly-built but unfinished house:

*Good morning. This is my father's house. We laid tiles yesterday and I forgot to do this but I thought I best get it done today. And this is Peter and the boys. This is my brother Luke there. He is helping. He has been here for a whole month working hard at laying the tiles. This is the lounge. It's quite a flow with the lounge. From the lounge it flows through to this hallway over here. It goes up to the kitchen. Everything is still in a mess. I'll just take you back there . . . And this is my table. This is my table that I sent away and it has arrived here. And this house is three bed rooms. I'm taking you through there. This is mum and dad's room. Everything is very much like a Pacific island room. This is room one. Room two; it's a still a bit of storage . . . This is the third bedroom. This is where Luke is.*

*And there is the shower, wow they've got running water. Power. They have got electricity, which is a big improvement. I can remember when I was here when I was young it was candle lights and kerosene lamp. . . . Some of the bricks, roof tins that dad left over from, from the house. It's accumulated and they're going to extend the house, carport kind of from this side of the house and just to make it a bit tidier before we carry on putting any more money into the place. (Mabel)*

Mabel talked me through the massive amounts of work that she, her partner, her brother and one or two other family members contributed to building and setting up the house. Obviously the home improvements that were available now for her parents' new house, were markedly different to her life in Tonga as a child. However, even after spending 2 weeks with her parents in Tonga, Mabel confided to me during the final interview that she still felt inadequate in what she had done for her mother and father; *I really feel guilty that I, I feel I need to give more. I mean not of materialistic stuff and this is another different call as well, as the call of the soul. I feel like there's something in here it's sort of telling me you need to go and at least spend 6 months or a year with them.* Her yearning to give more was compelling. Upon my

own reflection of Mabel's admission, I found myself questioning if even after six months Mabel would find the "guilt" subside as she had already given so much but still not found any solace.

Later in her tour of her parents new house Mabel is clear that she expects to contribute further for the completion of the house. She had assisted in the build of her parent's new home, but would continue on until they were established. Yet it is important to note here that even though she had invested considerably into this property with her younger brother she told me on several occasions that she expects nothing back from her input and knows also that she has no ownership of the house or the land that it is on:

*I feel I have done my best or to the best that I can, to leave my mark in their hearts. As I see it, two out of ten children came forward to return the unconditional love that they have invested in all of us. And that makes me feel good, returning their love. And our cultural belief is a debt that no one can ever fully repay from birth to death. No matter how far afield we journey . . . it has its ways of revolving back, full circle. And that, just doing this reflections, things sorts of come to the surface, little bit by bit, which is very interesting. And also reflecting back, back to the material world, the investment that I have put into my parents' house in the end of the day it goes to my brother Luke; the owner of the land. My share in this that I can go for holiday at any time or my children but there is no inheritance in it for my children. As my father stated it will be our family home. Whenever we want to go home there is a roof over our head. I guess for me I feel comfortable to receive that hearing it. For some of my brothers and sisters I don't think it would be too comfortable a family home yes even though dad says that but when he's passed on I think it'll be different story. But anyhow, I don't worry too much about it. (Mabel)*

Mabel highlights some very poignant issues within her summary of giving to her mother and father's house. Again she reiterates that the debt to parents can never fully be repaid and that she is *returning their unconditional love*. She also returns to the analogy of the circle; *No matter how far afield we journey . . . it has its ways of revolving back, full circle* identifying that she sees the system of reciprocity as a perpetuating one, potentially continued on by her children



to her. But it is also possible to see that while she expects nothing back from her investment, she eludes to feeling more “comfortable” about being in the “family home” than some of her other siblings because she has invested so much into the property.

Mabel’s investment into family property and assistance with meeting family needs had begun when she was a young lady living in the family home. She quite proudly talked about “putting a roof over her family’s head” during personal contact times and quite literally did, but it was not until Mabel undertook a weekly topic suggestion of looking through photo albums that she illuminated my understanding of this event and recalled when she had started to contribute.



Figure 33: Put the roof on the house (Mabel)

Being obligated and providing for her family had clearly stayed with her:

*This is a photo of our house in Niue. It was six bedrooms that my father built. As I mentioned before Charis, it was a family, it was a collective effort of collecting resources, we all worked and saved money and, I helped put the roof on that house . . . And our garden and frangipani, [we] always love garden[s], our family. (Mabel)*

Mabel’s obligation to her parents and her family, although significantly important to her, was also a continuing point of contention. Having spent most of her life in a society that values the success of the individual and having bi-cultural children brought up with values heavily based in the New Zealand ideology, Mabel was continually battling the opinions of her children and in many ways fighting an internal conflict between her own old and new belief systems. Mabel identified that her son, Thomas, was actually finding her generosity difficult to understand. When she discussed with him the amount of money that she was giving to her

parents (his maternal grandparents) his response had reflected what she believed were values from her late (Pākehā) husband:

*Thomas had said it; I don't think dad would be happy with that. . . . Alright that's his [opinion] . . . this is his way of thinking and I guess he and his father think very much alike and he said "so what happen then to the house when [grandma and grandpa] die? Do we have the inheritance of any of that?" It was incredible. And I said well in our culture you know the land and the house it sits on Luke's [Thomas' uncle] property alright, oh well the property sits on Luke's land and I said but we have a share-hold in it, you can use it. [Thomas said]: "So I can't sell the house if I want my share back?" (Mabel)*

When I talked with Mabel about her son's response she was surprised at how the nature of generosity had been lost on him. His insistence in keeping hold of "his share" of any monies that she had invested was difficult for her to comprehend. But the priority of individual ownership in her son's life had, in her opinion, clearly stemmed from her late husband's values and growing up in New Zealand. She had noticed that there were inter-generational changes in the nature of giving and reflected that these may be as a result of forfeiting other aspects of her culture, i.e., the language. She felt that this was an unfortunate loss of her culture and she identified other aspects of the culture that were also diminishing. These made up a large component of her identity and her link to her culture and family:

*There is something that is missing although they yearn for it, it's the language itself. I started to teach them. They thought it was very funny, I sounded funny, so I gave up and that is one thing I am hoping still that they could pick up. It's never too late I told them, but this, how would you put it, it's the difference of being a culture person to who they are now is that we don't have the same heart although I'm working hard on it. . . . having a caring heart for strangers especially; no, no they do, but in different ways for us. See for me I can easily part with things. I noticed Lucy, Thomas when I was loading up that truck. I was loading that way, [while] Peter and Lucy were unloading that way. [They] were off loading a few things on the other*

*side. You know what I mean? . . . Lucy said to me her way of look[ing] at it she said to me, but mum why do you have to give all these things when you should be really looking after me and your children. . . . I said all in good time. . . . You have to learn to live and know how to survive. And I said all these things are just junk, I said if I give it to you, you'll just give it away again because when you finally can afford good things they're not, they have no more value and I said these things [are] valued a lot more back in the islands because they are different, they couldn't get things like that. I said New Zealand is lined with those things. But that's her way of looking at things. It's me, me, me, me, me, for her. It's them only. They don't see around them, that maybe there are people worse off than them. Those are difference [from] me and I wish that my children can see my heart. You know when you give something give it whole heartedly and just be happy. (Mabel)*

Within the experience of giving to her parents, Mabel learnt that her children held very different values than those she was brought up with in her culture. Although she was saddened by the revelation that they don't see things as she does, that they don't have the same *heart* as she does, Mabel has made the connection that it is the absence of her culture that has annulled the value of generosity. She was acutely aware that they were assessing their entitlement to what she was giving and struggled with having to explain why she was giving, when she knows that the need is great.

Although the most widely attributed movement of support is from child to parents, parents also supported their children and grandchildren. Joel's parents contributed to their grandchildren's school fees and he emphasised that he never felt pressure or obliged to give to family events:

*In fact they help a lot in terms of school fees and stuff and that's something that they really support, is to make sure that grandchildren and kids are at school and if they are at school then that's their duty. That's how they see it. They still support the kids. They pay their school fees. My dad's still working full-time and you know he doesn't want to stay home and do nothing. But I find that's one thing that I take my hat [off] is how my parents you know*

*always support us kids through our schooling and they never expect you to, like other PI kids you know I've heard a lot of stories from other PI kids that they have to fork out money for a birthday or a funeral . . . they'll [his parents] never ask us for any money and it's not until we finish studying and work that they will say oh like my older brother for example you know he's finished his study, he's working then my father will ask him, oh have you got... he never say you gotta give like a thousand dollars or ten thousand dollars or a hundred dollars, he'll just ask you if you've got any help, if you've got any money to help but for this kind of for this birthday or for this funeral then you know it's up to you, you know they never say you have to give me \$100 or something, no its never like that. So I guess I owe that to my parents and how they practice and do things and I find that I've been doing the same thing with my kids. I will do the same thing. So the one thing about my parents is that they were very independent. They will help their brother and sisters but they wouldn't want us to go and ask anything from anybody. They would have provided that for us. So I guess in a way I'm kind of lucky to have parents like that. 'Cause I still see a lot of PI families who are struggling because of that particular issue of having to fork out for funerals and birthdays and you know. Man, I've heard of students who have to pay for their parents to go to Tonga or Samoa for some stupid thing. And they're struggling through school, they're struggling to get there to pay their bills, they're struggling to get some food to eat. That's why I feel that I'm so lucky for that. (Joel)*

Clearly Joel was aware of how many Pacific people, including students, had to toil to find money to send back home; *I've heard a lot of stories from other PI kids that they have to fork out money, I still see a lot of PI families who are struggling, struggling through school, struggling to pay their bills, struggling to get some food to eat.* The extent of the obligation for Pacific people is varied but, in those cases where the pressure is high, it can be extremely detrimental for the person's involvement not only in consumption, but, more broadly, in social processes. Joel, who was not put in that situation by his parents, was quite the contrary. Not only does Joel stress how lucky he is to have parents that are independent - *I'm kind of lucky, I feel that I'm so lucky for*

*that, but he described not going to other members of his extended family when he was in need; but they wouldn't want us to go and ask anything from anybody, they would have provided that for us because his parents would be there to assist.*

Like Joel, many participants realised that there was a difference in *give* and *take* between New Zealand and their home country. For the majority, it was clear that they expected and had planned to contribute to family events well into the future. Interestingly, upon talking to some of the older participants, they made it clear that while they intended to assist their parents both financially and with their time, they did not expect their children would do the same for them. Mabel revealed during the final interview that she had no intention of her children making the same sacrifices that she had for her parents:

*I don't want to burden my children and my expectations to look after me . . .  
[I am] giving them some ideas about where, what, what to do in the future  
and for me with my children I've told them I don't want them to look after me  
and I've exposed them to the hardship of being a Carer of the elderly. I said  
I've gone through that. I've always been a nurse and I've always work[ed]  
around in the field of health looking after mum when she was very ill and I  
said, think about those things, will you be able to nurse me? That is a very  
serious chore of its own. I said its best [for] you [to] put me in a rest home.  
Down the road, there'll be nurses; they'll get paid to do the job. (Mabel)*

In her mind, the circle of *give* and *take* did not continue to encompass her. Mabel did not want her children to feel the *burden* of her old age and the responsibility of nursing her as she had done for others. The feelings and emotions she expresses about her desire to protect her children, *I don't want to burden my children, I don't want them to look after me, I've exposed them to the hardship, think about those things, will you be able to nurse me?, that is a very serious chore, put me in a rest home, they'll get paid to do the job* stand in stark contrast to the feelings that Mabel expresses about her own parents and the care she longs to give them. Her feelings of responsibility and indebtedness drifted in and out of feelings of guilt at not being able to do more for her parents, particularly as she saw them ageing rapidly:

*My heart aches when I see this because although I worked hard while with  
them to put together their house as much as possible but maintaining their*

*quality will continue to deteriorate more I know this for sure. And I can see that their need is to have that someone to be with them or a home carer to maintain their home also provided the social contact. Just having that someone to be with will make a big differen[ce]. But that is one thing that I look and I feel for me, I feel it is my responsibility; culturally it is the children's responsibility to be there for their parents at a time like this. When they are old we don't put them in rest home but we're at or in their home to look after them personally. And I guess it's their expectation culturally. But for me having come from overseas to New Zealand and see how [people] or how a different [culture] had treated their aging parents; they put them in rest homes and I think that's one of the things that my parents were very aware of, that they don't want to go into a rest home. They want to be in their home no matter how bad it is or how good it is, they just want to be home, if they want to sleep, they sleep. If they want to eat, they eat. And they don't have anything else to worry about. . . . my father had said that they want to have that total freedom just to be. And I think with the support that my brother and I had given by providing the roof over their heads to go home, I think that has met that nees of theirs that they've been yearning for for a long time of wanting to go back. (Mabel)*

Mabel's concept of giving was set in a variety of emotions. Primarily, there was an overriding sense of responsibility for members of her family which was sometimes marred by guilt, and an acknowledgement that her giving would not be returned. She did not expect any entitlement to ownership or shares in her parents' home in Tonga and she did not expect that her children would be responsible for her in her twilight years. Mabel is aware that being in New Zealand has changed the parameters of *give* and *take* not only in her children, but also within her own expectations of what she should expect in return. Mabel becomes the amalgam value holder, existing between the old values of Tongan culture in her parents and the new values of New Zealand culture in her children. She worked to maintain the expectations of her parents and, regardless of what her children eventually do, it is possible to see that Mabel is attempting to remove her own expectations of her children's involvement in her old age.

***'Buffering' the Journey***

Participants also talked about supporting their siblings. This could be substantial at times and meant in some cases that family members may be working multiple jobs to support their transition to New Zealand. Sarah was only 22 years old and flatting alone when her brother arrived in New Zealand. Her entries reflected some of the many things that she did to help with his migration but very rarely, if ever, did I note her reluctance to support him. Once he had settled in New Zealand, she arranged a job for him at her workplace, but her commitment to him and providing enough for him was a strong one. She spoke often about her responsibility to him, which she did not take lightly, and even when complimented on her commitment to him, she shrugged it off as nothing special:

*I was talking to my brother on Thursday, this morning sort of said to him, he'd been wearing the same jumper for days and I was like, well why don't you chuck it in the wash, wear a different one. And he sort of said that's the only one he has and I thought oh well I'll go and buy you some stuff . . . We went and bought my brother jumpers, jeans, socks, shoes, beanies, t shirts, pretty much everything . . . anything he wants later on he can buy himself, once he starts getting his own money. . . . I think I spent about four or five hundred dollars. Which kind of hurt. It's only money really. So that's alright. (Sarah)*

*You know sort of you have to weigh up things and its interesting now that my brother's here before I used to be like oh I don't care, I'll spend money on whatever and, and I'll just eat noodles. You know it never really bothered me. But now that I'm sort of like looking after someone it's changed a bit and it's not a bad thing . . . It's just something that happened. I guess priorities shift a bit. (Sarah)*

*Ben started working today, my brother so that was good, so I took him into work to get his uniform and all that sorted. And I ended up doing it all and then I took him to the produce section and introduced him to everyone and you know all that kind of thing and so he went off and yeah I worked until nine I don't know, 9.30ish. And then I hung around and waited for Ben to*

*finish cause he finished at 10. So I did some shopping just you know got bread, chips, coke for Ben. (Sarah)*

*. . . I just have to go and buy my [brother] some work pants. And so I've gotta go to The Warehouse 'cause I didn't realize how hard it was to find black pants for guys go figure, but yeah someone's told me they have them at The Warehouse. (Sarah)*



**Figure 34: Shopping for everything (Ruth)**

Sarah talked throughout her diaries about what was happening with her brother's transition to New Zealand. She appeared eager to help him find his feet and settle into his new environment. She worked at "buffering" the distance between the expectations of moving here and the realities of living here, by providing for his needs; *well I'll go and buy you some stuff, priorities shift, I did some shopping . . . for Ben, I just have to go and buy my (brother) . . .* Sarah was anxious about establishing him with the tools needed to survive in New Zealand and began with buying him all that he needed and organising him a job at a supermarket, where she also worked. She talked during personal contact times about filling his requirements culturally through visiting the Pacific Island centre and making sure that he had the things she missed out on when she first arrived, right down to teaching him how to cook on his own. But Sarah was not unique in helping out and trying to buffer the younger sibling's transition to New Zealand. Older



children within the family who migrated to New Zealand were often responsible for ensuring their younger siblings were supported. Ruth was on the receiving end of the sibling support. She was the youngest in her family and had siblings in New Zealand to buffer the journey or “pave the way” before she arrived. This support changed the experience of coming to New Zealand for her and in some respects made her migration more familiar and less intimidating:

*. . . then it came for the time when my big sister wanted to leave school and she wanted to leave the island basically. . . . We had this thing called the New Zealand School Certificate and she didn't pass and so as I recall I was just a kid at the time, but she was working in the local factory sewing clothing uniforms and my Auntie was one of the supervisors there. So it was all looking very much like a factory hand, sewing kind of future in those days and the family said, send her out to New Zealand and she can do better there. So Jackie, who was 17 at the time, became the first, she's the first born. She became the first one to immigrate from the Cooks to New Zealand of us kids. And she came over, she joined my aunties who were working packing cigarettes in a tobacco factory in Parnell and she just worked on the airfare to get money for my other two brothers to join her. My two older brothers . . . she flew them over to New Zealand and they also got jobs here. And so the three of them were working here and sending money back home which was really needed because myself and my sister and a new younger sister that you know that my mother had given birth to late in life was still at home with us in the family house and yeah, we were in difficult times. (Ruth)*

Ruth's older sister was responsible for helping many of the family migrate. She paid for flights and transitioning her younger siblings into New Zealand life. Later Ruth describes the feelings of enjoyment when her siblings came home from New Zealand for Christmas. Here she illustrates the “dream” perpetuating through the gifts from abroad and as she talks about her own experiences, it is clear that the hardships of life in a new country are not recalled:

*We were definitely not a rich family, not even close to it because my dad was working so hard to bring the bacon home, so to speak. And so those three were in New Zealand for a long time, just year after year sending money back*

*when they could and coming back every Christmas with loads of chocolate and presents. It was always really nice and fuzzy-wuzzy having them around at Christmas I loved it, but I was a kid then . . . you just love everything about life pretty much. There's not a lot that is traumatising for me I think I've had a good life. (Ruth)*

Ruth draws us back to the original expectations of being in New Zealand, about the dream of moving to the land of milk and honey. Firsthand, we can see the perpetuation of this “myth” within the sacrifices of the older siblings providing for their family and doing little to admit to the hardships of life in New Zealand. Only later does Ruth uncover the true hardship of her siblings’ lives in providing for their family, working in factories that provided no job security and little satisfaction:

*And meanwhile my sister had also paid [for] my younger sister to come over during that year. Helen was still a toddler at that stage so when I went back to the Cooks she was still a toddler being raised by my parents and I went back to me grandparents’ house and then eventually back to my parents house. But at the stage, around that time, my family or my siblings, my brothers and sisters settled here. They settled in Auckland they were finding their way around and they joined the statistics of, you know, the factory workers making up, making up the numbers in factories wherever they were packing jackets or packing chocolate, packing Twisties, packing corned beef and all that kind of thing and that’s where they still are today. They’re just in different factories, going from job to job in different factories, so there was always that pressure in my family that you know Ruth is the one that was going to do well at school [crying] ...not end up in a factory (breathes deeply and cries) and each of them in their own way have been very quietly proud and supportive of me [wipes tears away from face] in their own way, without saying it. (Ruth)*

Here Ruth shares the insight she has into her siblings’ transition to New Zealand. It was not until she was older that Ruth had begun to see the sacrifice her brothers and, in particular, her sister had made in moving to New Zealand to work and provide for their family back in the

islands. Ruth understood the difficult choices that they had to make and the struggles that they must have faced in being the first to come and settle in the new country. It is also possible to begin to see the ties of obligation and the level of giving that participants and their families had to undertake.

Participants also discussed giving to the collective through extended family events. There appeared to be a difference between giving directly to family and giving to extended family, stirring varied emotions from acquiescence to anger. Perspectives were split between wanting to aid extended family and encourage a system of collective sharing, to abhorrence at the loads of debt and difficulty Pacific people faced when trying to meet the levels of giving that were being solicited. Ruth felt particularly strongly about the hardships that many Pacific people felt when trying to meet the requirements both culturally and of their family. She talked on multiple occasions about the heavy burden that many Pacific people felt to provide financially for their family, both in the islands and in New Zealand. Ruth had firsthand experience of this burden and became aware that when she hosted family members that there were expectations beyond just paying for them while they were staying in the home both in New Zealand and in the islands:

*They come to New Zealand and they know they're going back with their suitcases full. They know when they visit your house that you know if they like your TV or your stereo it's theirs, they can take it back provided they can pay the cargo. They know that they're going to be eating Kentucky Fried Chicken and takeaways paid for by you for however long they're gonna be there and that you know most likely you will pay for the chicken for them to take back. It's just taken for granted. (Ruth)*

Ruth expresses compliance with the declaration that, *they're going back with their suitcases full*. Her experience was also that she had received plenty when she stayed with family and in turn she provided her guests with the same, but as she sums it up, *it's just taken for granted*. The family on holiday had expected that, because Ruth was living in New Zealand, that she must be doing well, which for many Pacific migrants was not always the case.

*The praxis of giving*

Participants talked over time about the different occasions and rules about giving. There was a strong emphasis on the “*mana*” of giving and the difference in expectations of giftgiving in New Zealand. Ruth acknowledged that giving was difficult in the Cook Islands; *there’s still a drain on resources that you feel much more keenly in the Cook Islands cause food is expensive and much more expensive than it is here*. But the giving continues on regardless of the hardship, both in the islands and in New Zealand. Later when Ruth discussed reciprocity she emphasised that although much was given in New Zealand, much less was expected in the Cook Islands:

*. . . the issue of reciprocity. That’s an interesting one for me. More value for your dollar in New Zealand, having more dollars when you’re working in New Zealand full stop, than you would have when you’re back home . . . Because of that when it comes to reciprocity and gift giving you can tell that you’re going to get better you’re going to expect more things when you are you know, earning better money in New Zealand, rather than at home where people would probably just give you whatever they have, whatever they have. They may not even have like an old basket hanging on the wall, or you know something, an old mat or a tivaevae that they’ve had in the family for a while. Which for me personally have a far greater value, rather than you know some nicely made lace that was made in China that cost 60 bucks or something, but that you can afford in New Zealand so you give that as your exchange and the thing is when you get something, when someone does something for you, you have to return the favour. It’s not even asked for, it’s known. (Ruth)*

Ruth makes the point that what you give is not as important as the fact that you have given. But she acknowledges that she places *a far greater value* on a gift that is handcrafted than one which is paid for in New Zealand, regardless of how much it costs because people are *earning better money in New Zealand*. Again she stresses that the exchange of gifts and the manner in which this is undertaken is more of an “unwritten rule”: *it’s not even asked for it’s known*. Later Ruth explains that giving in the Cook Islands had fewer of the rules seen in other Pacific cultures. This situation was a benefit for her as she could see the advantage of giving without holding back:

*Gift giving for me . . . it's like it is part of your breathing; it's not a negative thing at all. The giving of gifts is you just know when you have to give and what little thing you can give is not so much about what, although and sometimes, it is, in fa'aSamoa it is about what. Like for us in the Cooks who I think are a bit more relaxed when it comes to Polynesia for us it's a bit more about simply giving whatever you have. The importance is in the fact that you are able to give, that you have given. Not so much how much or how big your tapa was. Or things like that. How many pigs you were able to bring, or the pea soup, or the corned beef and that . . . So the giving is more about actually taking part and representing families you know about keeping the continuum of giving no matter what the occasion is. Rather than how much, going away feeling a sense of satisfaction that you know your family had the biggest pile of taro at this event. But I don't know I think I've bought into the worst of my dad's or the best of my dad's Samoan side and my mum's side where you know I just tend to be a bit over generous with my money and things like that and for me money is there to help make others comfortable not just yourself so it's not necessarily about saving for tomorrow and that's the thing, that's the thing. In Raro [Rarotonga] growing up in this whole, you know, notion we have is that when you have something you have it to be able to give it away to help others. So you're not necessarily thinking about the rainy days ahead and the times when you will not have anything. That for me is very, that for me is something that's really come home, now that we are here and you do have to save for those rainy days and those moments when you don't have money to get the sugar and things like that you know you can't just go next door and ask the neighbours for this and that and anything because they're related to you, because you know they're gonna do the same to you. You can't do that so just that whole issue of preparedness, of economic preparedness, of saving, of having money in your pocket and anytime. That's something that has really come home for me being here and the nature of the bills (Ruth)*

In this entry Ruth reiterates her earlier points of the naturalness of giving for Pacific people and the value of the giving, not on “how much” you gave (which she links more to her Samoan side than her Cook Islands heritage). She explains the Cook Island way of giving as *when you have something you have it to be able to give it away to help others*, strengthening the community is central of most importance and positioning “having things” as inconsequential. *You have it for the purpose of giving it away.* Clearly the dualisms of Pacific and New Zealand societies are becoming more pronounced as we move through the different Pacific nations and realise the extremes of divergence within their beliefs and the values held. In addition to these issues, she also talks about realising the need for saving in New Zealand, which she did not have to do when she was in the islands. Her concepts of community and sharing had changed since living in New Zealand and she was aware that she had to provide for herself and her family.

In contrast to Ruth experiences of giving, other participants talked about their own Pacific cultures as being more concerned about quantity. Participants also discussed the excessive amounts of giving. This is not necessarily a new phenomenon, however, with access to greater sums of money and with family being located out of the islands. In New Zealand, the giving (as participants noted) was in some cases more about outdoing others, rather than giving what they could, or giving to help the family. Jessica observed that demands made on some of her friends were significant and unrealistic:

*I like my culture very much I just don't agree with some of the things. So that's why I take things that I know would benefit me and utilise it to the best of my abilities and to the effective way I could use it and for the not so good things, I just try to ignore it. And maybe I'll be called a wannabe palagi for it, but it's just the way it is. Like, I cannot for example give to my extended family ten thousand dollars, when I only have a net worth of five thousand dollars, it's just ridiculous. But yeah it's alarming to see how many Samoans who are basically stuck and still within that circle of giving more than you have, and funerals and weddings are the best examples of when that happens and yeah who cares about what other people think. I think Samoan people are just people pleaser people. If you know, if you understand they just try to please other people and in the end they are the ones who are going to suffer because they just have less money and nothing at the end. (Jessica)*

Jessica talks about people within her culture as “people pleasers” and it is interesting to see that because she does not agree with the Samoan way of giving to excess, she also considers that she may be seen to be an outsider because of that view; *maybe I’ll be called a wannabe palagi*. While this type of giving may be as a result of an overgenerous nature, we also must consider that it may be as a result of competing with other families. Later Jessica talked about the hardships of giving back in the islands and filled me in further on the extent of giving in Samoa. After the death of her father a few years earlier Jessica began to understand the hardships of excessive giving. She felt exasperated by the sacrifices that villagers had to make to present a picture of wealth. Her experience detailed the intricacies of giving:

*. . . the gift giving part and in Samoa there’s lots of discussions regarding gifts or mea alofa, that we give to the family of the deceased. And one of those is with regards to the boxes of herrings, like the cans, yeah that fish. That fish in the can it’s called a herring. Back then, our people used to give the whole box and the whole box comprised of, I think 48 herring cans. And back then people would just give so much, like they would give maybe 100 boxes of those herring cans and then maybe 100 fine mats and a thousand dollars and yeah that comes from one extended family. An extended family of you know like one chief title and there maybe 10 people in it, like 10 families maximum, or like 5 families minimum. And then they’re all put together and then the main chief of the family will present their gifts to the family of the deceased in which most cases they have to be related to. And giving less is like it’s considered a downfall to the family. Giving less is like telling the people that your family is not wealthy. Yeah, it’s putting down your chief title. It’s, it’s considered small, it’s considered bad. And yeah they give less and if they give more, oh yeah we’re just telling them that we’ve got more money, we’ve got more wealth than what they think then what people think. And it’s all about, it’s all about perception, it’s all about what other people think, it’s all about the image. And I mean most of the time I believe they give because they want to give but then on top of that they give because of the image. They want people to think that they’re wealthier than what they look like to them. And it’s that perception that makes me disagree [with] some of*

*my traditions and customs and like for example for those, for the boxes of herrings, people will just give hundreds, like hundreds of boxes of herrings and, and that one box like that 45, 48 cans, like herring cans back then like maybe 10 years ago it was 75 tala, like 75 Samoan tala for that one box and 75 tala its like 75% of a hundred dollars and that's too much, too much. . . . So the compulsory thing now is to give in the half box only. Instead of 48 cans you just give 28, 24 cans and that one is like half price of 75 dollars. So you're actually giving half. And people in Samoa are actually trying to get used to that new idea because back then if you give in half, it's like not giving at all. You know what I mean, like if you give in halves you're telling people that, oh sorry we didn't have enough money to buy the whole box so you know, it's like demeaning and degrading for the family as well. But I personally agree with the new, what's the word, with the new thing, with the new protocol. Yeah I actually agree with it because I don't know, it's just like a life saving thing for most families. 'Cause other families who do not own a television for example, do not own a TV, do not have a fridge, would rather buy that 75 dollars box of herrings instead of saving to buy a TV for the family or like food for the family and it's just wrong. You're just giving things that you can really have. It's giving more than what you actually have and that's when the gift-giving thing is also wrong, it's all about pride, it's all about what other people think. Who cares about what other people think. Give whatever you can, give what you can afford. If you [can] afford to give them a thousand dollars, give it, if you can't, don't. Just don't stretch it.*  
(Jessica)

Clearly the giving process although intended to assist those in need, had developed, at some stage, components of competitiveness which now result in people “stretching” to save face. Joel also saw gift giving as a reflection on himself and his family, but he was more concerned about the quality of the gift. He was always very aware of the perception of brand and the type of quality it was linked to:

*I guess for me, growing up in Tonga, I think when you do buy gifts for example if you're buying gifts for birthday of buying it for your best friend or*



*something like that. When I was growing up we used to buy, it doesn't matter what the price was, it was the quality of the present. Because I think I was growing up in a family where if you buy a real cheap present and you give it to someone and they found out that it's a real cheap or for example if it's a Warehouse present I think the shame of being cheap will not only reflect on me, it will reflect on my whole family so I think that's where it all started from. 'Cause when you're buying things for birthday or friend you always make sure you buy a good quality present because just for that reason, you don't wanna be seen as a person who's stingy or real cheap to buy, you know, cheap stuff. So I guess that's where it all came from. And the other thing was that the reason why for choosing a lot of those labels, like for example, when you're buying, what do you call it, if you're buying stuff that are dear you always think that if you're buying dear stuff that it means that its good quality. But I doubt it, I don't think that's true because from experience that's not true, you know you buy labels you end up having bad stuff. (Joel)*

Joel saw giving as a way of showing the value of the relationship through the quality of the present; *it doesn't matter what the price was, it was the quality of the present*. He was concerned about appearing *cheap* or *stingy* and acknowledged that it would *reflect on my whole family*. His understanding of the significance of a gift confirmed that a lot could be read into the meaning of the gift in his experience. His act of giving, as with many participants, was intertwined with ensuring that the cycle of give and take was continued, but it had also made any act of giving a site for crafting a new cycle and for maintaining the protocol and rules for cultural gift giving.

Overall participants had varied emotions on obligation. These were sometimes favourable, sometimes not and sometimes participants would contradict their stance. Regardless of what was being said, obligation was undeniably part of the Pacific migrant experience and was not a “short-term” undertaking. The obligation felt by participants was an enduring tie to their family and their culture. Mabel looked at obligation like an eternal circle. She was giving to her parents, but felt that one day, it would be returned to her:

*. . . I guess that's part of my upbringing; never hold on to materialistic stuff because you cannot take it with you when you die and give, give on one hand because you will receive, give wholeheartedly I mean. And that's how I believe and I carry that value, belief, because it's true. You give wholeheartedly and don't look for any kind of return you know and it finds its ways of returning in the most disguising way. (Mabel)*

Mabel believed that her adherence to obligation would someday come back to her when she was in need. Giving up *materialistic stuff* was also important to her understanding of obligation, as was giving *wholeheartedly*. Sarah differed to Mabel in that while she did give to her family, she was much more open with her concerns about “fairness”:

*Yeah I've never really, like I know it's a necessity to give money back to your family 'cause I mean people in Samoa earn nothing and so pretty much our family's fine 'cause they all put their pays together that's food for the week or fortnight or however long it is. But yeah I've never really been keen on the whole giving 3/4s of my pay and that mainly comes from being here and sort of thinking well I worked really hard for that you know but I mean it is a reality going back to Samoa, it is just something you have to do to be able to survive and live with your family. (Sarah)*

*. . . but yeah I don't know I have mixed feelings about that. I don't mind giving to my family but at the same time I don't feel that you should have to and I think it's a little bit unfair, but I mean as it is I give money to my parents now. When they sort of need it I send it over yeah I don't know. (Sarah)*

Sarah identified that her reluctance in parting with money to give to family stemmed from her time in New Zealand where she worked very hard for her money. She was clearly divided between her responsibilities of maintaining the cycle of giving and the urge to keep her money for her own needs in New Zealand. However, it was difficult to confirm her feelings on this as she was also very aware of the hardships of life in Samoa and the genuine need that they had for her giving. Later Sarah acknowledged that it was much easier to earn money in New Zealand than in Samoa and challenged her previous stance:

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

*I feel a bit of an obligation and that's mainly because you know I'm living here and life is much easier for me here. Like I work, I get more money than I need and then pretty much if I had nothing else to spend it on I'll just spend it on random things just to spend it. (Sarah)*

*Yeah and I mean my family hasn't a problem with that, they know if they need anything they can ask me and I'll get the money but yeah I do feel a bit of an obligation to send money back if requested. (Sarah)*

Sarah's feelings about obligation and the responsibilities that she had to her family were the dominant drivers in her decision to continuing to support the traditions of giving and in supporting her family. Even though she was feeling pulled by the two different value systems that she navigated, she was clear that when it came down to it she would always provide what they needed, when they requested it.



**Figure 35: Showing me what they want (Jessica)**

### *Church give and tithe*

Another area of obligation that pervaded many participants' diaries was the area of religion, with a particular focus on church and God. Having a relationship with God was a large component in many participants' lives. However, the nature of the relationship had changed upon moving to New Zealand. In the islands the relationship with God involved regular attendance and giving to the church. Financial obligation to the church was a big part of this relationship and some participants committed much of their time and money to be able to support their church in both in the Islands and in New Zealand; however, there were changes post migration. Participants identified that this was due to the different societal values and appeared as the loosening of rules and regulations around the rigidity of their tithing, particularly in the amount and frequency of giving and in attendance of church events. Participants firstly talked about "how it used to be" when they were in the islands, shedding light on the differences that they experienced now that they lived in New Zealand. Joel recalled the commitment that his parents undertook to tithe 10% of their income when they lived in Tonga:

*. . . growing up in a family . . . that belongs to Seventh Day Adventists I remember how my parents used to pay their tithe which is 10% of their earning to them. It was pretty, you know, it has to be done. (Joel)*

Joel alludes to the obligation of paying this tithe weekly, stating; *you know it has to be done*, pointing again to the 'naturalness' of obligation that was highlighted previously. Jessica also discussed tithing in her family and shared the protocol of giving:

*. . . in Samoa the wage-earners give money to my mother and then my mother would just give it to the church under our family name and so I didn't contribute 'cause I was still at school and then coming here I'm still at school, at uni but I felt the need to give money to the church because although I'm not working but I am still earning something through allowance, so I put aside \$10 of my allowance of a thousand, more than a thousand to give into the church and it's like just a need for me to give to the church. (Jessica)*

The practice of giving to the church in Samoa, as Jessica reveals, is a family affair. The money is collected by the family and given to the mother, in Jessica's case the head of her family and then passed on to the church under their family name. The public nature of giving to the church, particularly in Samoa, is unique in that it becomes a site for competitive giving, giving more than other families. Jessica describes her feelings of tithing as a *need for me to give to the church*. She has similar feelings about giving to her family and again alludes to the idea that it is just something that is done, rather than a consciously made decision. Ruth had a very different experience in the Cook Islands growing up:

*The issue of tithing. Tithing through our church, we always tithe. I never tithed in the church growing up in PIC church but we had the first roots, where you do gift . . . you know you take food to them on certain important dates and things like that so. The tithe on the harvest or first fruits or whatever you have available was kind of practised loosely in our church growing up. It's no longer my experience here, that we just actually pay 10% on our income and leave it at that. (Ruth)*

For Ruth, giving to the church in the Cook Islands was not stringently adhered to as it was for Jessica; *practiced loosely in our church growing up*. Interestingly, however, for Ruth the regularity of tithing to the church became greater for her when she moved to New Zealand; *through our church, we always tithe*. However, Ruth was the exception rather than the rule, as most participants experienced or observed a sense of movement away from the church, as Natalie observed when discussing the differences and similarities of church in Samoa and New Zealand:

*I think [church is] practically the same, but the only difference is some people here don't go to church anymore because there is not rules and regulations that says you know like the rules and regulations that a village would have you know is that they need to push people to go to church, but here you know, this is not like, people live in different places and if there's a church near them then that's the church they go to, if they want to. So the person has a choice whether to go to church or not. (Natalie)*

Natalie observed that fewer Pacific people attended church in New Zealand because they had the choice. There were no longer village rules for church attendance and the obligation to attend had evaporated along with the community they had left behind. Natalie, however, was stringent with church attendance and went to church services every day of the week. She was determined to keep her faith and although she had been in New Zealand for nearly a year she was keeping up with a hectic schedule of church involvement. In addition to this, she was also giving financially through tithing:

*Like for example like the giving like when you're giving, my friends [are] amazed that we give the minister \$50 during the Sunday when there's a thing called love, they call it alofa. A contribution because the ministers don't get paid from anywhere else you know, we the congregation give him money, all free, you know it's all your donation that comes from the heart you know. And some people have made competition you know I gave the minister more but I said to my husband, if we're able to afford, give, if we're not able to afford, don't give. So for a period of 7-8 months we weren't able to give anything you know because you gotta give it with your heart, your full heart. You can't give it and you think, "Oh what's going to happen tomorrow?" "What are we going to eat?" That kind of thing. You have to afford it to be able to give it. So that's what we managed our budget ok we can afford this much to give the minister \$50 every fortnight and in between there is a donation for the development of the church and we give them \$20. So \$50 for the minister on the other Sunday and \$20 to the minister on the next Sunday. So that's \$70 all together. (Natalie)*

The minister of the church is highly esteemed in Samoa. Giving to the minister is significant as Natalie tells us as they *don't get paid from anywhere else*. Natalie observes that *some people have made competition* of giving to the minister. This reflects Jessica's description of the public nature of giving in Samoa and it is possible to see that the nature of giving to the church has transferred to the church in New Zealand in that it has become a *competition* for some to see who can give the most. Natalie later described the hierarchical position of the minister in Samoan society, which was particularly relevant for her as her father was a well-respected minister back in Samoa. She had revealed during personal contact times that the obligation of

her father to his “flock” had overridden any need she had of her father and acknowledged the hybridity of culture and religion:

*And I used religion as a, because most of the cultures the aspects in our culture has been cultured has been adapted by adopted you know the Christianity principle in terms of you know in terms of respect or in terms of you know your relationship to others. You know your relationship with whoever, your family or the minister you know it's always the ministers first. The pastors get, you give the best things to the pastor and then to that chief, the head chief of your family and then to the whole family. So you can say that's in a hierarchy within the cultural system that has they've put the religion into it as well, but at the same time our religion has to be quite separate at times from the culture so it's a very complicated thing and I guess it's good, it's really good in a way. (Natalie)*

Obligation to the church was undoubtedly a large part of life in the islands and for some participants this obligation continued into life in New Zealand. Although the nature of giving had changed, as participants had observed or experienced, it was still practised particularly by those participants who had only been in New Zealand for a short period of time. Martha, Ruth, Natalie, and on occasion, Jessica were most consistent with church attendance and tithing; however, for those other participants, many were still active believers in God and incorporated prayer into everyday activity.

### **In Closing: Obligation Revealed**

Obligation saw participants retain the collective perspective of life, giving as a matter of nature, selflessness and competitiveness in an environment of individual thinking and lifestyle. Participants acknowledged that sometimes there was great personal sacrifice in the choices they made to meet these obligations and, although many provided significantly for family they would still undertake to sacrifice more of themselves, their time, and their money in order to help others out. So while there existed an internal and external conflict regarding the nature and place of giving in such a individualistic society and, even when participants took on aspects of materialism and individualism, their desire to meet the obligations of their family was more often than not a compelling part of their identity that drew them closer to their culture.

For many of the participants, brothers and sisters played a major part in the transition to New Zealand, either assisting with the migration journey (e.g., Sarah and Ruth) or highlighting the individualism of New Zealand society (e.g., Joel). Family and the need to be close to family was great during the initial period of migration to New Zealand, but as each participant came to the gradual realisation that his or her environment had changed, they began to take up the responsibility of obligation as a means of linking in with their family and the culture. Obligation was a significant part of keeping their families tied to the lifestyle of the islands, even though in many cases the participant was aware that it may not be reciprocated by the next generation of New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders.

### ***Personal Sacrifice***

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While obligation can be seen to be a driving force in the cultural maintenance of life in New Zealand, personal sacrifice is an unavoidable condition of meeting obligation. Participants sacrificed life in the islands for the “dream” of attaining something better for themselves and their families, even when this “dream” was not their own, but that of family. The life they left behind was what they knew and had contributed to them feeling as part of a whole. Life in New Zealand was hard and comfort was found in the ownership or accumulation of things.

Throughout storyline five we can see the sacrifice that went on for migrants, particularly for first members of the family to arrive who paved the way for the rest of the family to follow and who concurrently needed to provide for the requirements of family in the Islands. Their



desire to “buffer” the way for other members of their family emphasised that obligation was more than just a “duty”, it was a genuine desire to make the transition to New Zealand a more pleasant and less shocking experience. Participants expressed sacrifice in the most mundane of experiences, from going grocery shopping with their sibling and buying what they want rather than their own preference (Sarah), to paying for childcare so that their child would experience a little of what life meant in the Cook Islands (Ruth), to mortgaging the home to provide a new home for parents (Mabel).

To meet obligations participants had to sacrifice. Sacrifice was predominantly in monetary form, but may also have been time and in sacrificing meeting their own needs. Personal sacrifice was not a condition of life in New Zealand, but it was a result of a multitude of emotions ranging from; guilt, isolation, indebtedness, desire, belonging, and, perhaps surprisingly, competition.

### ***Competitive Obligation***

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Competitive obligation is not a new phenomenon. Throughout the stories of obligation there appeared an underlying almost insidious theme, of competitive obligation. When participants were asked about this directly most would either acknowledge they had seen it in other people, or refute that they had observed it at all. However, when reviewing the diaries, it was clear that being competitive was an unavoidable part of the cycle of give and take. Competition was apparent in diaries through church tithing based on who was giving more to the minister, or the level of entitlement that a participant felt toward staying in the family home, or who should be the owner of the family home if significant renovations were undertaken on the property. Some reflected that these new dimensions to obligation were as a result of moving to New Zealand; however, as we have learnt about the process of giving, particularly to the church in the islands, there is a very public manifestation of giving and obligation that rewards those who give more than others. Conditions in New Zealand also meant that competition could be increased as participants had greater access to debt, increased access to goods, and larger incomes.

So being in New Zealand changed the nature of giving for Pacific people. For some it meant that they were no longer compelled to give, but as we have established, participants were still very active in giving and maintaining obligation as a component of life in New Zealand.

Ruth summed up her experience of giving in New Zealand and identified the dilemma of living here for many. There was undoubtedly access to more, but:

*. . . being in New Zealand has changed the nature of what we give and whether we give in fact, in good and in bad ways. (Ruth)*

Ruth identifies as we have found that the nature of giving has changed, but also makes the observation that giving is optional; *whether we give in fact*. However, we have seen that obligation is still a very large component of Pacific migrant lives and identities in New Zealand. For some this was their main link back to their culture and for others this was a means to repay the *debt* of having received.

## 12. THE PACIFIC EXPERIENCE OF CONSUMER ACCULTURATION

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*Consumer goods may serve to fulfil a wide range of personal and social functions. Fairly obviously, they commonly serve to satisfy needs or indulge wants and desires. In addition they may serve to compensate the individual for feelings of inferiority, insecurity or loss, or to symbolise achievement, success or power. They also commonly serve to communicate social distinctions or reinforce relationships of superiority and inferiority between individuals or groups. (Miller, 1995, p. 111)*

Over the previous five storylines we have learnt of the experiences for Pacific individuals in migrating to New Zealand. These experiences couched in the context of participants' daily lives, illuminate a bigger story of the contemporary Pacific journey to New Zealand. Having contextualised participant experiences into storylines and themes, I now step back and look to understand what these findings mean for consumer acculturation processes for Pacific individuals immigrating to New Zealand.

From the previous storylines a process of Pacific consumer acculturation to New Zealand society becomes apparent. Through storyline one, we see the process begins prior to migration. The participant is told wonderful stories of how life is and the opportunities available through living in New Zealand. But in reality, life varied greatly from this picture. Within storylines two and three we learn that two of the most catastrophic acknowledgments of change that participants had to make upon migrating to New Zealand were that family had changed and that there was no longer a collective structure to society. Participants noted that family members had altered in the values that they held and practised, and, that the collective society that they were used to was now absent. Without the familiar relationships of family and the structures of a collective society, both good and bad, participants began to become aware of isolation, difference, and their own resolution to become an individual. Many of the issues that developed throughout the storylines have and continue to exist in the islands, for example, competitiveness, migration, and consumption. However, the movement of migrants into New Zealand presented new challenges and different engagements of minority consumers within a dominant capitalistic society. Even with globally changing value systems that centre more on acquisition and individualism, participants experienced discord in their day-to-day lives in New Zealand. The purpose of this chapter is to tie the findings of the storylines and themes to the broader discourse of consumer acculturation and to advance marketer understandings of Pacific consumer groups.

### **Finding the ‘Pacific Experience’ in Consumer Acculturation**

Consumer acculturation appeared throughout the everyday experiences of participants. These experiences appeared in public and private situations, in the home, work and at social occasions. Participant adaptation of consumption values from Pacific to Western values pervaded all areas of their lives. Collectively, these experiences could be linked to a bigger picture of consumer acculturation. Therefore, to draw out an understanding of the overall process of their acculturation I moved away from traditional conceptualisations of this process. Existing models of the consumer acculturation process have been developed from a North American/Hispanic perspective (e.g., Peñaloza, 1989, 1994). Instead, I have focused on the Pacific perspective. In moving away from the dominant paradigm of US consumer acculturative assumptions it is possible to see the unique process of acculturation from a specific immigrant consumer group perspective in New Zealand.

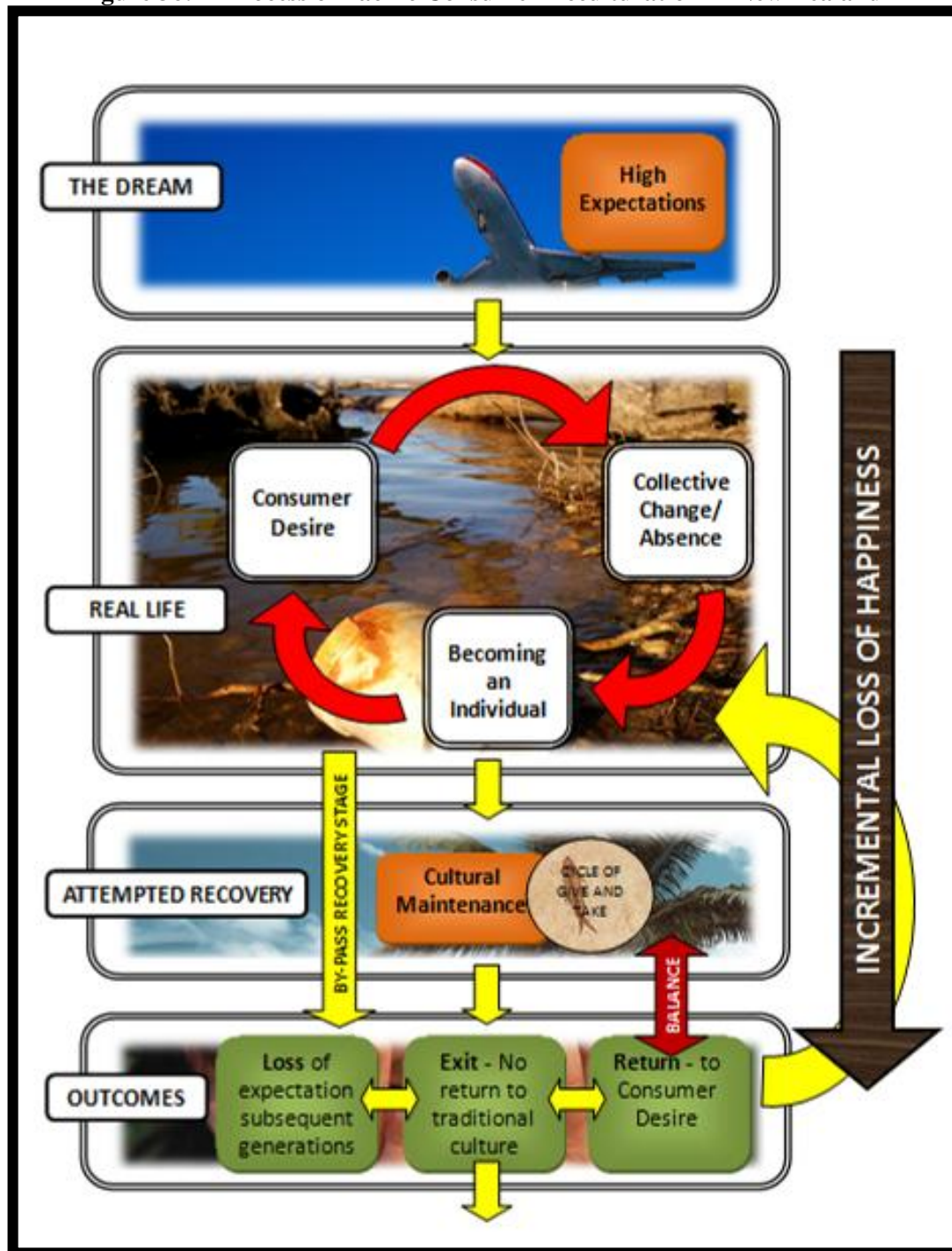
Pacific consumption activities differ from the Western norm in multiple ways ranging from different understandings of “normal” consumption, to different motivations in continuing to consume, and to changing attitudes towards individual and collective consumption. However, there are similarities in certain areas: in the motivations to engage in Western consumption particularly premigration, in some of the conflicts that they had to endure, and in some of the strategies that they employed to overcome the conflict. Pacific consumer acculturation surfaced during everyday activities, as a progression of moving to and from the various phases of conflict and coping. The stages of the process were not necessarily overt or immediate, but subtle, internal, and incremental. Primarily the journey moved from premigration expectations where identity was grounded in collective culture and there were high expectations of New Zealand, to realising the loss of the collective after individuals had evaluated their new host culture, assessing their values and that of their family.

As participants became aware of the changes in their family, many became resolved to being an individual. Participants began adopting individualistic characteristics of the host culture (as other family members had done). They sought to “fill the void” of collective life by seeking out the original dream of consumption desire, which began a typically temporary process of focused consuming (for some this became excessive or compulsive consumption). From here the individual sought to find the happiness that was absent through refocusing on culture and/or religion, but predominantly through fulfilling cultural obligation to family members. This

Pacific Consumer Acculturation  
Charis Brown

behaviour became an important means of tying the migrated individual to his or her family. However, not all members experienced this stage; some by-passed this phase and continued to the outcome stage. Ultimately, there was a realisation that their place in the circle of give and take might not inevitably be continued by subsequent generations.

Figure 36: A Process of Pacific Consumer Acculturation in New Zealand



The previous storylines have been distilled down to a process of Pacific consumer acculturation (Figure 37) that incorporates five components: the dream, real life conflict, attempted recovery, outcomes and happiness. This process begins to translate the complex meanings and changes that Pacific consumers have to undertake. This process provides insight into how other Pacific migrants may experience the acculturation process.

### **The Dream**



At the start of the participants' journey to New Zealand was the dream. Within this dream New Zealand was an imagined utopia. This dream is where the acculturation process began, in the islands, even before the participant had moved to New Zealand. Just like other minority ethnic groups, Pacific people were touched by massmedia in their home nations and were exposed to versions of life in the Western world, through migrated family members, tourism, television, and movies (Peñaloza, 1994). However, participants predominantly spoke about word-of-mouth being the main form of promotion regarding life in New Zealand. Resoundingly, participants expressed this word-of-mouth as stories of success. The stories of success and the bounties described as available in New Zealand were great. They centred predominantly on consumption goals and included increased access to consumer goods, higher wages, improved education, and better services.

Participants reflected on family members returning home and sharing their newfound wealth. Migrated families and individuals worked to portray an image of success through their representation of life in New Zealand. Lee (2006) mentioned in her research into the children of Tongan migrants that the representation of success was driven by the family. This was a

portrayal that Tongan youth were becoming uncomfortable with: "...resentment of young people of their parents' funneling of family income to churches and Tonga and the pressures placed on them to be evidence of the success of the migration process" (Lee, 2006, p. 125). This imposition of needing youth to be "evidence of success" was uncomfortably perpetuating the "dream" of life in New Zealand. Participants only later learned that this expectation of success in moving to New Zealand was for many only an illusion. These stories impacted significantly on motivations to live in New Zealand and became evidence of the possibilities of life in New Zealand. But these visits back home by previously\* migrated family members were predominantly devoid of the realities and potential hardships that would be present during day-to-day life. Lee acknowledged that migration was not just about "helping kin in Tonga" but was also about increasing opportunities for migrants' children. Where those children had "...been able to achieve some upward social mobility, they need to demonstrate this through their lifestyles" (Lee, 2006, p. 125). Participants demonstrated a desire to attain upward social mobility through expectations. These expectations weighed in heavily in the promise of New Zealand. Participants were expectant of the "success" and the opportunities of "upward social mobility" but had no expectations of negative potentialities, difficulties, and discrimination. Just as with other ethnic populations (e.g., Hispanic: Peñaloza, 1994), expectations were a major motivator for migration. Connell (2006b) identified that "...those migrants who are regarded as successful are often those who have contributed most to the village (Smith 1994: 227; Huntsman and Hooper 1996: 324). These are the conquerors of the outside world" (Connell, 2006b, p. 95).

Another expectation prior to migration was that family members and wider society would continue in the traditional cultural way to assist and support them in their settling in to the new host culture. Peñaloza (1994) stated that these were expectations also presented by her Hispanic participants: "Mexican immigration was described as "una cadena" [a chain], one man comes, then sends for his brother, who sends for his brother, who sends for his wife. All informants knew someone already living in the United States when they arrived." (Peñaloza, 1994, p. 39). In the same manner, Pacific migrants were expecting to rely on family members to assist in their settling into the new host country. This expectation alleviated (sometimes falsely) participant concerns prior to their migration about settling into a new country. Both expectation areas contributed to real-life conflict for the participant and led to adaptation strategies to assist in the acculturation process.





themselves for their needs and wants. Losing the collective and the feeling of being part of a bigger group occurred quite early on in their migration. It was usually one of the first signals that life in New Zealand was not the same as back in the islands. Observing this change was significant for the newly migrated individual, particularly in their loss of the familiar: culture, surroundings, support networks, and the compounding isolation that resulted. An example of this loss within the diaries was with Joel, who experienced isolation and distance from family members in New Zealand and took on an extreme level of individualism to “protect” himself from the disappointment of family members who had let him down. For some participants, the realisation of this cultural isolation/loss triggered the resolution that they would become a self-contained monad. From this resolve the development of individualistic traits began to grow.

With the acceptance of individualistic traits, the participants began to seek out the benefits of their new culture through consumption. On occasion this consumption developed into negative consumption behaviour like addiction or excessive consumption. Participants sought out feelings of fulfillment and happiness that had been unwittingly abandoned during the process of migration. This stage of the acculturation process was the most traumatic and some participants were drawn into and out of this stage throughout the lifecycle of their migration, even 20 years on.



### *Change/Absence of a collective way of life*

Change in, and absence of, the collective was one of the biggest impacting factors on the migrated individual. This factor was also one of the first realisations of change for participants. Lee and Tse (1994) identified that without the collective and family the individual feels isolated. The absence of these familial ties was extremely significant to the individual. Participants were not prepared for the change in these family ties. Many anticipated that those family members present in New Zealand would provide stability through a continued relationship, a relationship that reflected the same values as back in their island nation. The reality differed starkly as participants identified changes in the way their family members were when they came to New Zealand. Some participants regained their sense of being

part of a greater whole, while others reflected on difficult and sometimes painful experiences of realising that they were in a country that favoured an individual outlook rather than seeing each member as a part of a bigger community. This reality was one of the most difficult for participants. In their recollections, this reality/difference/change was rife with emotions of hurt, displacement, and isolation. While many participants were very young when they moved here, the experiences were similar for those that were older – losing their place as part of a bigger collective exposed them to traumas that they had not anticipated. Schumaker (2001) identifies that social connectedness is an inalienable human need:

Aloneness and social alienation are intolerable states for the human being. We would wither and die, both psychologically and physically, if deprived entirely of the opportunity to relate meaningfully to other people. In the course of connecting with other people, we rise above puerile self-interest and trivial self-serving pursuits, with positive general benefits to the wider community. All functional cultures take heed of our inherently social nature. . . On the other hand, a hypothetical culture that for some reason does not allow for the satisfaction of our relatedness need will produce members who are prone to many types of psychological and emotional disorders. (Schumaker, 2001, p. 6)

Schumaker, while identifying that a “hypothetical culture” that does not allow for these important social connections will create members who are prone to negative disorders, is touching on the dilemma that Pacific migrants to New Zealand have. They move from a society founded on the development and maintenance of relational arrangements which permeate every aspect of their lives, to a society that focuses on the individual. This huge paradox renders those members of collective societies, i.e., Pacific people, (Cook Islanders; Tongans; Fijians; Samoans) vulnerable to the effects of that “hypothetical culture in the form of psychological and emotional distresses and disorders. Schumaker goes on to identify that more specific to Western society “the motivational properties of modern consumer culture have been blamed many times for their tendency to dissolve social bonds, and to reduce for deprivation collective sources of coping” (Schumaker, 2001, p. 6). From this point of view we can observe that Pacific migrants are faced with both the impact of losing their much needed social connections and in the substitute that they seek --the original dream of having more--they will only be exacerbating the dissolution of bonds and their traditional forms of collective coping.

The importance of the family within the acculturation process cannot be overlooked.

Nauck and Settles (2001) identify that family ties and security are the most effective mechanisms of social security. Santisteban and Mitrani (2003) describe the family as an important part of reducing the stress of the acculturation process, and a significant component of migrants' transition into the host culture. They assert that this is particularly the case for adolescents, where the "...family's ability to protect, guide, and nurture its members" (p. 123) contributes to their success in the host culture. Family input can reduce acculturative stress and depressive symptoms. Hovey and King (1996) found that youth in families that had low levels of family functioning experienced higher levels of acculturative stress. This brought about symptoms of depression and an overall loss of happiness. Within the family it was also possible for different members to exhibit different levels of acculturation, or be in different phases of the acculturation process. When this variation occurs the distinction between the participants' rejection of the traditional culture, the host culture, the person, and/or the family becomes very difficult to distinguish.

Within Mabel's diaries we can see the varying degrees of acculturation within her family unit. Her children, born in New Zealand, are highly acculturated and experienced at life in New Zealand. Her parents, residing in Tonga and travelling for short stays with family in Australia and New Zealand, maintain a low need to acculturate and, therefore, resist becoming acculturated. In between these two opposite ends of the spectrum, Mabel balances her cultural upbringing and needs within the context of a contemporary New Zealand that she now calls home. It is clear throughout her entries that she is divided between wanting to reconnect her children with her (and their) culture and her awareness that they now have distinctly different values than she does. This is a dilemma for Mabel and she deals with this by removing/suppressing/revising her cultural expectations of her children.



### ***Becoming an individual***

Becoming an individual was primarily a coping strategy for participants as they looked to fit into their new environment. This was a method for them to take on characteristics that they were now observing in family members and learn to take care of themselves as their first priority. During this stage it was rare for migrated individuals to realise or acknowledge the reasons why other family members had changed.

Adjusting to characteristics of individuality meant that participants had to change who they were. This change may have only been achieved through incremental changes over time or as a result of an extreme resolution of change; however, this process created some identity crises, both at an intrapersonal and cultural level. For the most part, individuals recoiled from those family members and looked outward for alternative comforts. Having independence was initially difficult as participants had to make a major change to their thinking. There were aspects of becoming independent that were undeniably appealing to participants during this stage and participants acknowledged that becoming an individual had both positive and negative characteristics.

Individual traits were initially adopted as a coping strategy but they were later identified as being a trait of palagi culture that would not be easily relinquished upon returning to the islands. Some even suggested that individuality was too hastily dismissed by Pacific people as selfish and not compatible to the collective way of life, seeing rather that individualism could be symbiotic and in harmony with the collective system. Independence was acknowledged as the most difficult benefit to leave when and if they returned to the islands. Participants enjoyed a sense of “freedom” living in New Zealand and liked to be earning their own money. They experienced a sense of autonomy from the constraints of religious, family, cultural commitments and restrictions that they were unaccustomed to and were not necessarily expecting. The responsibility to family was still there, but they were able to make decisions, were forced to rely on themselves, and had choices about what they wanted to do.

### *Consumption desire*



Migrant success at mastering aspects of Western consumption assisted the acculturation process. Participants acknowledged going through stages of consumption proficiency. The experiences with family, the feelings of being let down, the loss of community, and the sense of missing being part of a larger collective society directed participants into this stage. Participants sought to find happiness in consuming. They attempted to “fill the void” that the absence of collective life had created with the trappings of Western consumption, and an attempt to attain the original “dream”. At times participants experienced such severe negativity about previously migrated family members that they became completely focused on putting

themselves first. Although many researchers (e.g., Berry, 1980; Peñaloza, 1989; Santisteban & Mitrani, 2003) discuss the stress of the conflict period, the severity of some individuals’ experiences during this stage impacted and shaped the individual for the rest of their lives. Hamilton and Denniss (2005) described the opportunities that this conflict, however, creates: “A society that is feeling anxious, depressed, dissatisfied and inadequate provides fertile ground for the sellers of things that promise to make us happy” (p. 120).

Participants talked about quickly succumbing to peer pressure, related to buying the “right” brands, consuming alcohol, and finding solace in social isolation through gaming machines. Many of these new behaviours, although providing value conflicts for participants, also became an opportunity for the individual to experience what many termed as freedom. But even with a renewed sense of freedom participants described a loss of happiness and increasing discontent as they pursued life in New Zealand. To counter the growing conflict and discontent of this phase, participants looked to become more involved in the host culture. Consumption provided one of the easiest routes to achieving this end. However, individuals were faced with the dilemma of a dream based on consumption objectives, marred by the need to adopt conflicting values in order to obtain those idealised outcomes. Some participants also began to become involved with other subcultural groups that exposed them to negative consumption behaviours; for example, rugby moved Paul and Joel into a binge-drinking culture. O’Guinn and

Faber (1989) discussed components of negative consumption behaviour including compulsive consumption, defining it as "...a response to an uncontrollable drive or desire to obtain, use, or experience a feeling, substance, or activity that leads an individual to repetitively engage in behavior that will ultimately cause harm to the individual and/or to others". (p. 148). Rugby and drinking became aspects of New Zealand culture that were easily picked up, particularly by the male participants, and areas of inclusion and acceptance of excessive consumption behaviours. Through these subcultures participants sought to find the inclusion that they knew was lacking from their previously collective, lifestyle.



### Loss of Happiness

Alongside the "real-life" phase of the Pacific consumer acculturation process happiness was declining. Layard (2005) provides a simplistic definition of happiness as "feeling good -- enjoying life and wanting the feeling to be maintained. By unhappiness I mean feeling bad and wishing things were different." (p. 12). Overall, people seek out happiness, to feel good, and avoid pain; it is a big part of our motivational drive (Layard, 2005).

Throughout the fieldwork stage of this research I was confronted by participants' statements that hinted at a movement toward accepting discontent as a part of their lives in New Zealand. The loss of happiness occurred over time. The need to replace collective values for the pursuit of more individualistic goals marked the start of this period of loss. Participants moved to and from acculturative stress -- moments of being content -- to realising that they were discontent with a consumption values and the importance placed on material wealth.

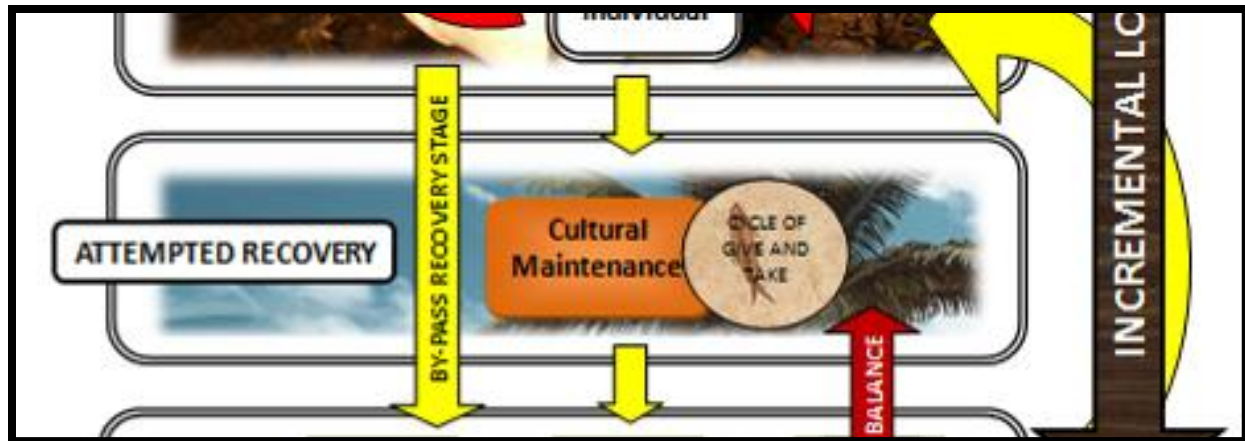
While participants did not directly talk about the feeling of happiness or unhappiness, the implication of being content, finding wellbeing, and enjoyment were intertwined within certain experiences, and absent from others, as they described their lives in New Zealand. Within the diaries participants spoke of happiness as: *wellbeing, looking forward to, spirit of expectation,*

*closer to family, better money.* Feelings of unhappiness were described as: *sadness, loss, isolated, shock, alone, survive, clash, drifting apart, distance, naked, vulnerable, scary, stressful, and shameful.* Through these words and experiences it was possible to understand happiness (and its absence) as part of the everyday, part of the mundane. Happiness and/or discontent was present in everyday conversation. It was marked by fluctuations of emotions, entrenched in the context of participants' daily lives.

The sense or break down of happiness appears to be lost through a misconnection with collective forms of identity that is located in the wider social network. In its place the pursuit of consumer lifestyles provided a false sense of happiness which briefly refocused the individual back onto his or her own needs and wants. Kassiola (2003) identifies that the human desire to "want" is excessive and growing: "In our current world, human wants appear limitless both in number and diversity and ceaseless in their creation. Getting what one wants is our social definition of individual happiness; for the society as a whole, having its citizenry get what it wants is the prime indicator of national priority and success" (p. 14). This overwhelming drive to "get what one wants" defines contemporary happiness. However, their focus on consuming became unrewarding at some point, particularly once the participants realised that consumption pursuits were futile. This realization/awareness/awakening presented participants with a downward turn in their individual feelings and experiences of happiness and increased acculturative stress. This search for solace and happiness in consumption was termed "commodity fetishism" by Marx (1978), where the individual seeks happiness in consumer goods, particularly those goods which are yet to be purchased.



### Attempted Recovery through Culture



During the attempted recovery stage participants reconnected with or found new connections that fitted with their core-values. Participants sought to “recover” some of the values that had dissipated since their migration. Relationships, commitments and obligations to family were strong and on-going aspects of this recovery, particularly through their culture. Church and spirituality also appeared as significant agents to recovery for participants. Returning to culture and continuing obligations had become a significant route to “recovery”. There were two main aspects of obligation within participant narratives. First, obligation was a form of cultural maintenance. It meant that participants worked at maintaining aspects of their culture through obligation, which transcended generations and countries. Secondly, obligation was identified as a means of repaying their families, especially their parents. This obligation/repayment was described by participants as a “debt” and linked participants with their family for many years to come and over many miles. Connell (2006a) identified this restoration of obligatory links as a return on an investment: “Initially remittances are sent to parents – as so clearly happens in Pacific cases – and in an economic sense can be seen as repayment for their past investment in the human capital of the migrant; in a social sense this is usually expressed as duty, loyalty and maintenance of family ties.” (p. 77). While, financially, remittances back to the islands were and still are undeniably the life bread of many Pacific families, obligations far exceeded money alone. The time, support, help and continued involvement of Pacific people in their wider families’ lives represented what some participants described as a “circle of giving”. However, it also created a process that could cause some struggle as Pacific people tried to live within a New Zealand way of life and at the same time improve the lives of their family.



In the first instance obligation was a significant component of participants' feeling as though they were still part of their culture. Many identified with giving as the "Pacific-way" and acknowledged that obligation was not a challenge to maintain in their lives, saying it was merely part of who they were and how they were brought up. Many believed that it was as "natural as breathing". For participants, obligation served as a compelling force linking them to their culture and their families even when many years had passed since moving to New Zealand. While this obligation/circle of giving is a strong tradition of many Pacific cultures, it is not stagnant and has in many ways been impacted by the values that Pacific people who migrate to New Zealand have been exposed to. This influence has caused changes that have created ripples within the communities back in the islands (i.e., increasing expectations of fa'alavelave for funerals; increased frequency of financial support requests from the islands to individuals in New Zealand).

Continuing the tradition of obligation affected the choices that Pacific consumers made within New Zealand in either deferring their consumption activities, or in making choices based on the "greater good" of their community. It also meant sacrificing their own needs for those of their families so that they could help out family still in the islands, or family members that had also migrated to New Zealand. Furthermore, this process contributed to the development of a type of consumption assessment, where participants would weight up their need to have something against the guilt of not buying something or providing money for family back home. This potentially added an additional dimension to the decision making process for these consumers, as on many occasions, they would buy only if they felt they had deprived themselves of something for long enough or had continued with either an inferior or damaged item.

Participants acknowledged that remittances and obligation were not just a form of expenditure. De Raad and Walton (2008) considered alternative perspectives: "Are remittances and gifts the equivalent of current consumption (whether it is to support family or community members in New Zealand or the islands or to pay for goods sent from the islands) or do they constitute a form of saving (as they build individual and communal assets not captured by financial and physical measures)?" (p. 63). The question of the value of remittances and the innate protection that investing in the collective provides, has been absent from the measurement and understandings of the concept. De Raad and Walton (2008) also found that the redistribution through the church was significant to the community:

There was also a conversation about how money given to the church could be regarded as either saving or consumption. Some suggested that gifting to the church was a form of redistribution. Others thought it contributed to the community's resources and built up an asset from which, in the future, the relevant community would draw a variety of benefits, including material ones. That, at least to some extent, could be seen as a form of savings. (p. 63)

In giving to the church there was a sense of fulfilling duty to God. Some participants poured themselves into church and God. They found that the church offered some stability. They were able to attend, be surrounded by people of their own culture, hear seminars in their own language and give back to God through tithing, ensuring their "pathway to heaven".

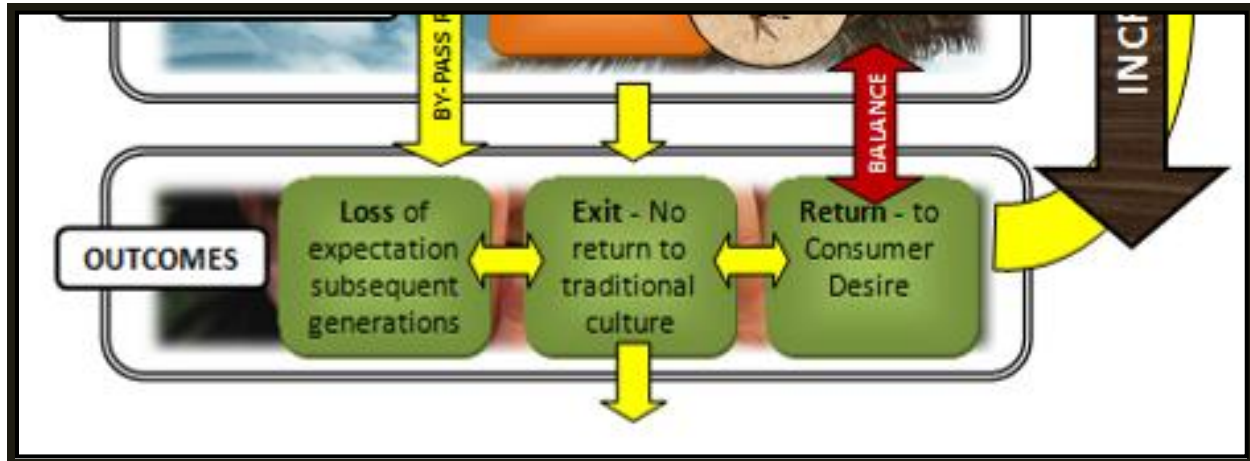
Participants also realised that moving to New Zealand had ensured that their place on the *give* and *take* cycle might not be perpetuated by the next generation. This realisation meant that they lowered or eliminated their expectations of reciprocated giving and obligation so that pressure would not be placed on *potentially* reluctant children.

Not all participants found or sought solace by retreating to their culture. Some participants sought consistency in their lives through alternative means. The "attempt" at "recovery" is not an intentional method to self-heal, but rather a more subconscious need for fulfillment and the need to find happiness again. The increasing hardships experienced during the conflict stage needed to be offset by something more meaningful – which was not being met by consumption. Participants realised that in the pursuit of more, they had lost the aspects of their lives that had been taken for granted in the past. This loss includes aspects of everyday life in the islands that participants described throughout their stories: open doors, neighbours who cared, family closeby, having nothing and it was not important, others helping out when they were in need.

During this time some participants gained a heightened sense of belonging to their culture. It gave participants a longing for learning more about their culture and increased their level of desired affiliation to their culture. Even when individual did not know their native language they often found more links to their culture while living in New Zealand. During their time in New Zealand they found they felt "more Samoan" or "more Tongan". Learning aspects of their culture through performance became part of their lives here - yet this finding stands in contrast to acculturation research that implies that the individual assimilates to his or her new

culture. These individuals were intensifying the aspects of their identity that marked them as “different” to the (dominant) norm.

### Outcome



Once participants had passed through the earlier cultural phase, there were primarily three outcomes. The first of these was to exit the acculturation process and assimilate all aspects of the self to the host culture. This was a desired outcome for one participant, with the only exception that religion was her solace and path back into a life more meaningful. Another route was to circle back into “real-life” phases, where the lifestyle of consuming -- whether that be sports, alcohol, gambling or consumer goods -- was too attractive to pass/forgo. This form of consumption was a route to shallow fulfillment and has been shown to be potentially harmful to those that mark their identity by what they have. Finally, most participants worked at achieving a delicate balance between consumer desire and cultural maintenance. This balance involved integrating aspects of culture into their lives in New Zealand. Participants achieved this integration through strengthening ties to their family and participating in aspects of culture through obligation.

A side-effect for many of the older participants in this study was the acknowledgement that they no longer had expectations of their children following in their footsteps. This was especially so for expectations regarding continuing the traditions of reciprocity, geriatric care, and obligation. These aspects of the culture, although continued by these individuals to their own families, were something they felt would be left in the past by their own children. None of them passed judgment on this letting go of culture; they just pointed this out as a matter of fact.

Connell (2006a) identified that the changes in culture due to individualism were significant and identified that they occurred in varied aspects of life: “Anecdotal evidence points to the growing individualism of overseas migrants, but especially to the increasing numbers of second-generation Islanders born overseas, and the reduced likelihood of such people sending remittances to their ‘home’ countries, especially if they take up host country citizenship” (Connell 2006a, p. 73). While it is not a new idea that immigrant consumers move in to and out of the consumer acculturation process, there is a unique integration of culture that compounds the Pacific consumer acculturation process. These unique characteristics added features of guilt, self-sacrifice, powerlessness, and survival.

The migrated individual is not absent, nor does he or she maintain the position of “victim” throughout the process of the consumer acculturation journey. The migrants are very active in determining their own solutions and as Ruth described, “...turning lemons into lemonade”. It is undeniably a difficult journey, but in this study participants fought to retain those aspects of their culture and religion that each deemed important, and many held on to their culture through a compelling desire to help out others, particularly members of their families in the islands, and others who were migrating. The changes that each individual experienced internally were not overt, but occurred over time and many participants were not conscious of these changes until I had asked them to probe deeply into their lives and experiences in moving to New Zealand. Each participant journey illustrated capability and skills at dealing with and adapting to such a different climate as in New Zealand. However, the changes of moving toward consumer values are not only occurring within the boundaries of New Zealand, but are also impacting on life in the islands. Significantly, the fulfillment of these desires could not be met until participants were able to move to New Zealand, or another Western nation (e.g., Australia).

### Understanding the Effects of a Consumer Lifestyle on Pacific People

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The Pacific consumers' relationship with consumption is a complex one. Firstly, participants had to engage in the New Zealand system because of some form of compulsion; i.e., achieving educational goals, or providing funds for the family back in the islands. The decision to migrate was rarely made by the participant alone: predominantly it was collective decision made by the wider family. This engagement, although in some ways thrust upon the individuals, became a source of attaining both positive and negative aspects of life that they might not have experienced premigration, for example, the sense of more freedom, the responsibility of handling their own income, looking after themselves first. While in New Zealand, participants used consumption in two ways: (1) to *resist* aspects of both the host culture and their own traditional culture, and (2) to *establish* themselves in the host culture, redefining their role/position in their traditional culture. Connell (2006b) explains that the increasing demand for consumer goods have been pushing international migration, something which is particularly the case within the Pacific. He warns, however, that the costs of this continued migration are rarely considered:

Despite the immediate benefits of international migration, long-term international migration of skilled workers might impose considerable costs. Governments have not controlled or directed the use of remittances (and nor have they sought to do so) while rising material consumption levels following migration tend to generate increased demand for consumer goods. Expectations never decline. This demand can usually be satisfied only by further migration, as long as other sources of national income prove difficult to develop. (Connell, 2006b, p. 93)

Connell's reference to expectations that never decline moves our understanding of the initial dream as being perpetuated intergenerationally. As long as the desire to possess consumer goods increases, so will the need to send more people to Westernised nations: "Rising material consumption levels following migration have generated increased demand for consumer goods, a demand that can be satisfied only by further migration, as migrants bypass the small towns of the Pacific to seek superior living conditions beyond" (Connell, 2006b, p. 95). These expectations and the insatiable need to accumulate are unsustainable in the long term and the consequences of this excessive consumption lifestyle must be urgently considered. The consequences are present for both Pacific individuals in New Zealand and, as Connell identifies, are impacting on life in

the islands.

Secondly, investing in the wider family through fa'alavelave, mea alofa, and remittances is not a "cut and dried" category of consumption. The Pacific "cycle of giving" is not solely about consumption expenditure; it is also an investment, a form of savings for the individual and his or her family members. Remittances are used both for consumption purposes and for investment:

Conventional wisdom suggests that remittances are used overwhelmingly for consumption objectives and inadequate amounts are directed towards investment. There are, however, alternative perceptions of the use of remittances... After debt repayment, remittances are used for housing and for community goals (such as water tanks and churches), airfares and education (an investment in social capital). They are also used for various forms of investment (Connell, 2006a, p. 73).

When participants gave, they had expectations of return, whether this was in the form of shared ownership, entitlement to access (e.g., land), expectations of financial, emotional support, and, or, reciprocated giving. Although not all expectations were fulfilled, there was a significant network of reliable support that could be called upon and counted on during times of individual need. This is a "grey" area for Western academia and more broadly Western society, as the concept of reciprocity is neglected, misunderstood and seen as a negative component of culture, particularly when considered alongside Western understandings of accumulation and personal wealth.

So what is the bigger picture here? I head back to my original research question, *How do Pacific people living in New Zealand experience consumer acculturation?*; and seek from my renewed insights an answer to this question through participants' shared experiences. The process of consumer acculturation within Pacific individual experience has been explored to consider these linkages and the inevitable impact of consumption both on the individual and the wider culture. The impact on the individual of chasing the consumption dream has been considered alongside the overall process of acculturation. The bigger picture brings us back to questioning the relevance and structure of a consumer lifestyle. Kassiola (2003) acknowledges the significance of the consumerism movement saying "...almost the entire human collectivity, consciously hold and pursue: consumerism, competition, individualism, overcoming scarcity, material security, want fulfillment, technology, status, and limitless economic growth." (p. 9)

Within participant narratives, it was possible to see this desire and limitless wanting growing as they became more focused on and prioritised consuming to fill the absence of culture and the collective. The dilemma of consumption pursuits became clear throughout the storylines. Participants dreamed about the possibilities of New Zealand, dreams which were centred on consumption goals. Once participants achieved aspects of their original dream, there was the eventual realisation that consumption pursuits were futile and contributed to discontent. Kassiola (2003) describes this discontent as wanting something, and then, finding that it is “empty”. With this renewed view of consumption as hollow, consumers are forced to reconsider their values and motivations; however, for many consumers this realisation does not cause change. They remain chasing the same elusive consumption dream, persevering “in our struggle for success at getting our wants” (p. 17). The outcome of this disillusionment Kassiola admits, shakes the worldview of the individual at its foundations, initiating a “re-examination and reconstitution” (p. 17) of his or her value system. For participants, the realisation of the “emptiness” in consumption pursuits initiated an eventual search for reengagement with culture, religion, and family.

The emptiness found in the pursuit of consumption could be soul-destroying as participants realised that what they had been working towards, what they had hoped to find was devoid of meaning and satisfaction. The journey and the difficulties contained in their journeys were not rewarded with the joy of fulfillment, but rather with the realisation of futility and discontent. But rather than a reevaluation of goals and priorities some participants remained true to those pursuits of achieving “success” with a dogged sense of determination, sometimes at any cost. Clearly the movement of the individual through the “consumer desire” phase is linked to fulfillment of the dream, but it is also linked to the replacement of the core characteristics of life in the islands. The trade-off for participants who were focused on the pursuit of the dream was that core values were being replaced, values such as community, sense of belonging, circle of giving and other cultural customs. While the participants were not necessarily willing to trade off these aspects of their culture, it was in most cases a gradual movement that occurred over time and in the absence of a conscious decision. Only upon reflection did participants begin to understand the severity of the trade-off and the discord that it had created for themselves and subsequent generations. This discord was present in the insatiable lifestyle of consumption pursuits. The hollowness found in the success of desires-met, only creates the need for more and

a place on the perpetual consumer lifecycle. Zimmerman (2003) identifies the insatiability of consumption pursuits:

*Satisfying material desires is surely important, but humanity's ultimate desire can never be satisfied, even by an infinite amount of material goods, for arguably what people really want is not more consumer goods, not more power over nature, not a longer life span, but eternity in the form of union with the nondual divine...* The consumerist culture that wreaks social and ecological chaos arises because so many people are using material goods to fill a void that such goods cannot fill. One can never get enough of what one doesn't really want. (p. 176)

In answering my original question I have found that Pacific consumer acculturation processes are tied to the eventual need to find alternative routes to fulfillment. There already exists some movement towards alternative ways of life that incorporate more harmonious elements and purposes. Hamilton and Denniss (2005) recognise that this search is about seeking less, a more minimal lifestyle: "There is a growing trend in Western society to choose a lifestyle that 'downshifts'. Changing patterns of consumption revolve around an assessment of consumption habits and asking what can be done without" (Hamilton & Denniss, 2005). Within a New Zealand context, Pacific consumers would benefit from the integration of their core values into their daily lives and the embracing of their value system by wider societal structures. Seeking the answers from collective methods would encourage the retention of cultural values. Potentially taking the "the best from both worlds" would be the ultimate route to navigating life in New Zealand.



### 13. ENLIGHTENED BY NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

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When I started this thesis I wanted to find answers to questions that I had around the problems and hardships that faced Pacific people as they acculturated as consumers to New Zealand society. Somewhere along the way I realised that what I was questioning and looking at far exceeded the basic question I had asked about acculturation; instead it begged a much bigger political and existential question around the pursuit of consumption and the futility of being part of the “rat race”. Having come to the end of the research, I realize that there are certain things that may never have an answer or a solution, but that in creating awareness I am helping others to also ask the same questions and I hope to play a small part in alleviating the symptoms, for myself, and others closely involved in the creation of this thesis. Looking back at what I have learnt from my participants there are certainly conclusions that I can draw with some conviction, but there may also be things that would have been interpreted differently and alternative insights that would have been unearthed had someone else been at the helm. However, what I reflect on is my own understandings from the previous 4 years.

At the most basic level of this study I have tried to learn about the Pacific consumer experience and focus on the methods that participants employed to acculturate into New Zealand society. To achieve this goal I sought to learn from my participants’ experiences and stories within the context of their wider lives and explore what they chose to share with me. While in retrospect it was a mammoth undertaking, I realised very early on that I had created an opportunity for intense insight into the way Pacific consumers lived. I found my involvement in my participants’ lives humbling and, at some moments, a little daunting. I learnt, however, that in reverting to my core values as a critical researcher and woman, they stood me in good stead for those moments when I found myself slightly “out-of-my-depth”. Asking my participants for “more” was where I found participants reflecting on their lives in ways that I had not anticipated I would be privy to. It was within these reflections that the contradictions of life appeared; where the moments of discontent came to the surface through stories of the past. These observations and sometimes raw feelings of a participant’s life exposed a side of consumption that participants and I had not fully considered or understood previously.

This video diary method has not been used in any other consumer acculturation research, nor has consumer acculturation been studied within specific Pacific groups. I also chose to move away from the dominant US paradigm of consumer acculturation and consider what my participants told me was relevant and significant in their lives. In doing so, I have tried to maintain each participant's voice as paramount, by incorporating Pacific epistemologies throughout my activity, interaction and writing. Regardless of this positioning, I hope that I have added to the ongoing conversation on consumer acculturation. I also hope that I have been able to carve out a new domain focused on Pacific consumers in New Zealand.

### **Concluding from what we have learnt**

From this research, we learn that the Pacific consumer acculturation process begins premigration. Participants were being primed by family and mass media to seek out a "better life" than the one they could hope for in the islands. Moving to New Zealand and the reunion with family members was viewed as unproblematic and many likened their relocation to New Zealand as going "home". Without exception, New Zealand was framed as a land of opportunity, primarily because of the fabled stories of New Zealand which came from family members. This conception was compounded by the remittances and gift giving of those family members back to the islands.

We learn that accounts of "opportunity" were almost exclusively focused on the fulfillment of consumption desires: better education, improved transport, better clothes, more variety, and greater access to foods. These desires revolved around wanting and having more, better access to more, and the money to be able to acquire more. We also learn that there is a high level of responsibility on the migrated individual. Decisions around the migration of family members are usually undertaken by the wider family and typically have a specific objective, whether educational or job related. The migrated individual also paved the way for subsequent siblings and extended family members. Responsibility was also located in their perceived "successes" at life in New Zealand. Success was primarily identified as fiscally based, both in the accumulation of wealth in New Zealand and the return of funds to family in the islands. Not only is the individual built up to believe that they will achieve "success", but many know that the level of family reliance on their "success" is extensive.

A process of acculturation surfaced as participants realised that social structures in the new host country were different. This process mirrored some aspects of US models of consumer acculturation in that there was a ‘dream’ that began the process of migration and decisions were made to achieve this dream within the host country. We learn that compulsive and excessive consumption behaviours can be seen as symptoms of larger issues – those of the adaptation of an individual from a collective society to an individualistic society. The stark contrast of these value systems created massive conflict that impacted the individual right down to the level of everyday consumption activities and choices. Religion remains important for some participants. For those that choose not to attend church, their level of engagement with prayer and other religious activities does not necessarily decline. They remain bound in many ways to the beliefs of religion and the “blurry” line between cultural values and religion remain cloudy. Individuals worked to balance the role of giving and reciprocity, which sat uncomfortably with personal accumulation.

The movement toward personal sacrifice was a site of conflict for individuals as they navigated not only the demands of their new social environment, the reduction in family contact, and reduced cultural commitments, but also the personal desire to be linked to their culture and many of their traditions. Throughout this conflict, happiness was incrementally lost and regained during the process of acculturating as consumers. The longer Pacific people were in New Zealand, the better the access to the dreams they had longed for prior to migrating. Yet, in the same breath, even though individuals were irrevocably changing in their new environment, they still desired to hold on to selected parts of their culture, either by choice or by duty. In addition to the aspects of becoming an individual that we already know about, we have found that in the process of becoming an individual, participants enjoyed aspects of their newly acquired freedom. There was a sense of freedom that was described by participants as “not easy to let go off”. This freedom and other aspects of the new host culture were readily embraced and incorporated into the participants’ daily lives.

## **Research Scope**

Throughout this research I have tried to stay true to my epistemological, ontological and theoretical foundations. Now that I reflect on how I could have strengthened what I have completed, I am left with many more questions and the possibility of many more research topics to pursue. Within this project, however, I am confident that I have exhausted all avenues of presenting my own understandings, so my realisation of limitations moves the research into alternative domains, primarily outside of the scope of my topic.

Not unlike minority populations to the United States, like Hispanic and Asian populations, Pacific people hail from diverse cultures and countries and are continually homogenised into one group when they arrive in New Zealand. This phenomenon is not unique to New Zealand; however, as I identified in the literature review, studies on understanding Pacific acculturation tend to group Pacific and Asian cultures together, or neglect to identify the different groups. I am looking here to highlight the idiosyncratic process of acculturation that Pacific people experience and, in doing so, encourage other researchers to “dig deeper” into issues that have surfaced. As was shown throughout this thesis, it became plainly apparent that Pacific consumers, although having similarities to other international minority consumer groups, deviated from what many researchers have identified as the “norm” for other acculturating cultures. Therefore, I believe that researching larger groups of Pacific people undertaken in the “big” New Zealand cities such as Auckland and Wellington may highlight differences or provide new insights. Because those substantial-sized populations have the capacity to develop their own culture, separate from the mainstream.

While I cannot generalise the findings in this thesis to the whole of the Pacific population migrating to New Zealand, I can say with confidence that there are ways that we can learn from the journeys of these nine participants and improve the acculturation process for other impending immigrants. The voices of only nine participants although central to my intensive critical ethnographic stance and choice of method is limiting in that it considers only their (and their family’s) perspectives. The voices of those not heard could potentially provide different insights, and focusing on one Pacific cultural group at a time would expose the diversity within the cultures themselves. I have tried to capture as much about the individual differences within the

cultures as possible; still the presence of these additional voices might have revealed other, concealed insights.

### **Strengths of the Study**

One of the primary goals of this project was to assist Pacific people. I have been working to enhance the research experience for this community and I have utilised a new medium - video diaries - to achieve this goal. It is an evolving process, one that has had its triumphs and tragedies, but overall it has been beneficial for both my participants and me. I am aware also of the boundaries that I am pushing (if only in a small way); fortunately, this challenge has not been mounted alone as I stand as a part of a “research unit”, learning from and gaining encouragement from my supervisors and participants.

I believe that primarily this research has been advantageous because it explores the impact of consumption and the sometimes difficult process of acculturating to a new society. This is a journey fraught with disappointments and worries and, from what I have seen, made more difficult by an elusive dream that is always just out of reach, and once attained never lives up to the promises that it makes. I have had the benefit of working from research undertaken within other minority groups around the world and look at this thesis as supporting that research, and extending and moving the consumer acculturation conversation away from the dominant US consumer paradigm.

Finally, I believe that the strength of this research lies in the questions that we are left with. Where do we go from here? How do we look purposefully and positively toward the future? How do we reevaluate the futile but continuing pursuits of the consumer lifestyle? These and other questions move the reader to consider the next steps toward the future and how we can improve on the past.

## Considering the Implications for Participants

*...I've been going through lots of processing about myself, being a consumer and as a Pacific Islander in New Zealand. To be honest, thank you Charis for coming across which I think you deserve, you needed me to serve your purpose, but at the same time it also does serve its purposes for me. ...I've sort of realised this week that doing lots, or allowing me lots of time to do this kind of reflection and just following through from what I said earlier on, reflecting on how I feel, and made mistakes to learn from it and ah yeah. It opened up lots of doors to understanding and I'd like to sort of speak on how I feel now compared to when I started. I was still beating around the bush and somewhat I feel like I have this kind of settling feelings inside me and it's a good feeling. Like I said I don't have that urge to sort of hurry up and spend as much money that I have just earned. Now I'd rather let it go ...I'm quite happy (Mabel)*

I had not anticipated the full extent of opportunities that this research topic and method provided for the research, the participant, and me. In deciding to take a critical stance, I was looking to assist participants to reflect on their experiences and transform their lives. I chose the method based on the possibilities of shaping it to provide the participants with more control over their research involvement, to choose and direct their own input, at their own pace. Now, reflecting on the words of Mabel (above) I have become aware of the significance of the research process. It allowed participants to take stock of their lives, to reflect on the past, their choices, their memories, and what these would mean for their future. It was a unique journey that for some became an outlet for catharsis - the revelation of secrets, and movement to the start of something new.

Both the camera and I were used as a supportive listener where the discussion of “forgotten” memories and “silent” issues were purged. I experienced great openness from the participants in sharing their lives and their families with me and, in turn, I shared openly of my own experiences. Through this mutual sharing, I was part of the transformation that my participants experienced, caught up in the process of self-reflection and evaluation that I was privy to. Participants had insights into their lives and behaviours, seeing why they felt and acted

in certain ways. These insights, on occasion, moved participants to change their lives if they felt that the recognition was significant enough and it was emotionally significant to watch participants “connect the dots” in their lives. The evolution and recognition of their actions brought about the “epiphany” that yielded deep insights, but epiphanies only came about after considerable time spent pondering and openly discussing issues.

Within this research there are several implications for participants. Migration remains a necessary part of Pacific survival. It is a rite of passage for many Pacific people in providing a better life for their families back home and in New Zealand. Access to education is a large component of this opportunity. By educating Pacific people prior to migration, they are more empowered and equipped to assist their families and the wider communities by taking that knowledge back home and/or gaining access to higher incomes. Pacific experiences of consumption highlight opportunities for improving the pre and postmigration experience through better consumer awareness and education.

There is an urgent need to revise the premigration dream of consumption. The pursuit of the Western dream is not all that it is hoped to be. It is rife with the difficulties of competitiveness and individualism that stand in stark contrast to the values of Pacific culture. Premigration awareness is needed to assist in making expectations of New Zealand more realistic, particularly in the additional expenses not only they, but those family members currently in New Zealand will face. Holding on to traditional values of their collective society, like family connections, can assist in the acculturation process and make life more “worthwhile” in the new host country.

Pacific people need to consider the benefits of utilising their collective methods and strategies to deal with social issues as a collective. The structure of their social networks and cultural group strategies should be utilised to secure beneficial collective outcomes for the individual, rather than a sometimes futile attempt to secure happiness in consumption and wealth. I include in this recommendation a need to consider collective answers to financial security and future planning of Pacific people in New Zealand. There is a real need to utilise more than just the financial advantages of New Zealand to meet the needs of life in New Zealand.

Personal adjustments to the new environment assisted participants with regaining happiness. Changes in the broader host culture would also be beneficial to improving happiness.

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

To ensure the sustainability of Pacific values, customs and culture in New Zealand, there needs to be more education on these in a formal environment, like the school system. Beneficial aspects of the host culture need to be integrated with Pacific cultures to maintain those aspects of the culture that are important. As Sarah spoke about the potential “harmony” that is possible to attain, I too recommend that “harmony” can be achieved by the development of collective tools that resource the individual through collective methods, but with a view to alleviating the burden of having to meet unrealistic expectations of “success” in both of those worlds. Layard (2005) recommends that to increase “happiness” public policy needs to be encompassing of education that teaches attitudes that eliminate negative thoughts and promote positive attitudes (p. 200). In a cultural context, the formalisation of cultural education would be beneficially included in the schooling curriculum to assist in the generational identity journey. In this way, many of the difficulties experienced by Pacific migrants could be alleviated.



### **Considering the Implications for Consumer Research**

This research addresses the gaps identified in the literature of greater diversity and perspectives needed within consumer research. Within these pages, there is a movement away from one dominant paradigm and an embracing of a small minority voice. This voice illustrates the similarities of experience across the borders of different countries, but also highlights the substantial differences. These differences appear in: the sites and influences of conflict; the strong ties to cultural life that are maintained; the obligations that exist; the continual search for balance and happiness; and the host cultures' facilitation and acceptance of the immigrants and their culture.

By looking at Pacific culture, we are learning a lot about Western society. We can see that there is mimicry in the progress of desiring a lifestyle of consumption that has spread the world over. It is not fulfilling, yet this fact is overlooked in order to perpetuate the dream that is offered. It is possible to see that Pacific immigrant consumption habits are following the habits of the Industrial Period of burgeoning consumption. Consumerism is feeding the desires of many Pacific people to want more, have more, own more, and replacing many of the long held traditional values of community ownership and reciprocity. Pacific consumers, and more broadly all consumers, must revise and reestablish how they interact within the consumption environment. The pursuit of consumption is frivolous and does not create happiness, nor replace the values lost in the trade-off of migration. If we consider the negative effects that consumption has had (and is currently having) on Western society, we must ask the question. How can we improve this inevitability for Pacific consumers? While I am not suggesting that we throw off all consumption, there are alternative routes to happiness and improved mental health. These centre on the community and a collective way of life that embraces sustainability. The impacts of this alternative to consumer research are significant and require immediate consideration.

As consumer researchers, particularly from ethnic minorities, we must ask the pivotal questions that affect our communities: Is it possible to keep aspects of culture that encourage accountability and collectivity? Is it possible to retain cultural identity that benefits the person and not evaluate individuals by their material wealth? How can marketers contribute to the wellbeing of minority cultures and not impose a structure of material hierarchy? Is it even possible?

### **Considering the Methodological Implications**

The use of video diaries should be considered more by researchers, especially by consumer researchers concerned with the wellbeing of their participants. The method is extremely flexible and can be tailored to the population's needs and requirements. It is paramount that within the research process researchers consider their participants and take a more "harmonious" approach to the research process (e.g., feminist, indigenous, critical researchers). Video diaries are a viable and valuable resource for researchers undertaking an ethnographic stance that looks beyond participant feedback to specific questions and probes deeply into the wider context and environment of each participant. For the context of this thesis, video diaries offered participants the opportunity to visually represent themselves and their lives. It provided participants with the tools to provide their own context and their stories. This was a profound opportunity that gave participants the principal control over their involvement in the research.

Video diaries facilitated the reflection process for participants at various stages of their diary process. Utilising the method outlined in this thesis provided multiple opportunities to individually and/or collectively build more meaningful reflections into experiences and memories. It was an important component of developing the full potential of the method and quickly became a "cathartic" process for participants. Unexpected issues were uncovered and revelations became an unintended side-effect of the method.

Video diaries capture more than "thick and rich description"; they captured saturated description (Brown et al., in print). Saturated description provides unanticipated discoveries of understanding. It can also provide more data than a researcher can absorb. This combined visual and audible description of a given event, wrapped up in multiple opportunities for insight and reflection, provides many occasions for eliciting insight from a diary entry. The visual and verbal data extend the researcher's toolkit for research. The method allows the researcher to hear a participant's voice, see his or her circumstances and comprehend his or her experiences more thoroughly. The participants benefit from the opportunity to review an experience, while the continued reflection and discussion expose a "fresh" perspective on their lives.

### **Considering the Implications for Social Policy**

On reflection of the bigger picture, I began to see the overriding issues surrounding the absence in New Zealand of collective values and networks that are interwoven in Pacific cultures. While this system is not unique to Pacific cultures - Western societies are predominantly founded on the success and continual striving toward individual goals and lifestyles. When these contrasting cultures collide, as in migration, the differences are compounded for the individual. Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder, (2006) identify that diversity in culture is becoming more prevalent in countries that have been long-standing receivers of immigrants and also those that have just started to receive immigrants. The absence of these Pacific collective structures is having an undeniable impact on individuals who have migrated. I believe the implications for social policy are significant.

Community is a concept which needs to be addressed. The overriding difficulties that individuals faced were rooted in the loss of the community. There is a need for community driven collective initiatives and solutions that recreate the values of collective lifestyles. These values could easily be integrated into wider social structures so that immigrants felt visible and included within their communities. The development of surrogate communities would assist in the integration of individuals into the community. So too would a mentoring system for individuals to seek help for budgeting, and consumption education would be advantageous to undertake. This education would be particularly relevant for Pacific immigrants if there was a focus around the perils of high interest loans, outcomes of bad debts, disadvantages of borrowing to send money home and assistance with transferring educational achievements from the islands into New Zealand qualifications. This assistance would also be valuable with the establishment and settlement of Pacific people, even if they already have family members in New Zealand. Individuals could then be supported by others in the same situation and together they could begin reorienting themselves to the new host culture. Community is the solution.

There is definitely a need for premigration education on the challenges of a consumption lifestyle and individualistic pursuits. Primarily, there needs to be better awareness surrounding the realities of life in New Zealand. If the “dream” of life in New Zealand could be viewed more realistically, then the decision to come to New Zealand and other Western nations could be a much more enlightened one.

## **Considering the Implications for Future Research**

While I started this research looking for definitive answers I came to realise that I am asking more questions, having completed this thesis, than I had at the beginning. The collected knowledge collated in this thesis contributes to throwing light on only a small part of the Pacific consumer journey. From this small start at understanding the Pacific consumer acculturation, there are many roads to travel. First, a look at larger populations of Pacific people in New Zealand, for example in the Auckland and or Wellington regions, may produce differing outcomes to those in this study. For example, consideration of more Pacific people populated regions of New Zealand would no doubt highlight consumption resistance, and, like Hispanic communities, potentially identify sites of cultural resistance or segregation to the mainstream consumption practices of New Zealanders. Although I have focused on how the isolation from one's culture impacted on the acculturation journey, it may be more advantageous to live in an area that is more reflective of the Pacific and may highlight that issues, such as, how being isolated or alienated, may be reduced. Other questions stirring included:

- How does consumer acculturation affect the consumer decision making process of Pacific people?
- What are the differences between the different Pacific cultures?
- What specific community strategies will respond best to the absence of collective societal structures?

### ***Pacific Consumers***

Research into Pacific consumers needs to be undertaken more regularly. There appears to be considerable research into particular aspects of negative consumption behaviour, particularly around compulsive and addictive consumption, but there is clearly a greater need to understand how the transition from being a collectivist citizen can be more easily made into an individualistic society.

- How much does obligation to family impact on consumer decision making processes?
- How many generations of New Zealand born Pacific people pass before obligation is diminished?
- How does obligation to the church impact on consumption decisions?

## The End of This Journey and the Beginning of Another . . .

*Time is short...integrate their insights into your thoughts and actions. It is not hyperbole to say that your own happiness and the fate of the planet may lie in the balance.*  
(Kassiola, 2003, p. 13)

It is with sadness (and undeniably relief) that I finish this thesis. Again I am drawn to looking at the bigger picture of what I leave with the completion of this thesis. Although I started with a clear intention to consider Pacific consumer acculturation, I found it impossible to ignore the significant questions that plagued me during this research around the futility of consumption pursuits. As I draw together the threads of knowledge and reflect on the journey that the research has taken me on, I am confronted by how the past can inform us about the present. Reflecting on Western consumption patterns, it is possible to see a similar picture emerging within the Pacific consumption journey. From this comparison, we can learn more about what is to come for Pacific people. Now is the time to heed the warnings from various sectors of our community, both within and outside of academia. The need for a more sustainable lifestyle is significant as we move toward the future, and, if we contemplate life without excessive consumption, an alternative lifestyle/s must be sought out.

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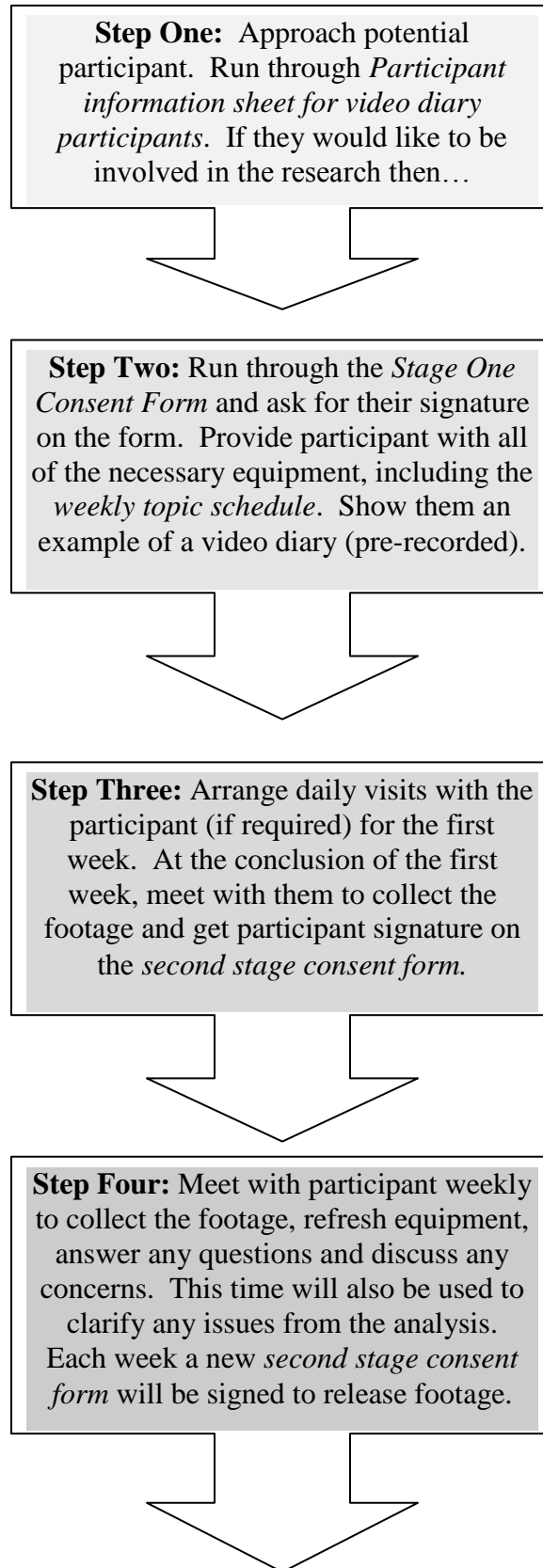
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## APPENDICES

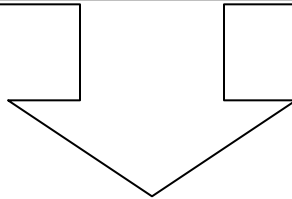
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### Appendix 1.0: Steps of the Participant Process for Video Diaries

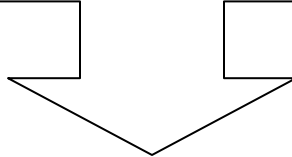




**Step Five:** Upon completion of the video diaries, preliminary analysis of the data will be undertaken to uncover themes. These and other issues will be discussed in a final interview with the participant to ensure that meanings are clarified and that any further comments are included. They will need to sign a second stage consent form at the completion of this interview



**Step Six:** All participants will be given an opportunity to meet at the completion of all fieldwork to discuss as a group the themes that have emerged and add any further comments to their input. This will be the final step in the fieldwork process, enabling co-construction of meaning.



**Step Seven:** All participants will be provided with an electronic copy (DVD and CD) of their recordings and upon completion of the final PhD thesis an electronic copy of this.

### **Appendix 1.1: Participant Information Sheet**

**Project Title:** Understanding the Pacific Consumer: Everyday experiences of being a consumer in New Zealand

**Researcher:** Charis Brown, WMS, Waikato University

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate I thank you. If you decide not to take part, I thank you for considering my request to be a part of this project.

#### **What is the aim of this research?**

The aim of this doctoral study is to understand Pacific consumption through everyday consumer experience. The guiding question is: *What are Pacific people's experiences of being a consumer in New Zealand?*

#### **What type of participants are being sought?**

The types of participants being sought include those from Pacific Island countries/lineage who currently reside in New Zealand and can share their thoughts, feelings and everyday experiences of being a consumer. It is important that participants have some knowledge of their culture and some recollection of their time living in their homeland.

#### **What will you be asked to do?**

Should participants agree to take part in this project they will be involved with visually recording (on to a digital video camera) their experiences of everyday events on a daily basis for a period of approximately 6-8 weeks. At the end of every day the participant would reflect on what they chose to capture on camera and summarise the significance of the events. This should take about 10-20 minutes per day.

#### **Procedures in which you will be involved:**

During the course of the video diary collection you will be given the opportunity to talk about your own experiences. You, using the researcher's filming equipment will record your diary

entries. At the end of each day it is important to summarize the events of the day, just as you would in a written diary. You will then have the opportunity (with the researcher) to review and make additional comments or amendments to the diaries either weekly or bi-weekly.

Upon completion of the diary collection period, there will be one final interview with the researcher that will examine aspects of your diaries and provide you with an opportunity to further discuss aspects of your experiences. [At this time I will share with you some of the themes that have emerged from the research and offer you the opportunity to comment upon and/or share your experiences related to these themes]. Finally, you will receive a DVD containing your diaries and final interview for your record.

#### **Procedures in which the content of your interview will be recorded**

Digital video will be used to capture your diaries and final interview. The reason for using video is varied. Firstly, being able to express meaning through a visual format enables greater understanding and insight into individual experiences. Secondly, the visual enables greater possibilities in sharing the learned knowledge and experience with other researchers and the community. In essence there is a greater opportunity to reach a wider audience through this medium.

All the equipment that is required will be provided for the participant (at no charge) for the duration of their involvement. Participants have multiple opportunities during the course of the research process to clarify and/or amend their input into the video diary.

#### **What commitment is involved?**

The participant commitment includes:	The researcher commitment includes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A commitment to undertake daily video diaries that reflect their experiences outlined in the video diary guide</li><li>• A minimum of 10 minutes per day to</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing the participant with all of the required equipment for the study</li><li>• To provide the participant with all relevant information regarding the</li></ul>

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

<p>discuss/share their experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A willingness to be involved in a visually recorded medium that is intended for a wider audience</li> <li>• To be available weekly or bi-weekly to meet with the researcher to review recorded diaries and to be available for one final interview at the completion of the diary collection process</li> </ul>	<p>study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To assist the participant as is required</li> <li>• To provide the participant with the opportunity to delete or change any part of their video diary collection during the weekly review and consent process with the researcher</li> <li>• To undertake a final interview with the participant to ensure that they have discussed all that they need to</li> </ul>
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**Can you change your mind and withdraw from the project?**

Yes, participants may withdraw from participation in the project and without disadvantage. Participants must give first stage consent prior to starting the video diaries and second stage consent will be required weekly or bi-weekly during the collection of the video footage and upon completion of the final interview. Participants that would like to withdraw from the project at an earlier stage may do so, and only the video footage with second stage consent can be retained for the purposes of this project. This two-step consent process ensures that the participant will be able to clarify their input during the process of this research.

**What data will be collected and what will it be used for?**

The information collected will be presented back to participants at various stages during the research process for approval of content and accuracy. Once the individual participants are in agreement that the information is an accurate and representative portrayal of their views, it will be presented within the thesis as a means of understanding Pacific consumer experiences. Aspects of your video diaries may also be published in academic journals, used in presentations and/or used for research purposes during the course of the PhD study and/or on completion of the PhD study. This will only occur once the researcher has received second stage consent from each participant.

**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

The raw data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only the research team (researcher and supervisors) will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the University's research policy, any information that supports the results of the thesis will be kept for future reference.

**WHAT IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?**

If you have any questions about this project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Charis Brown

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Waikato Management School

Waikato University

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**Appendix 1.2: Participant Stage One Consent Form**

**Project Title:** Understanding the Pacific Consumer: Everyday experiences of being a consumer in New Zealand

**Researcher:** Charis Brown, WMS, Waikato University

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know:

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project without disadvantage;
3. Any unnecessary data video tapes and/or audio tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but, as required by the University's research policy, any information that supports the results of the thesis will be kept for future reference.
4. If I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without disadvantage;
5. The equipment provided for the purposes of this research is only for the collection of diary entries and/or photos for this project. Please handle this equipment with care and return to the researcher at the completion of the project. Ownership of this equipment at all times remains with the researcher;
6. The results of the project will be used for the researcher's PhD thesis and may be published for academic purposes;
7. The commitments required by myself;

I, (participant name) agree to take part in this project.

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(Signature of participant)

(Date)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the:  
University of Waikato Human Ethics Committee

**Appendix 1.3: Participant Stage Two Consent Form**

**Project Title:** Understanding the Pacific Consumer: Everyday experiences of being a consumer in New Zealand

**Researcher:** Charis Brown, WMS, Waikato University

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. My participation in the project has been entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and only the video footage with second stage consent can be retained for the purposes of this project;
3. Any unnecessary digital video tapes, photographic images and/or audio tapes that have been collected for this project will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but, as required by the University's research policy, any information that supports the results of the thesis will be kept for future reference;
4. The equipment provided for the purposes of this research must be returned in its original condition to the researcher;
5. I understand that there will be a final opportunity for participants involved in this process to meet at the conclusion of the fieldwork to discuss the uncovered themes and relevant findings and further co-construct meanings within the research;
6. The results of the project may be published and I hereby consent to the researcher's use of my name, the use of the digital video recordings that I have made, the use of the interview, and the use of the images that I have made, for the purpose of illustration and publication in the following outputs (please tick):

☐ PhD Thesis and Academic publications including seminars/conferences

☐ Community Conferences

I, (participant name) agree to the above.

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(Signature of participant)

(Date)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the:  
University of Waikato Human Ethics Committee

### **Appendix 1.4: Video Diary Participant Guide**

**Project Title:** Understanding the Pacific Consumer: Everyday experiences of being a consumer in New Zealand

**Researcher:** Charis Brown, WMS, Waikato University

#### **What do you need to do?**

Video entries need to be recorded on a daily basis, at least once per day. The entries are a personal observation and summary of the day relating to your experiences and provide an opportunity for your personal comments, to recall the events of the day, and express your feelings. Over the course of your week there are particular tasks for you to record during the week. These vary from week to week but include recording events that occur in and outside of the home, such as:

- Recording meal times
- Going shopping
- Touring the home
- Family history
- Identification of prized possessions
- Window shopping
- Describing changes in your life and that of your families post migration

During the time that you undertake your entry you can take the camera around your home, to work, or on your personal or family excursions. You are not limited to one location with your entries. There is no limitations on the amount of time that you can record, however there are various tasks that must be achieved during the course of the week. At the end of each day it is necessary to summarise the day, including discussing what you have recorded for the assigned task. In addition to these assigned tasks there are several broad areas for discussion that are designed to assist you in undertaking your video diary and aid with your reflection of the day. These are:

- Today's purchases



**Pacific Consumer Acculturation**  
**Charis Brown**

- Your wants and needs
- Your family wants and needs
- Achievements
- Difficulties
- Events upcoming
- Remembering how things were in your past
- Highs for today
- Lows for today
- Other issues

These topic areas are provided as suggestions for your diary entry, they are not the only things you can discuss.

There will be weekly meetings with you and the researcher to discuss progress, replace equipment (e.g. tapes), and monitor participation. At these meetings you will be asked to sign the second stage consent form for the diary entries collected.

Depending on your progress and the regularity of your entries this project would be conducted over a 6 to 8 week period. Once your entries have been transferred to DVD, there will be a follow up interview to discuss the diaries and any themes that have arisen from the research. Finally, there will be an opportunity for participants involved in this process to meet at the conclusion of the fieldwork to discuss the uncovered themes and relevant findings and further co-construct meanings within the research.

**Appendix 1.5: Participant Schedule of Weekly Topics**

<b>Week One</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introducing the family</li><li>• Recording one breakfast</li><li>• Going shopping</li></ul>
<b>Week Two</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Touring the home</li><li>• Family history</li><li>• Photo albums</li></ul>
<b>Week Three</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recording one lunch</li><li>• Identification of prized possessions</li><li>• Recording a Church Service or other event</li></ul>
<b>Week Four</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Window shopping</li><li>• Describing changes in your life and that of your families post migration</li><li>• Interviews of family members</li></ul>
<b>Week Five</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Filming the workplace</li><li>• Recording fun/happiness</li><li>• Recording one lunch</li></ul>
<b>Week Six</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A family outing</li><li>• Recording a dinner</li><li>• Discussion of Important event</li></ul>

## Appendix 2.0: Research outputs from Thesis

### Publications

Brown, C., Costley, C., Friend, L., & Varey, R., (in print). *Capturing their dream: Video diaries and the minority consumer*. Consumption, Markets and Culture: Special Edition.

Brown, C., (2007). *Pacific Consumer Acculturation: Understanding the Dynamics of Pacific Consumption*. In Matthewson, C. and Taumoepeau, M. (eds), *Pacific Voices IV: Abstracts for the Pacific Postgraduate Symposium*, Pacific Islands Centre, University of Otago.

### Conferences

Brown, C., Friend, L., & Costley, C. (2009). *Transformative Research Methods: Video Diaries*. International Institute for Qualitative Methodology 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Advances in Qualitative Methods Conference, Vancouver, British Colombia, Canada.

Brown, C. (2009). *In pursuit of happiness: Pacific consumers in New Zealand*. Pacific Talanoa Series Seminars. Building Research Capacity in the Social Sciences (BRCSS). {Presented 18<sup>th</sup> May 09}

Brown, C., (2008). *Gathering Pacific Perspectives: Video diaries and the minority consumer*. University of Waikato, Hamilton: 12th Annual Waikato Management School Student Research Conference. {Presented 20<sup>th</sup> Oct 08}

Brown, C., Costley, C., Friend, L., & Varey, R., (2008). *Capturing their dream: Video diaries and the minority consumer*. (Full paper) Boston, USA: Consumer Culture Theory Conference Proceedings.