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# **Experiences of Tongan Women Migrants at Paid Work in New Zealand**

by

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**Being a Thesis**

**Presented to the University of Waikato**

**in Partial Fulfillment**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The employment experiences of Tongan women migrants have received little attention in the literature. This study therefore, sought to shed light on the dynamics of their social and economic experiences at paid work in New Zealand. It was guided by the theories of population geographies, feminist geography and postcolonialism. The inter-relationships of these theories provided insights into the influence of migration on these women's identities, ethnicity and gender relations and also how these influence these women's experiences at paid work in New Zealand. The data were drawn from two major sources: i) the New Zealand 2006 population census and ii) in-depth interviews held in Tonga and New Zealand, with greater focus on the interviews.

This study revealed that the Tongan women's decisions for migrating to New Zealand were influenced by social rather than economic incentives. Migration has challenged these women's traditional roles and reconstructed their gender relations. Many are breadwinners yet Tongan born men in New Zealand still predominantly engage in the labour force and have higher personal income. Their experiences at paid work also differ from the New Zealand born Tongan women in New Zealand. These differences reflect the availability of their social networks and their familiarity with the socio-economic systems in New Zealand. They experienced successes and failures at paid work on their way to improving their lives in New Zealand.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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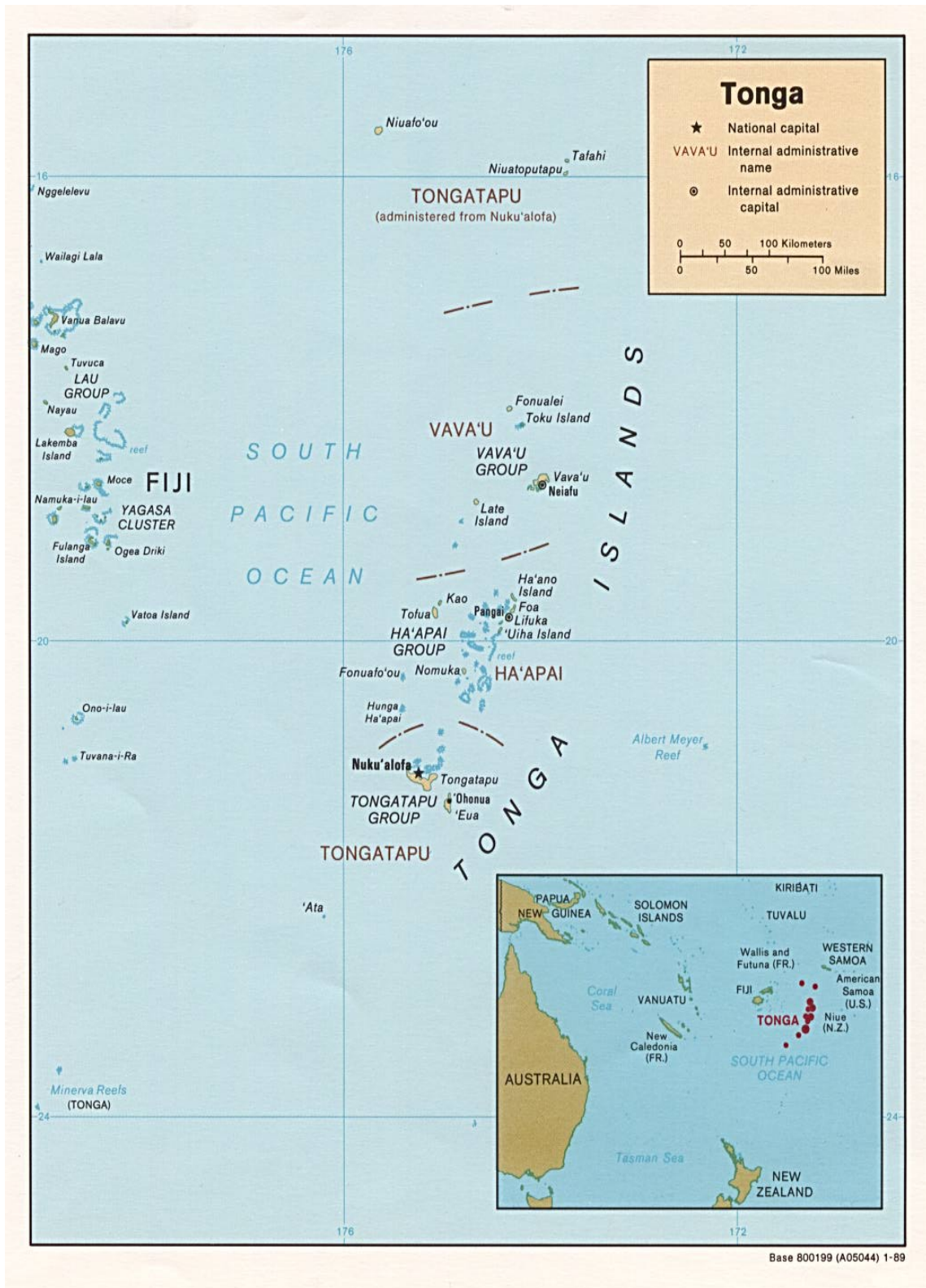


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**Figure 1. Map of Tonga**

(Source: Friendly Islands Kayak Company, 2007)

# Chapter One: Introduction

## Background

Tonga is the “last surviving Polynesian kingdom” in the South Pacific (Small and Dixon, 2004 6), with a population density of 156 people for each square kilometer. There are five main administrative districts, namely; Tongatapu, Vava’u, Ha’apai, ‘Eua and the Niuas (see Figure 1). Amongst these island districts, Tongatapu (the largest island) contains the largest concentration of Tonga’s population. The rest of the population is shared by the other districts with the Niuas, situated on the far north of the Tonga group, having the smallest population.

The unequal population distribution in Tonga is very much an effect of migration. The International Organization for Migration (2005b 460) defines migration, as a “process of moving either across an international border, or within a state”. This latter form of migration of Tongans within Tonga is characterized by a search for better opportunities elsewhere than people normally have in their own villages and small islands. As Connell (2004 158) highlights, people are “moving away from the remote islands and isolated rural areas, particularly to urban areas, which have usually grown considerably in recent years”. The clustering of better education facilities and work opportunities in the main islands, particularly in Nuku’alofa (capital of Tonga on Tongatapu), were held accountable for the continuous migration of people there. As a result, 70 percent of Tonga’s population now live in Tongatapu (Connell and Brown, 2004) and 38.8 percent of the total population of Tonga dwell in the urban areas of the main islands (Department of Environment, 2002). Regardless of the opportunities offered by these urban areas, many people are still unsatisfied reflecting differentials in wages and educational opportunities between Tonga and overseas countries and made more critical by land shortages (Connell and Brown, 2004, Lee, 2003). Among other factors, these had inspired many people to seek opportunities overseas.

The capitalist mode of production through the process of capital accumulation (in the developed countries) and the need to find profitable means of producing and exchanging goods, has resulted in the recruitment of large numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled workers from the developing countries (Spoonley, 1993). Migrant workers perceive these capitalist societies to have relatively higher wages and other benefits that they can not obtain in their own homelands. Hence, many migrate in search for the “best return on their human capital”(Castles and Miller, 1993 45). In the Pacific, as in other parts of the world, a “...massive increase in the volume of international mobility to the metropolitan countries such as New Zealand” has occurred (Bedford, 1997 6). Small islands and island states were observed by Bedford as “beautiful but not places to live” (cited in Connell, 2002 70). This was also observed by the Parliament of Australia Senate which stated that Tongans routinely “leave their homelands in search of lucrative jobs abroad” (Parliament of Australia: Senate, 2006). Of course, as the World Bank (2006 2) stated, in a review of population in Tonga, labour migration is “not going to solve all the problems” for the country. However, any chance of improving the living standards of not only those remaining in the islands but also the migrants and their descendants in their new homelands, is for many worth taking the opportunity.

Despite the considerable amount of literature written on labour migration, Larner (1989) notes that women tend to disappear not only in discussions about labour migration but also in discussions about migrant women’s participation in the paid work force. This suggests that women as well as men migrate for labour opportunities overseas and participate in the labour force, but because women’s contributions are hardly discussed in these arenas, the focus was mostly on men. There is therefore, pressing need to address this research gap.

### **Importance of this study**

This study suggests it is important to recognize and better understand the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand because women are often overlooked in labour migration research. As Larner (1990 19) points out,

For the most part, male experiences were emphasized, or aggregate data were examined without any recognition that the experiences associated with migration may be fundamentally different for women and men.

There is a similar lack of research which has given “priority to investigating” the Pacific island women’s “experiences as paid workers” (NACEW, 1990 173) including Tongan women migrants. In addition, my positionality as a Tongan woman and migrant has prompted my interest in exploring the experiences of Tongan migrants, particularly women, at paid work in New Zealand. My intention here is to bridge the gap in literature on women’s migration, and be able to provide an insight into the social and economic dynamics of their experiences at paid work in New Zealand. Therefore, it is now necessary to consider the research questions addressing this study.

### **Research objectives and questions**

As previously introduced, this study is guided by this overall question: ‘what are the social and economic dynamics of the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand?’, and followed by three main questions in which are displayed below.

1. What are the work experiences of Tongan women migrants in New Zealand?
  - What kind of paid work do these women have or have had?
  - What kind of incomes do these women have or have had?
  - What are their age characteristics in the workforce?
2. What is the employment history of Tongan women migrants in New Zealand?
  - What jobs have they had?
  - How long have they been in their current/last job and why?
3. How does migration and paid work in New Zealand affect the ways Tongan women are identified?

## **Working definitions of terms used within the research**

Providing that migration involves the movement of people whether within their country or abroad, the birthplaces of migrants are significant in recognizing who they are, where they have come from and where they are going. Statistics New Zealand (2006 2) identifies birthplace as a “country where the respondent [who is identified on the census dwelling form] was born”. Hence, the term ‘migrants’ entails those people who leave their state or country of origin or of habitual residence, to establish themselves either permanently or temporarily in another state within their own country or another country (International Organization for Migration, 2005b). In this study, Tongan women migrants are referred to as Tongan women who identified themselves in the New Zealand census report to have been born in Tonga. They will also be referred to as ‘Tongan born women’.

The New Zealand born Tongans on the other hand, include Tongan women who were born in New Zealand and identified themselves in the population census to be of Tongan ethnicity. Given that the experiences of Tongan women migrants at ‘paid work’ is what this study underlines, it is crucial to be acquainted with the term ‘paid work’. This term is expressed in the Australian *New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999 [Cth]* as “any work for financial gain or any other reward (whether as an employee, a self-employed individual or otherwise) that involves a substantial degree of personal exertion on the part of the individual concerned”. Hence, the term ‘paid work’ in this study will be referred to any work the women who participated in the interviews and the 2006 New Zealand census did or are doing in return for cash.

## **The structure of the thesis**

The substantive findings of this research are presented in six chapters. Chapter Two begins with a background discussion of international migration and the socio-economic context of migration in New Zealand.

The Third Chapter is a review of the relevant literature on migration and recognizes the different theories guiding the methodological designs employed in this study, with particular emphasis on women as migrants and their experiences at paid work.

Chapter Four discusses the methodology employed in this qualitative and quantitative study, with particular reference to the theoretical frameworks underpinning these approaches. The problems and difficulties of these research methods will also be disclosed in this chapter.

Chapter Five contains the results from the in-depth interviews and the demographic and socio-economic analysis of the 2006 New Zealand population census data on Tongan women in New Zealand. The in-depth interviews will expose the experiences at paid work of the participants, while the census data shows how Tongan women migrants are represented in the New Zealand work force. This chapter includes; the reasons for migrating to New Zealand and returning to Tonga, comparing the returning women's work experiences in New Zealand with those in Tonga and, comparing the experiences at paid work between Tongan born women and those born in New Zealand.

The Sixth Chapter discusses the research findings in relation to the theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter Three. In addition, this chapter will attempt to answer the research questions. The final chapter will provide a conclusion to the thesis.

## **Chapter Two: Setting the Context**

This chapter investigates the background for this study and highlights the migration situation in the world and the likely factors accountable for Pacific people, particularly Tongans, migrating outside their national borders. There are three sequential sections in this chapter. The first provides an outline of international migration. The second section exposes the migration experiences of Pacific peoples, and the last section provides an explanation of the socio-economic setting of migration in Tonga and New Zealand.

### **International migration**

International migration is a “global phenomenon” (Chandra, 2003 1), a part of a transnational revolution that is reshaping societies and politics around the globe (Castles and Miller, 1993, Piper, 2006). With advances in travel and communications technology, migrants have engaged in “back-and-forth circulation, which can contribute to economic growth in both the sending and receiving countries” (International Organization for Migration, 2005a 185). This resulted in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century being marked as an important new chapter in the history of globalization. Massey and Jess (1995 216) describe globalization, as a component of “major processes of social change, and the multidirectional nature of the moving and mixing involved has produced and reproduced not sameness but hybridity and local uniqueness”. In other words, neither any culture nor any place is left unexposed to foreign influences as a result of migration.

Researchers traditionally explained the flow of international migration during the post world war II era as “stemming, from the asymmetric structural relations between the highly industrialized rich countries and the poor developing nations” (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2004 6). This is evident across the globe as economic relations not only affect regions but also local economies (Massey, 1994).



In the light of this, Castles (2000b 11) portrays the developing countries as having provided “labour reserves” for the highly industrialized countries because of their slower economic development but increasing population. King (1995 18) considers labour migration to be “movement purely for the purpose of finding work or a better rate of pay”. He adds that the foremost cause for this was the “demand for cheap labour from centers of capital accumulation” in the developed countries. These labourers are attracted into the industrialized countries by their higher wages. However, since they do not have the required qualifications for higher skilled jobs in these destination countries, they tend to engage in the low-status and low-paid jobs that the local populations are reluctant to take (Semyonov and Gorodzeisky, 2004).

Colin James (2006) also notes that most emigration in the past, was of men from poor countries. However, a shift in gender migration is evident where female domestic and service workers from poor countries have become a large proportion of emigrants. This is also the case in the Pacific and Tonga. He reminds us that immigration not only brings in more workers, but adds more people to New Zealand’s population, raising questions about how well they adapt and are accepted in New Zealand.

### **Pacific region: migration experience**

Prior to introducing the socio-economic situation in Tonga and New Zealand as the settings of this study, it is crucial to at least have a reasonable appreciation of the historical background of migration in the Pacific, particularly among Polynesians. This section is essential as it underpins the migration of Tongans not only within their home islands, but also outside their national borders.

#### **A Historical overview**

The very heart of regional population dynamics involves large numbers of people migrating over long distances. Fundamentally, it was through migration that the Pacific islands were originally settled (Haberkorn and Lepers, 1998). Hau’ofa (1994 156-157) endorses this statement and adds that

The world of Oceania is neither tiny nor deficient in resources. It was only as a condition of the colonial confinement...[but] islanders have broken out of their confinement, are moving around and away from their homelands, not so much because their countries are poor, but because they were unnaturally confined and severed from many of their traditional sources of wealth, and because it is in their blood to be mobile.

Hau'ofa is trying to convince mainstream observers that the traveling of Pacific people beyond their territories is not entirely the result of capital accumulation in the developed countries, but also a reflection of their ways of life. Bedford (2007 5) insists that these people are not going to remain confined in these spaces "if it proves too difficult to obtain a satisfactory livelihood...[particularly] if better opportunities are perceived to be reasonably accessible elsewhere". Hence, once they migrate, they always support each other as part of their existence, whether within or outside their home islands (Hau'ofa, 1994).

Connell and Brown (2004 2) argue that instead of migration being labeled as a Pacific phenomenon as Hau'ofa explicates, it is a reaction to "real and perceived inequalities in socio-economic opportunities" between the developed and the developing countries. A World Bank report (2006 49), discloses a similar sentiment to Connell and Browns' argument by affirming that migration remains a "time-honoured strategy of moving from a poor area to a richer one in the search for social and economic opportunities". In other words, Connell and Brown (2004) view migration to have been influenced by people's growing expectations over what represents a suitable level of affluence, an attractive occupation, and a suitable mix of services and facilities.

Hence, in the 1960s, migration first started in Polynesia and gradually become more international, particularly from Polynesia to the cities of New Zealand, United States of America and Australia (Connell, 2000). Connell (2000) also notes that migration was to countries with colonial attachment. However, since Tonga, had never been colonized by New Zealand or any other foreign country, it does not receive preferential treatment for "aspiring immigrants" like other Pacific island countries such as Samoa, Niue and Tokelau. This basically means that Tongans had to rely on

“regular migration channels, scholarships, and labour migration programmes in order to leave Tonga” (Lee, 2003 253). Therefore, when New Zealand offered opportunities for labour migrants in the Pacific islands, many Tongans considered these as “possibilities” to enter New Zealand. Migration also acted as a ‘safety valve’ for controlling Tonga’s high population growth rates at the time (Asian Development Bank, 2007, Connell, 2000, Maclellan, 2000).

Connell (2000) and the Asian Development Bank’s report on its ‘Country Assistance Plan’ in Tonga (2007), indicate that the reasons why Pacific migrants moved to town, particularly for better jobs, were the same motives for migrating overseas. These were also accelerated by advances in technology and communications. Even though many migrants chose to stay on overseas, some returned home and re-migrated later. However, the numbers of those who chose to stay on, as is the case for many Tongans, have resulted in almost as many of them now living overseas as at home. For this reason, Bedford (2000) notes a significant social and economic transformation of island states, not because of the efforts of national populations, but because of their transnational communities.

Regardless of the vast amount written on Pacific labour migration, Rokoduru (2006) sees the study of migration using a gender perspective, as generally rare. At the same time, she remarks about the lack of local research on gender and migration in most South Pacific countries.

### **Socio-economic Context**

This section reports on the socio-economic situations in Tonga and New Zealand with regard to migration. It is composed of three sub-sections. The first part presents a summary of the socio-economic conditions in Tonga and the second part gives evidence on international migration of Tongans particularly to New Zealand. The third part follows to explain the research justification.

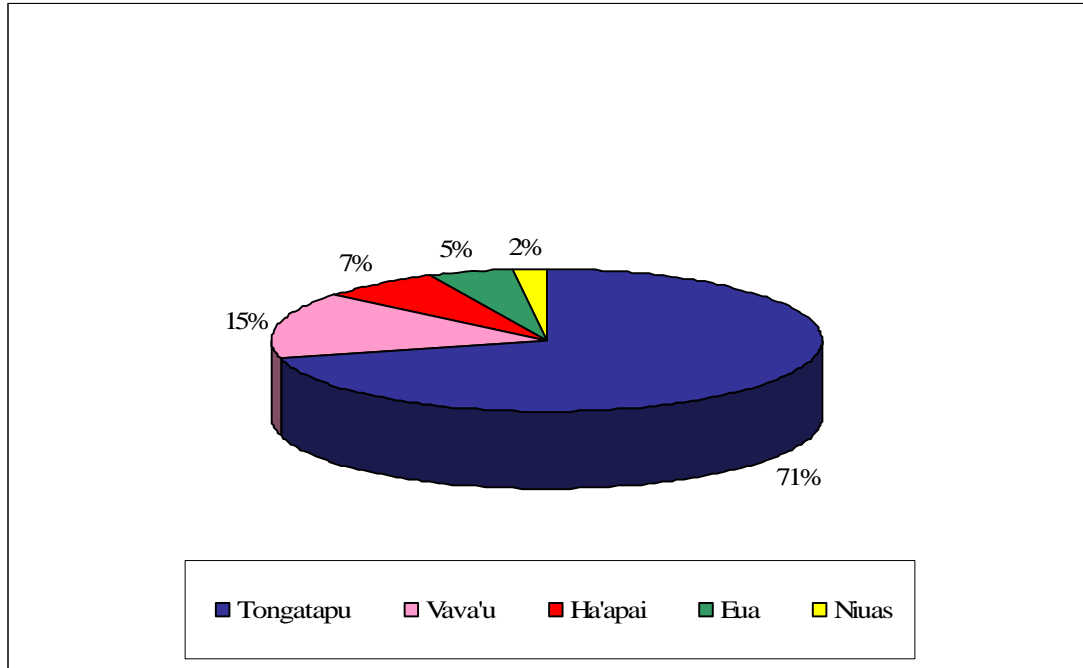
### **Tonga: a summary**

In order to understand the socio-economic situation in Tonga, it is important to be aware of its location, at least be acquainted with its history and know something of the characteristics of its population.

Tonga is a small nation with a land area of about 650km<sup>2</sup> (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2006). It is a constitutional monarchy. Although it has never been colonized by any foreign country, Tonga was a British protectorate from 1900 until 1970, and has been greatly influenced by missionaries. It is situated in the southwest Pacific Ocean, to the northeast of New Zealand (Tonga Statistics Department, 1999 xii). In 2006, the Statistics Department of Tonga recorded Tonga's population to have reached 101,134 with 51,197 males (50.6 percent) and 49,934 females (49.4 percent). This yields a population density of 156 people per square kilometer.

The population is distributed over five main island districts but the majority reside on the main island of Tongatapu (Tonga Statistics Department, 1999 xii). The map of Tonga (Figure 1) shows the distribution of islands in Tonga, with Tongatapu (largest island) on the far south and the rest of the islands mainly placed to its north. Having located the main islands in Tonga, Figure 2 shows the distribution pattern of its population. It indicates that Tongatapu has the predominant share of the Kingdom's population (70 percent). Vava'u (15 percent) follows with Ha'apai (7 percent) standing next on the list. 'Eua (5 percent) comes after and the two Niuas which are located on the far north, support only two percent of the Kingdom's total population.

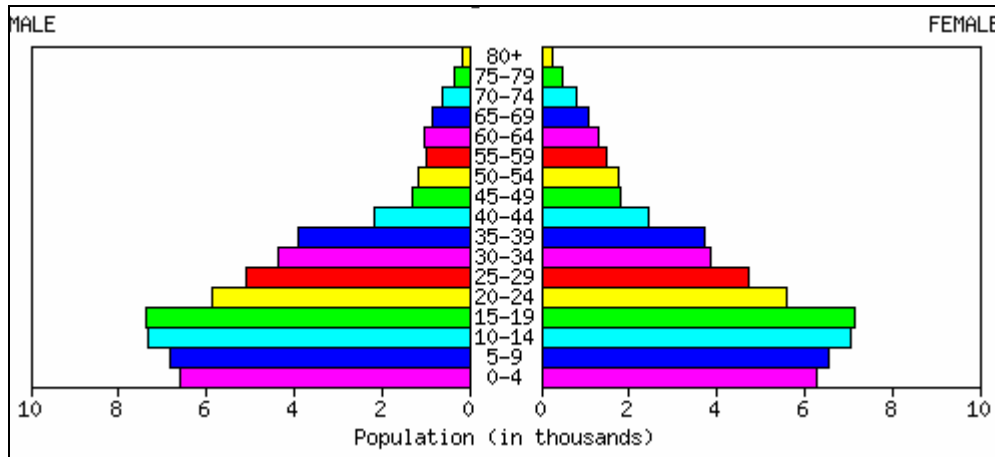
In addition, the National Assessment report written by the Department of Environment that was presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg (2002) declared that, 38.8 percent of the kingdom's population live in the urban areas of which 79 percent are living in the Greater Nuku'alofa area alone.



**Figure 2: Tonga’s Population Distribution by Main Island Districts, 2006**

(Source: Statistics Department, 2006)

The unevenness in the distribution of Tonga’s population is attributed to a number of factors. These include migration from outer islands in search of employment, cash income and education. As a result there is an unhealthy concentration of people in the main island particularly in the capital, Nuku’alofa (Small and Dixon, 2004).



**Figure 3: Tonga’s population pyramid, 2005**

(US Census Bureau Population Division, 2005)

Figure 3 indicates that Tonga’s population is very young with 55,169 people or 49 percent of the total population in 2005 below 20 years of age. As the Figure shows, fewer people are in the 20-54 age groups, although this is more obvious amongst the 40-54 age groups. This reflects the loss of people from this cohort through migration. There is a similar shortfall in the under 10 category reflecting the reduction of people of child bearing age as a result of migration.

**A glimpse into Tonga’s economy**

Emberson-Bain (1998 1) describes Tonga’s economy as small with a “narrow export base and a heavy reliance on foreign aid and foreign exchange remittances from Tongans living overseas”. This is why the World Bank (2006) reports that both aid and remittances in Tonga are highly important in the absence of significant domestic economic growth. As ‘Utoikamanu (2006 4) pointed out at the annual meetings of governors in Singapore in 2006, migration as well as remittances from those whom reside and work overseas, “sustain the Tongan economy and the present standard of living of the people”. Despite the substantial contribution of remittances to Tonga’s economy, agriculture remains the “most important sector of the economy”(Emberson-Bain, 1998 2) particularly providing the basis for the subsistence economy as well as some commercial activities.

### *Sexual division of labour*

As in most other Pacific societies, women in Tonga play a critical role. Gender differences are central to '*anga faka-Tonga*' or the 'Tongan way'. Larson, Bedcock Kamm and Chamberlain (1996) explained that the traditional role of women includes household chores, and child-rearing. Handicraft production is amongst the important roles they perform so as to fulfill their obligations to their family and community. Preferably, according to this perspective, females should stay home and do the indoor, 'clean', work while males do the outside, 'dirty', work and have more freedom away from the home. On top of this, status and rank in Tonga have played a powerful role not only in personal relationships but within families as well (Travel Documented Systems, 2007). In a Tongan family, although women have traditionally had a status that was generally higher than their brothers (Bleakley, 2002), men still have the privileges to land and political matters. Ideally, the brothers rule the family, but they work for their sisters to show that they are "proper Tongans who know the right way to behave" (James, 1995 77). However, in many families, when the sister is in waged employment and the sole source of cash, it is the sister who helps the brother.

This brings to mind the study completed by Larson, Bedcock, Kamm and Chamberlain (1996) on women and children in Tonga that, while increasing monetization of economic relationships and other forms of development is now taking place, there have been changeable effects upon women's ideals and approaches toward transformation in Tongan society. They now not only participate in subsistence production, but also cash production and contribute considerably to their family income. International migration has broken up many families and women are left behind by their husbands to manage the family without them (Asian Development Bank, 2007). Consequently, their traditional roles are altered and they now take on new roles in the absence of their husbands and eventually make sole decisions that were previously made by their husbands (International Organization for Migration, 2005a). A similar situation is experienced as a result of rapid urbanization which contributed to the breakdown of traditional extended families in Tonga (Travel Documented Systems, 2007).

Although Tonga recognizes the need to promote equity with the implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development in 2001 (Utoikamanu, 2005), there are still some areas where women are discriminated against. One of the most obvious cases where this is evident is in the course of land rights allocation in Tonga (Fonua, 2006). Tongan women can merely “lease land or hold land in trust for their male heirs or husbands” (Department of Environment, 2002 72).

Another obvious example of gender inequality in Tonga, concerns the availability of statistical data broken down by gender, ethnicity and economic status. As a Secretariat of the Pacific Community report on Tonga’s country showed,

Data on labour force participation consistently underreport the work of women, since women’s work in Tonga is more likely to be in the informal sector as well as at home. Accurate statistics on migration, particularly at the regional and international levels, are also inadequate (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2001 8).

Undoubtedly, women are almost invisible with regard to statistical data and it is not surprising that the primary migration patterns were assumed to be of males in their “working age specifically the ages 25-39”. These are typically males migrating in search of “better economic opportunities” (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2001 6).

### **International migration of Tongans**

Tongan migration is part of a Pacific-wide phenomenon in which large numbers of people relative to their island population have settled overseas, primarily since the end of World War II. The main destinations of Tongans and other islanders are the United States, New Zealand, and Australia, but islanders have also settled in many other nations of the world (Connell, 2000).

Migrants in the 1960s were observed by Connell (2002), to have been primarily young single men who left their home for a few years to earn high overseas wages in order to help their families back in Tonga. However, since many of these migrants



were generally younger men who were not too fond of Tongan traditions, Connell noted that their returns to Tonga were limited. This implies that migration was not circular but a permanent transfer of human resources from Tonga to other places.

It was not until the 1970s that large scale international migration from Tonga took place. Given that the wages in Tonga are low and there are limited opportunities for paid employment, agricultural work has diminished, access to land is very difficult due to increasing population and, having access to media and overseas connections to the country's widespread diaspora, many Tongans have been stimulated to migrate overseas. Many perceived migration as the 'only solution' to these socio-economic problems (Lee, 2004, Travel Documented Systems, 2007).

The accessibility of nations, particularly New Zealand, to Tongan immigrants has made possible the flow of remittances to Tonga to assist with its trade deficit problem (Campbell, 2001). Ideally, remittances are a physical expression of the moral obligations between kin; they are seen as a demonstration of values such as love and respect. However, as James (1997) observes, in reality remittances often benefit certain kin, or in the long term the remitters themselves, rather than being distributed among the extended family. Lee (2004 137) also notes that many have now moved into "in-kind" remittances.

Because of the attractions of living and working in New Zealand were so overwhelming to many Tongan migrants, especially the young workers, they have chosen to stay on and become permanent residents. As they established themselves in New Zealand, their economic motivation for remaining became secondary to social factors (Krishnan, Schoeffel and Warren 1994).

### **Labour recruitment of Tongans: New Zealand context**

Bedford, Ho and Lidgard (2000) describe the New Zealand economy in the 1950s and 1960s as to having undergone a major industrial transformation. The labour shortages threatened the development of an import-substitution manufacturing base in

New Zealand, and encouraged the New Zealand government to provide a number of work permit schemes in order to draw in labourers from its Pacific island ex-colonies. These islands were perceived by New Zealand to have provided the convenient labour reserve its labour market required.

Since New Zealand had colonial connections with the Polynesian Pacific, specifically Samoa, Cook islands, Niue and Tokelau, the recruitment of labours in the 1960s was relatively straight forward as all these island workers already met the requirements to enter New Zealand. Tongans on the other hand, were recruited as semi and unskilled labourers (Spoonley, 2005) under a quota system (Beaglehole, 2007). Subsequent to their arrival in New Zealand, they filled the vacancies that locals were reluctant to take (Bedford and Lerner, 1992, Lee, 2003).

Many of these migrants only had temporary visas and instead of returning to Tonga after their permit expired, many “remained in New Zealand illegally” (Taumoefolau, 2006 1). Initially, it was not a big issue to New Zealand but later on the government decided to control it through its immigration policies. As a result, many overstayers were removed from New Zealand (Bedford and Lerner, 1992).

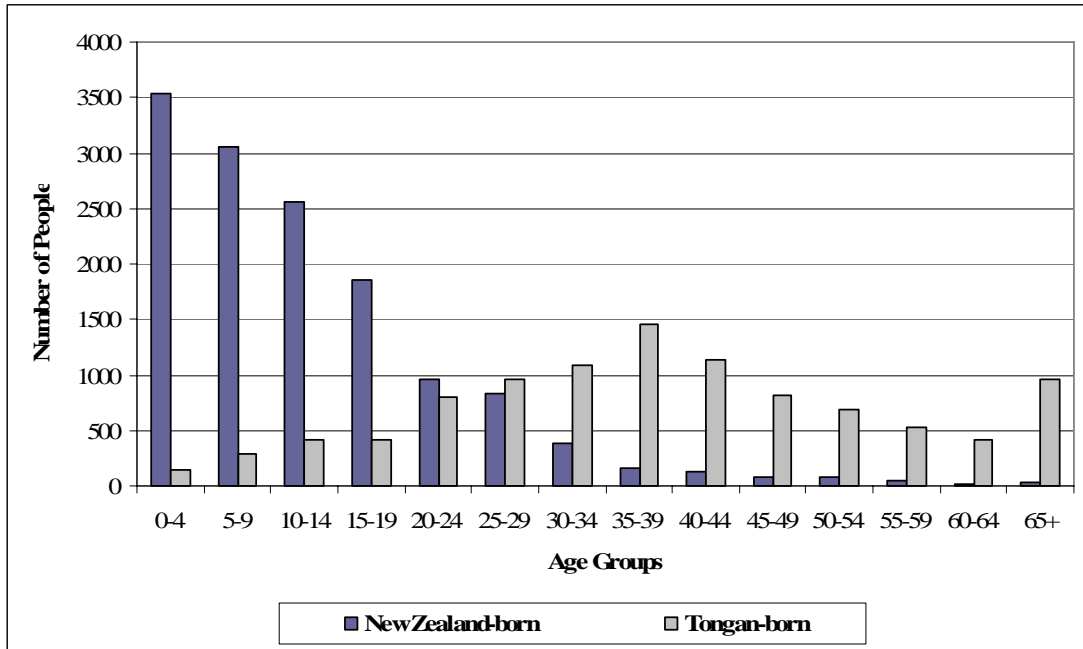
In 1987, the New Zealand government posited a ‘visa-free entry’ system, which reflected a more compassionate consideration of provisions for family reunification migration. Through the 1980s and 1990s the majority of Pacific islanders gaining residence and New Zealand citizenship, entered under family reunion or humanitarian provisions, rather than as workers (Bedford et al., 2000). The late 1980s saw peaks in arrivals and net gains in migration. However, the numbers of overstayers remained outstanding and this encouraged the New Zealand government to drop the ‘visa-free entry’ and to introduce a new immigration policy making entry difficult for unskilled and semiskilled workers. Consequently, the number of Tongans entering New Zealand dropped. As Bedford observed, “the trough in 1992, was due to the strict requirements of a skills and qualification-based point system” (cited in Esau, 2005 448). The strategic objectives of these policies were to construct New Zealand’s “human capital, strengthen international linkages, and encourage enterprise and

innovation” (Trlin and Watts, 2004 112). These of course, amplified the decline of Tongan migrants entering New Zealand, but nevertheless increasingly attracted its well-educated people.

### **Tongans in New Zealand**

At the time of the 2006 Census, a total of 50,478 people in New Zealand identified themselves as Tongans - the third largest Pacific island ethnic group living in New Zealand. Of this total, there were 25,323 males and 25,155 females (Statistics New Zealand, 2007b). Amongst those Tongans who identified themselves to have been born overseas, 93 percent were born in Tonga. For this reason, these ‘overseas born’ Tongans are treated as ‘Tongan born’.

The Tongan population in New Zealand is also categorized as ‘very youthful’ (‘Esau, 2005) but interestingly, the majority of these Tongans are New Zealand born children of earlier migrants. Even in the early 1990s, Bedford and Larner (1992 67) made clear that it was the “natural increase rather than migration” that contributed to most of the “annual increment to numbers living in New Zealand”. A greater concentration of those born in Tonga was nevertheless evident amongst the 24 and older age groups. However, the higher rate of growth amongst Tongans aged 0-4 years, suggests the significant part natural growth has played in the growth of Tongan population (Krishnan *et al.*, 1994).



**Figure 4: Tongan Population in New Zealand by Place of Birth, 2006**

(Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2007b)

Owing to the unavailability of the 2006 Census data on Tongan families and households in New Zealand at the time of this study, the 2001 Census is utilized as a substitute to characterize these. As reported by Statistics New Zealand (2005a), the most common family type for Tongan people living in New Zealand were ‘two-parent families’ with children, although the proportion had decreased, as the proportion of Tongan born children living in ‘one-parent’ families had risen. Also interesting to note is the greater proportion of overseas-born Tongan population (25 percent) in 2001 who were living in households with two or more families than their New Zealand born counterparts (16 percent) (Statistics New Zealand, 2005a).

In 2001, Taumoefolau (2006) observed that 80 percent of Tongans in New Zealand, were living in the Auckland region. Tongans are also likely to live close to their community centres, particularly their churches. This was also the case when they entered the local labour and housing markets in New Zealand. As Macpherson (2004 150) declares, many of them have “similar levels of social capital [and for a] considerable period of time, they remained clustered in similar sectors of the labour market with similar incomes and similar prospects”. Many of these migrants

“recognize and maintain a range of kin, village and church-based relationships as insurance against their uncertain prospects”. Beside these, Taumoefolau (2006 1-2) emphasizes that,

Despite the grim situation suggested by the statistics, many Tongan people perceive their move to New Zealand as a significant achievement... [and the] essential measures of [their] success are the ability to contribute to the extended family, and fulfilling community obligations. Even when Tongans are highly educated or materially wealthy, if they do not help the family in paying for funerals, weddings and church donations, they are not regarded as successful.

In the case of Tongan women migrants’ roles in New Zealand, many are still financially supporting their families and Tongan communities in both Tonga and New Zealand. However, during the process, these women experience failures and successes on their way to improving their lives in a western culture outside their own. Some of these experiences have been described by Lee (2003 253) who states that “many of these migrants experience racism, are unemployed or at poorly paid jobs, and feeling alienated in the land that they believed offered so much hope”.

### **Research justification**

As previously mentioned in Chapter One, “there is little relating specifically to female migrants” despite the considerable research on labour migration (Larner, 1990 19). Larner also insists that a lack of research on the “experiences of specific groups of Pacific island women in the New Zealand context” was also notable (Larner, 1990 20). As Esau (2005) indicates, although many general ideas on Tongans in New Zealand are found in population censuses, these are still inadequate detailed information on Tongan immigration to New Zealand and migrants’ experiences therein. As a Tongan woman and a migrant myself, it was also out of personal interest that I carried out this study with regard to Tongan women’s migration. Consequently, becoming conscious of all the above issues, has provided great impetus in selecting this topic. This allows me to explore the theoretical approaches underpinning this study.

## Chapter Three: Theoretical Discussion

This chapter draws upon the major theories relating to migration. These will assist in understanding the factors and impacts of migration on Tongan women migrants in New Zealand. In addition, these theories help expose the social and economic dynamics of the experiences of these women, at paid work in New Zealand. The thesis is informed by three broad theoretical perspectives.

The first perspective is population geography, the study of ways in which spatial variations in the distribution, composition, migration and growth of population are related to the nature of places (Johnston, Gregory, Pratt and Watts, 2000). Many population geographers have focused most of their attention on migration, which involves “analyzing economic and social causes and consequences” (Johnston, Gregory and Smith, 1996 452). Therefore, this study explores the theoretical perspectives on migration with particular attention to variables such as gender, ethnicity and identity, and their relation to women’s migration and employment.

The second theoretical approach employed in this study is feminist geography. This theoretical perspective explicitly takes into account the “socially created gender structure of society” (McDowell and Sharp, 1997 20). Johnston *et al.* (2000 600) note that this approach had the “faintest of echoes in population geography...nor the feminisms of any decade have had much perceptible impact” on this discipline. Accordingly, along with other gender issues, the roles and experiences of women migrants at paid work have been largely neglected until recently.

The last approach applied in this study is postcolonialism. According to Ahmad (1996 367), this theoretical perspective includes examination of any and all “structures of power and domination”. Ponzanesi (2004 38) points out that this should not only challenge “past colonial histories”, but also account for the “present colonial operation of global capitalism”.

## **Migration**

### **Migration approaches**

Castles and Miller (2003 15) define migration as a “process which affects every dimension of social existence, and which develops its own complex and dynamics”. It may be “temporary or permanent” and “over long and short distances”, and has often involved “movement across international frontiers” (Ogden, 1984 3). It is the latter movement that this study is engaged with, and as previously noted in Chapter Two, this is an important ingredient in the process of globalization. For this reason, no culture or place is unexposed to the influences of migration. White (1995 1) describes this current era, although was coined by Castles and Miller, as “The Age of Migration”. Interestingly, the movements and mixing have not merely produced similarities, but differences in socio-economic background as well (Massey and Jess, 1995).

Since no single cause is ever sufficient to explain why people decide to leave their country and settle in another, no theory concerning the role of labour migration in the world economy can lay claim to be the only correct one. On this basis, it is now necessary to explore the variety of theoretical approaches that have been used to explain international migration (Castles and Miller, 1993).

### **Economic theories of migration**

Neo-classical theorists portray the capitalist economic system as being based on free markets. As Wallerstein (1991a 117) explains,

Capitalism is the only mode of production in which the maximization of surplus-creation is rewarded *per se*...The ‘rewards’ and ‘penalties’ are mediated through a structure called the ‘market’ [which means] the structure of the market ensures that those who do not accumulate the capital (but mainly consume surplus value) lose out economically over time to those who do accumulate capital.

Traditional approaches to migration were influenced by these ideas. King and Connell (1999) agree with this explanation that migration is largely a reaction to the differences in both socio-economic opportunities and standard of living as effects of uneven development. As Lee (2003) puts it, migration between two places was a response to various 'pushes' at origins and 'pulls' at destination.

This migration model is mainly found in neo-classical economics, where the emphasis is on the individuals' decisions to migrate to the area where they will receive the "best return on their human capital" (Castles and Miller, 1993 45). Traditionally, it was the thought that for the individual migrant, the principal motivation was to search for a better wage and more secure employment. In other words, people migrate with the intention of "maximizing personal economic gains" (Ogden, 1984 26). As Ravenstein (1889 268) illuminated

Bad or oppressive laws, heavy taxation, an unattractive climate, uncongenial social surroundings, and even compulsion (slave trade, transportation), all have produced and are still producing currents of migration, but none of these currents can compare in volume with that which arises from the desire inherent in most men to "better" themselves in material respects.

Ravenstein explicitly refers to migration as primarily the outcome of economic dissimilarities between various regions in the world. Simply, it is the most disadvantaged people of the world who are expected to move from the poor to richer areas (King and Connell, 1999). Notwithstanding this, Hau'ofa (1994) refers to the migration of the people of Oceania as contrary to this explanation. He is convinced that the migration of Polynesians was not because their countries were poor, but because they were not used to being confined from their sources of wealth.

Castles and Miller (1993) are more or less of the same mind as Hau'ofa to some extent, regarding migration to be more common amongst the people of intermediate social status who have undergone economic and social change, than from the least developed countries.



Recognizing the trend of labour migration, Chriswick (2000 65) observes it as “positively self-selected” in the sense that highly- skilled workers migrate to other countries that offer higher wages in order to obtain better return on their human capital. Such human capital is acquired in educational systems, whose primary and self-proclaimed function is to “train people to become members of the new middle-classes; that is, to be the public enterprises which are the functional economic building-pieces” of the capitalist system (Wallerstein, 1991b 150). This consequently creates a ‘brain drain’ from the countries of origin (International Organization for Migration, 2005a). While much migrant labour involves the temporary movement of individuals, many stay on and become permanent residents. Soon after, through the process of chain migration, their families join them (Wegge, 2001).

There is little disagreement that the major influences on migration are mainly economic, although it is significant to recognize that socio-cultural changes are accomplished through migration (King and Connell, 1999). These socio-cultural changes include gender relations. As White puts it,

Much academic writing about migration has tended to ignore the significance of gender issues, but gender roles may be crucially affected by movement. In other spheres, families are often broken up, temporarily or on a more long term basis (White, 1995 3).

Despite the usefulness of this model in explaining the reasons for migration, it has a number of limitations. Apparently, this model can not explain “why a certain group of migrants go to one country rather than another and is not capable of forecasting future migration patterns” (Castles and Miller, 2003 24). Therefore, at this instant, it is essential to consider a wider range of factors including those outside of the economic sphere.

### **The historical structural approach**

The historical structural approach had its intellectual roots in Marxist political economy and in world systems theory which stresses the unequal distribution of economic and political power in the world economy. From the 1960s, Castles

(2000b) reports that many researchers turned to the model based on Marxist political economy, as it explains the extent to which the employers recruit labourers and the control of labour migrants by the state.

According to Miles (1987), the capitalist mode of production depends upon the trade of labour power with low wages. Researchers like Cutler, Hindess, Hirst and Hussain (1978 125) reveal that

The tendency to produce an industrial reserve army is based on an argument that the expansion of production under a capitalist mode of production...with a given composition of capital leads to labour shortages and increases in wages. This produces a substitution of means of production for labour and a reduction in the demand for labour power resulting in a pool of unemployed being created. This pool is permanent, being 'in reserve' for expansions in production of a particular rapid kind (which Marx treats as the 'norm' of capitalism).

This approach emerged to describe the wage variations and relative shortage of labour in the developed countries compared with the developing countries (Brettell, 2000). Given that the poor developing countries are characterized by “unstable economies, low wages, and limited opportunities for occupational and economic mobility” according to Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2004 6), opportunities were created for the capitalist countries to draw in labourers from them, to fill the jobs that members of the local population are reluctant to take.

This labour recruitment from outside national boundaries began at different times and was not only depending on the countries of origin, but also on the demand in the wealthy countries. The recruitment and migration flows were mainly drawn from colonies and ex-colonies, and they were easily structured through kin networks (Miles, 1987).

The Parliament of Australia Senate (2006) described Pacific Island nations as amongst some of the “smallest and poorest in the world”, with very youthful populations. Hau'ofa strongly disagrees with this statement such as the former and

describes it as a “bleak view” of the Pacific Islands’ existence by capitalist countries. As he explains,

Some of our islands had become, in the words of one social scientist, “MIRAB SOCIETIES” – pitiful microstates condemned forever to depend on migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy, and not on any real economic productivity (Hau'ofa, 1994 150).

This drove him to question the impacts of neo-colonialism and reflect on the way this had made Pacific Island people believe that they had no choice but to depend on capitalist countries for survival (Hau'ofa, 1994). Larner (1989) argues that the recruitment of labourers from these countries was simply because of the shortage of labourers in the developed countries. Such arguments in line with Larner had led Denoon (1984) to believe that labour migration can best be comprehended in the context of the political economy of the host countries. Similarly, Castles and Miller (2003 22) observe that,

Although governments of countries of origin play a part in encouraging or restricting migration it is particularly the governments of potential immigration areas which permit, restrict or prohibit movements. The most common reason to permit entry is the need for workers – with states sometimes taking on a role of labour recruiter on behalf of employers.

While the ‘push-pull’ theories tend to be inclined to “focus on mainly voluntary migration of individuals...historical structural accounts looked at mass recruitment of labour by capital” (Castles and Miller, 2003 25). Both this approach and the neo-classical one were perceived by Castles and Miller as insufficient to be able to consider the “complexities of migration”. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce a wider explanation of the reasons for international migration.

### **Migration systems theory**

Proponents of the migration systems approach reflect on each migratory movement as a result of ‘macro- and micro-structures’. Encompassing this approach are two or more countries exchanging migrants with each other. It is suggested that these migratory movements arise from the existence of prior links between sending and receiving countries based on colonization, political influence, trade, investment or

cultural ties. Macro-structures include the political economy of the world market, interstate relationships, and the laws, structures and practices established by the sending and receiving countries to control migration settlement (Castles and Miller, 1993, Castles and Miller, 2003, Lee, 2003).

Stillwell and Congdon (1991), on the other hand, describe the micro structures as processes underlying the 'decisions' made by potential migrants to migrate including the person's characteristics (for example age, marital status and household status) or individual household units (for example size and structure) and the wider characteristics of areas and markets (for example the regional relativity of wages and house prices) which provide the context for the migration.

It may be observed that most migration flows have started with young economically active people (often mainly men). As Ogden (1984) previously mentioned, the principal motivation for migration was traditionally an intention to search for a better wage and more secure employment. This model is consistent with Semyonov and Gorodzeisky's (2004) views that labour migrants leave their country of origin in search of temporary jobs to help support the household members left behind, with no intention to make the country of destination their home. Nevertheless, household migration strategies differ considerably across the world.

Once a movement is established, Stahl (as cited in Castles, 2000a) noted that the migrants mainly followed and are often helped by friends and relatives already in the area of migration. In Tonga, as in most parts of the world, much of the migration waves in the 1970s were initially temporary but many decided to settle more permanently. These migrants initiated "chains of migration, bringing siblings, parents and other family members to join them" thus encouraging more relatives to migrate (Lee, 2004 137).

Labour migrants are described by Castles and Miller (1993 24) as "targeted earners" who desire to help their families at home when they are able to earn enough money in the higher wage economy to which they are migrating. After some period in the

receiving country, a proportion of these primary migrants return, others prolong their stay, and some return and then remigrate. The factors attributing to their returns include failure to meet their financial expectations before migration and merely visiting families and relatives from whom they have been apart for so long. In the case of the Pacific islanders in New Zealand, household surveys, carried out by Bedford (2000) on their mobility behaviour, reveal that most of the migrant adults have been home at least once since arrival, with plans to take their children back to their islands sometime in the future.

### **Transnational theory**

Theories considering new linkages between societies based on migration have attracted much attention in recent years, leading to the emergence of a new body of theory on ‘transnationalism’ and ‘transnational communities’(Castles and Miller, 2003).

This concept has been derived through a revolution in transport and communications, and the increasing disparity between earnings in rich and poor countries whereas in the past, movements tended to be “circular, repetitive and usually over short distances” (King and Connell, 1999 5). Accordingly, this makes transnational migration far more common than has been the case before (Sharpe, 2001). This approach emphasizes that migrants do not utterly fail to remember their home country once they depart (Hollifield and Brettell, 2000). To be precise, these migrants may continue to feel “at home” in their nation of origin, while at the same time establishing a “new home” elsewhere (Lee, 2004 136). Hau’ofa (1994 157) examines the socio-economic contributions of Pacific people abroad to their families in the islands through sending remittances, as examples of the “ancient practice of reciprocity”. He firmly believes that those in the islands are not the “parasites” to the islanders-abroad, as often implied by economists. As for Tongans, a considerable proportion of them overseas remit money and goods to their close relatives in the islands (James, 1997).

### **International Migration Movements: Tendencies**

When comparing migration movements around the world, it is possible to identify certain general tendencies. All these tendencies have reinforced each other to change the racial mix of many countries and cities beyond all recognition (Poku and Graham, 2000). The first is referred to as the 'globalization of migration'. This is the tendency for more countries to be affected by migratory movements at the same time, affecting an increasing number of countries at origin and destination with both positive and negative effects on the countries and individuals involved (Piper, 2006).

The second tendency is the 'acceleration of migration'. The large growing number of migrations in all the major regions of the world at the present time increases the difficulties of governments, not only in the countries of origin, but the receiving countries as well, in setting migration and related policies to control the flows (Castles and Miller, 1993).

The third pattern is the 'differentiation of migration' with many countries having different types of immigration such as temporary labour migration, refugees or permanent settlement. Typically, migratory chains which start with one type of movement often continue with other forms despite governments' efforts to stop the movement. This is mostly attributable to the difficulty in controlling the exchange of ideas and information through kin networks, that can be considered an "obstacle to national and international policy measures" (Castles and Miller, 1993 8). This suggests that the governments particularly of the host countries have to vary their policies to cater for the different types of migrants entering their countries.

The fourth trend is 'feminization of migration'. This draws attention to the fact that women play "an increasing role in all regions and all types of migration, including labour flows" (Johnston *et al.*, 2000 502). Because the focus of this study is on women's migration, the following discussion explores this trend in greater depth.

### *Female labour migration in historical perspective*

Historically, migration has been a means of improving the life chances of women and men. These opportunities consist not merely of economic inducements, but also social incentives. As Lee (2003) wrote in her book ‘Tongans overseas: between two shores’, although Tongans migrate overseas to help their kin remaining in the islands, education was perceived by most Tongans as the main reason for migration overseas. However, since the focus of this study is based on the experiences of women in the labour market, the discussions below mainly focus on labour migration.

Demographic pressures, labour shortages and economic expansion have traditionally been considered as crucial factors behind the spatial redistribution of labour and mobility of the labour force. However, while it is increasingly being realized that migration is a gendered process (Hugo, 2002), there is little understanding of the complex relationship between migration of women and wider social and economic change. This implies that the patriarchal relationships between women and men are reconstructed once they enter a new country. It is therefore, an important task in the study of migration to examine this relationship and observe how it is being reconstructed (Espiritu, 2002).

The focus on the “economic aspects of migration and the male norm in the economy and working life”, has resulted in many current analyses of migration flows to be “resting on the assumptions that migrants are male workers” (Reyes, 2001 276). Further to this statement, Harzig (2001 17) explains that it was the “more adventurous man, less confined by traditions and conventions and reproductive responsibilities” who migrated abroad, in search of “better employment opportunities in industrial centers”. He adds that it was here where the stereotyping of male pioneer and female follower took shape. Sharpe (2001 4) observes that until the 1980s,

the circumstances of female migration were little discussed by anthropologists, sociologists or policy makers. Since then, substantial accounts have been written about the invisibility of the female migrant and the ingrained assumption that the typical migrant was young, single and male with economic motivations for moving. The migration of women was assumed to be for family reasons, to accompany male migrants.

The earliest systematic approaches to migration derived from the nineteenth century work of demographer Ravenstein, who advocated the formulation of statistical laws of migration. He claimed that women's preference for staying within their countries' borders and engaging in internal migration, was indeed "higher than for males" (Wegge, 2001 165). Many demographers, geographers and economists still follow this tradition in their work (Castles and Miller, 1993).

From this perspective, women are frequently addressed either as "dependents of male migrants or as members of the family left behind" (Reyes, 2001 276). They were often dealt with under the category of "family reunion" until after the 1960s when they "played a major role in labour migration" (Castles and Miller, 1993 8).

Sharpe (2001 1), on the other hand, argues that the twentieth century marked a turning point towards far "greater female migration over long distances". Research has shown that because of the gendered labour market, women, like men, were in demand as labourers and often had the same incentives to move. Though many of them started as independent migrants, they definitely soon became part of the immigrant workforce (Harzig, 2001). Consequently, today, women account for "approximately half of the global migrants" and in terms of labour migration, their number have expanded in "all areas other than in construction or heavy industry" (Sharpe, 2001 1).

### **Gender roles and functions in migration processes**

The role of gender in migratory processes has multifaceted relations not only in the country of origin but also in the host country (Reyes, 2001). This is confirmed by



Domash and Seager (2001 129) when they examine the ‘push and pull factors’ that explain migration, as “gender specific”. They observe that

The racial and gender fine tuning of labour migration by governments and commercial interests is also common. Many governments have national or ethnic immigration quotas, while others try to manipulate migration to achieve specific gendered labour results.

Owing to these revelations of how women’s functions are often invisible in the process of migration, it is essential to recognize their value in terms of the roles they play at this stage. Therefore, whether as part of settler, labour or refugee movements, women perform vital functions and take up specific roles. Harzig (2001 21) acknowledges that,

They were indeed followers as in spouses migration, their migration being sponsored by family unification policies. They may be considered as members of a family group – mothers, daughters – doing consumer-work, managing the family income, often establishing the private realm family and household as their sphere of interest. Today, as well educated women, being part of the ‘brain drain’ migration, they may hope to find qualified employment related to their previous education and training.

Obviously, women play a critical role in migration, for they are not exclusively restrained in their traditional spaces, but can contribute to the family income. Hence, it is expected that migration would be an “empowering process” for women. In this way, women gain a range of “new freedoms [although the] opposite” can also happen as they do not have with them their “support systems” in their places of origin to help them with the household work (Hugo, 2002 26, 29).

### **Migration: decision-making**

International migration was observed by earliest students and theorists of migration as a natural phenomenon, in which migration was determined by biology. Gabaccia (2001 191) adds that,

The gendered division of labour and of labour markets, culturally patterned family preferences and definitions of appropriate male and female behaviour all influence migration. They help determine whether men and women migrate or remain immobile together, or whether they instead separate as one leaves the other behind.

This simply means that women, like men, have the same impetus to migrate, although “women viewed their plans as one element in a larger picture, often involving family support” (Sharpe, 2001 9). Therefore, some young women were seen as more reliable in sending remittances than men, once they settle down in their country of destination (James, 1997).

Women’s decisions to migrate were usually made within the “context of the family, guided by the needs of the family economy, informed through letters and reports from earlier migrants” (Harzig, 2001 23). In other words, their migrations were very much dependent on extended networks. Therefore, it is important to understand their relationships with those left behind, and consider both as players in the migration process. The following discussions will help to gain more understandings of what women are experiencing at paid work.

### **Gender: Paid Work Perspective**

McDowell and Sharp (1997 20) clearly state the implications of gender in the study of geography to be just as important as the implications of any “other social and economic factor which transforms society and space”. Further, they consider gender to have been socially constructed and the factor accountable for distinguishing between “femininity and masculinity”, while the term sex is used to refer to “biological differences between men and women”. This social construction of gender is obviously revealed after “repetitive gender performances” (Johnston *et al.*, 1996 214) which then clearly differentiate each person as either female or male, based on how she or he identifies herself or himself.

The concept of ‘hegemony’ fits into this context where it refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life.

Hegemonic masculinity, is the “gender practice” which represents the authority of patriarchy, and assures the “dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell, 1995b 49).

Similarly, feminist researchers such as Domosh and Seager (2001), Larner (1990) and McDowell (1997) argue that a great deal of non-feminist research is sexist, largely as a result of more extensive cultural beliefs. As Domash and Seagar (2001 43) reveal, the “unpaid and reproductive labour (with effort devoted to nurturing and raising children) which is dominated by women, are invisible” in almost every demographic census. Such issues have been seriously considered by feminists to have come into place because of the spatial distinction of men and women between the public workplaces and the private home.

MacDowell and Sharp (1997) refer to these public places as men’s spaces because they are traditionally the breadwinners of the family, while women were placed at home. This is how capitalist societies have created gender roles since the industrial revolution, and has been the fundamental process in constructing the domination of men over women. The discrimination against women extends into workplaces and is particularly noteworthy in their wages. Women are lowly paid and their lack of status and power ostensibly reflects a worldwide division between men and them. Their work often failed to be appreciated just because its women that carries it out.

### **International division of labour**

Porter (1982 117) defines sexual division of labour as the “objective differences between what men and women in our society are primarily defined as and are primarily (regarded as) responsible for”. Given that gendered division of labour characterizes men and women into their positions in the society, international gendered division of labour is the worldwide recognition of this diversity. This is discussed in the following section.

### *Market and production factors in women's employment*

Market and production factors have been great influences on women's employment throughout the world. It is, then, the function of this section to reveal how this works. This section first discusses the levels of employment with regard to the market and production factors. The second part shows household effects on women's employment and the third outlines the influences of other contextual influences on their employment.

#### Levels of employment

The "gendering of particular jobs" reveals some of the complexities and contradictions about the social construction of work (Domosh and Seager, 2001 36). This is supported by feminist geographers as one of their important tasks is to make women visible, by making a geography of women which is hardly recognized in traditional population geography.

Stichter (1988) observes that in most societies, labour force participation rates for males are higher than for women. She adds that the variations in female employment levels and patterns are affected by "complex variables". As she observes,

recent trends illustrate the effects of two broad categories of factors: firstly, changes in the organization of production, that is, the growth of the industrial and service sectors and the impact of technological change in industry; and secondly changes in market conditions, particularly in product markets, but also in the availability of male labour (Stichter, 1988 328).

Regardless of these reports about women's inferiority to men in the workplace, arguably, women dominate occupational type like services sector, clerks and craft and related trade work (see Government of Tonga, 1999). This means, women can use their household skills derived from prior training in the domestic task, to participate in commercial market. Yet, as Stichter (1988 332) argues, the male/female wage gap runs in the opposite direction in the world market, which suggests the domination of women by "patriarchal controls" in the household have "extended into the workplace". This reason coupled with "employer prejudices" with reference to

women's suitable productive and reproductive roles, influences their experiences at paid work. Therefore, the Women and Geography Study Group (1984 22) suggest that,

without the understanding of the gender roles which underlie the workings of society, we cannot hope to present a reasonable analysis of the spatial behaviour of women and men, nor the institutions both are dependent on and influencing that behaviour.

Although the discrimination against women at work is very hard to overcome, it is still necessary to uncover the underlying causes of these processes. One of the aspects of the changing sectoral composition of the workforce which serves to increase women's employment is the "growth of the service sector", including such services as "tourism, much of the informal sector, professional services such as nursing and teaching, domestic service, and transport and communications" (Stichter, 1988 334).

Even the migrant women's experiences often remain distinct from those of men. They continue to form the lowest segment in a labour market divided according to ethnicity and gender. Immigrant women often provide unpaid labour in ethnic small businesses, giving a competitive edge that makes survival possible. The significance of women's "family and educational roles in reproducing and maintaining ethnic languages and cultures and resisting racism has been emphasized in many studies" (Castles and Miller, 1993 32).

### Household effects on women's employment

Existing sexual divisions of labour influence aspects of the social relations of household production and reproduction. These can be expected to have an impact on women's employment patterns. Firstly, the production orientation - approach is particularly associated with Marxism, which adopts a basically materialistic approach. Bradley summarizes the focus of this approach as firmly established on the sphere of "work or of production", and extends by adding gender to it and adjusting existing economic concepts to explain women's specific position. This has undoubtedly generated some of the most influential thinking about gendered divisions at work. For example, Marxists have made use of the idea of the "reserve army of labour or related women's position to the position of de-skilling" (Bradley, 1989 350).

As previously mentioned in early discussions, women's work is socially constructed to be around the home –in the private sphere, whereas men are the breadwinners of the households – working in the public sphere (Porter, 1982). This has undoubtedly positioned women as inferior to men. However, this theory fails to take into account the specific nature of gender divisions (Bradley, 1989) which explains how women's points of view are shaped by their class positionalities (hooks, 1995).

Bradley (1989) explains the exploitation of women by employers and/or male workers as the results of an almost exclusive focus on the work sphere, and failure to notice the family relationships which brings to our attention the second factor: the reproductive orientation. Here, the causes of gender divisions are sought within the domestic sphere with culture, ideology and reproduction as the key concepts. Sexual construction is therefore, the "root of the sexual divisions and male power". Consequently, any dissimilarities in the economic sphere are understood to be a simple indication of what is produced in the "domestic sphere [or the] patriarchal ideology" (Bradley, 1989 350).

Basically, the work of women has often been invisible and reduced to the domestic sphere. As hooks (1989 148) describes the division of labour at her own home, “in our home, sex roles were socially constructed”. Additionally, Reyes (2001 3) reveals that,

Women were defined as housewives and household work as a reproductive activity rather than work. Accordingly, women have been seen as tied to the reproductive work within the household while men have been assumed to contribute to the monetary income of the household through either their salaried work or marketable production. This conceptual separation of productive and reproductive work of household and market activities has contributed to preserving an image whereby women are defined as outside the active population.

With this in mind, there is a need to take note that the sexual divisions must not only apply to work and home, but also to production and reproduction. This is called the “joint orientation” with patriarchy and male dominance as the key concepts and, is seen to surpass the familiar “sociological distinctions between production and reproduction, private and public” (Bradley, 1989 351).

#### Other contextual influences on women’s employment

Equally important in the factors influencing women’s employment are the potential costs of maternity and childcare which have been an important factor in employers’ discrimination against women (Stichter, 1988). These particularly have effect if the employer had to take in the costs of child bearing and rearing, which of course, challenge them in the labour market.

Horsfield (1988) describes the factors affecting women’s participation at paid work to include their age, marital status, number of children, the income of their family, even the location of their home from work, education and ethnic origin. In other words, the variations in their working hours and concentration in different industries and occupation, are influenced by the above factors.

The Women and Geography Study Group (1984 20) emphasized that, “no attention has been paid to the practical need of working mothers for child care, in order to allow them to work in the first place”. They continue that,

Inequality of employment opportunity is not the only area in which women remain subordinate to men. Of particular importance is the difference in educational attainment between men and women. As in the case of employment, there are social factors which intervene to prevent women from achieving their full potential in many cases (1984 22).

That is to say, women’s participation at paid work takes into consideration their roles and responsibilities as mothers, wives and their place at home (private space) and men at the work place (public space) thus maintaining their subordination to men. However, these are not the only factors influencing women’s employment choices (Bardasi and Gornick, 2003).

In terms of the structure of their households, Stichter (1988 337) remarks that “different household structures produce different effects”. For example, women living in nuclear family households are more likely to be in the full-time labour force than if they headed a one-parent household. Likewise, women in two-parent households are “more likely to be working” than those in “multi-adult or one-parent households with children” (Horsfield, 1988 7).

In the case of Tongans in New Zealand, Statistics New Zealand revealed many of them to be living “as part of an extended family” in 1996. These extended families are composed of “related people who usually live together and may include more than one set of related parents, their children and/or grandchildren and other related people” (Statistics New Zealand, 2007a 1). It is expected that everybody who is living in an extended family should contribute to parenting, enabling women’s participation in the labour force, seeing that there are many hands to help out do the household chores and looking after the children while they go to work.

Part-time work is understood to offer women the advantage of providing more time away from employment, primarily for family-related activities. As expected, many



women may choose part-time over full-time employment. This is because they have dependent care responsibilities at home (Bardasi and Gornick, 2003).

Equally important, women with higher education tend to be more career-oriented and less likely to rely on traditional gender stereotypes. They are expected to have stronger bargaining positions in their families when they are employed. Those with higher education are also more likely to live in middle- or high-income households and, therefore, are able to pay others to look after their children as well as carrying out the domestic chores. As a consequence, the socio-economic level of their households influences their labour occupation (Cerrutti, 2003).

## **Ethnicity**

The migrations of the last half century have led to increasing ethnic diversity in many countries. As migrants settled in their new homes, they tended to form groups based on their “real or perceived common origins” (Johnston *et al.*, 1996 172).

Spoonley (1993 36, 37) defines ethnicity as an “identity that reflects the cultural experiences and feelings of a particular group”. He emphasizes that the members of any ethnic group are defined by “membership of that group according to certain agreed criteria”. Lee (2003 3, 5) points out that only Tongans understand “what it is to be Tongan” and assess “one another according to those understandings”. Since ethnicity is a process of self-definition, migration often intensifies ethnic awareness. Therefore, when Tongans accept their position as an ethnic group in New Zealand, they are “asserting their difference while proclaiming their unity as a people”, and search for “ways to improve their situation”.

Ethnicity arises whenever shared activities and meaning systems in one place are underpinned by shared relationship and blood-ties. Evidence can sometimes be read into certain shared physical features or the “body itself: the physique, the facial features, and in particular, the colour of the skin” (Keown, 2005 89). Indeed, Hall (1995) describes cultural identity to have been consistently experienced in so many places for so many years as if it was normal. Castles and Miller (1993 29) also make

clear that the social and political importance of ethnicity only takes place when it is associated with the practices of boundary drawing between dominant and minority groups, and a product of specific ways of “marginalization, which affect different groups in different ways”.

Therefore, institutional discrimination, such as refusal to recognize overseas qualifications or exclusion from public employment, are major causes of disadvantage. Informal discrimination – the unwillingness of employers to hire or promote immigrant workers also plays a part. In any case, trends towards labour market segmentation are part of the migratory process (Castles and Miller, 1993). As Connell (1995a 268) highlights, in his work: ‘In Samoan worlds: culture, migration, identity and Albert Wendt’,

Most migrants though well educated by island standards of the countries to which they migrate,...few speak English fluently. They tend to enter the urban workforce, often with difficulty, in low-paying, unskilled, non-unionized blue-collar jobs at the bottom of the employment hierarchy. [These] migrants often work long hours, because of a high level of financial commitments to their immediate family, the church and the relatives in their extended families in Samoa.

Despite the difficulties encountered by migrants at paid work in New Zealand, “the earlier arrivals can assist the newcomers, which strengthens the tendency to ethnic clustering” (Castles and Miller, 1993 204). Once migrants establish themselves in a new country,

Immigration countries have generally seen immigrants as permanent settlers who were to be assimilated or integrated. Culturally distinct settler groups almost always maintain their languages and some elements of their homeland cultures, at least for a few generations. Where governments have wanted or recognized permanent settlement, there has been a tendency to move from policies of individual assimilation to acceptance of some degree of long-term cultural difference (Castles and Miller, 1993 201).

This is why it is essential to be aware of the identities migrants hold once they established themselves in a new country.

## **Identity**

As migrants settle in their new home, they tend to develop changes in their personal identities. At any point in their lives they can think of themselves as relating to a number of identities. Therefore, migrants whether “individually, or in groups, are open to new influences” (White, 1995 2).

Many women migrants struggle to create an identity in their destination country and, to name one's reality is described by hooks (1989 109) as an “act of resistance...[to]...the process of domination – whether it be imperialist colonization, racism, or sexist oppression”. Tongans face similar situations where their identities as Tongans overseas, are often questioned especially after migration. However, it is important to note that any attempt to list and measure the criteria that define these identities would be “futile, as each individual has her or his own definition of that identity, shaped by her or his life experiences” (Lee, 2003 3).

In the Pacific, chain migration typically drew new settlers from families and villages with which early migrants had connections and produced concentrations of related people with similar social background (Macpherson, 2004). However, these linkages which are sustained by complex networks of communication, trade and circulation of people and ideas, are constantly changing Pacific cultures and, in the process generating a number of subcultures which have distinctive characteristics with their locations (Bedford, 2000). Accordingly, the identities of growing numbers of Pacific people who have been born, educated and have raised their families in New Zealand are qualitatively different from those of their migrant parents. Such dissimilarity is also evident in the economic sphere as those born in New Zealand have their families around to give them encouragement, and easier access into new forms of social and cultural capital, which eventually led to their upward mobility (Macpherson, 2004). This is the case for Tongans born in Tonga and those born and raised in New Zealand.

This brings to mind Lee's (2003 91) statement that, Tongans are mostly observed to uphold their “cultural identity overseas through their interactions with immediate and

extended family”. She carries on by saying that, when new migrants arrive in New Zealand, they often integrated into “existing households until they have settled and found employment”. According to her, in New Zealand, as in Tonga, it is common for “older people to live with their married children” and “formal childcare is seldom used” as people turn to kin in other households to look after their children especially if they were busy with work (Lee, 2003 41).

Having discussed the key theoretical approaches underpinning this study, it is essential to be conscious of the type of data collected that are relevant to this study. The quality of data required lies on the type of methodologies adopted in the research. These are outlined in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Four: Data Sources and Methodology**

This chapter discusses the data sources and methods that I have used for collecting information on the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand. These data were drawn from two major sources: i) New Zealand 2006 population census, and ii) in-depth interviews held in Tonga and New Zealand. As this study is centered on the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand, and with little literature written on this topic, most of the discussions will heavily rely on the information collected during the in-depth interviews. Accompanying these data is information drawn from published studies that have been undertaken in the Pacific region.

Owing to the difficulties in deciding the most fitting methodology for this research, it is vital that I should begin with a brief review of the ‘dominant research methods used by human geographers since the 1960s’ (Larner, 1989 41). A short outline of qualitative and feminist research will follow to critique these methods and the preferred methods adopted will then be introduced. An explanation of the data gathering process and analysis proceeds from there with my experiences during the interviews following after that.

### **Quantitative geography research**

As previously mentioned, research work in human geography was dominated by quantitative research methods in the decades following the 1960s (Larner, 1989). Researchers using this approach are often described as “preoccupied with numbers”, and giving “descriptive representative” overview about total populations (Sayer and Morgan, 1985 151). Once these data are collected, they are turned into numbers or codes, which are then accurately analyzed (Madge, Raghuram, Skelton, Willis and Williams, 1997).

Bryman (2004) sheds light on the quantitative researchers’ involvement with their subjects during their investigations as straightforward although their research is well

thought-out. They may also bring their perceptions to their research, so that theoretical work precedes the collection of data. Others use an inductive approach deriving theory from their data.

Proponents of quantitative research designs sometimes criticize the qualitative findings as being especially hard to duplicate seeing that the participants' answers are expected to be shaped by the

characteristics of the researchers and; because of the unstructured nature of qualitative data, interpretation will be profoundly influenced by the subjective leanings of the researcher...it is impossible to know how the findings can be generalized to other settings when the scope of findings of qualitative investigations is restrictive (Bryman, 2004 284).

Quantitative research on the other hand is often seen by its proponents as being objective and able to be replicated and compared.

### **Qualitative research and Feminist critique**

It is apparent from early discussions that the one factor responsible for the omission of women's lives from geographical research and the social sciences is situated within the methodologies employed. MacDowell elaborates on the principle factors accountable for this exclusion:

the absence of statistics that distinguish women from the family or that accurately record their waged work, let alone their unpaid labour; the choice of research methodology and/or, when using interview techniques, the choice of the subjects to interview. Many geographical studies do not question a focus on the household as the appropriate unit of the analysis, nor the unproblematic definition of the male partner as the head of household. This means, the internal power relations within the household remain unexamined. Other studies focus only on men and exclude women altogether (McDowell, 1992 105).

These views make clear a shortfall of quantitative data which artificially reduce the complications of women's lives, simply because the methods use nonrepresentational information, rather than "constructing experience in a holistic way". Feminist criticisms (including those of some feminist geographers) guide the researchers to

employ qualitative techniques as alternatives to quantitative methodologies, with the intention to promote a thorough appreciation of women's "socio-spatial experiences" (Madge *et al.*, 1997 92). For this reason, the qualitative researchers emphasize the importance of having close involvement with the person being investigated, so he or she can fully understand their world through their eyes. This method is more explanatory than the quantitative research and the concepts and theoretical elaboration often come out after the data is collected (Bryman, 2004).

Feminist methodologies attempt to give voice to women and correct the male-oriented perspectives that have predominated in the development of social science. As Stanley and Wise (1993) highlight, feminist research is research carried out by women and for women. Therefore, since feminist research is "action-oriented" and seeks to progress feminist values, qualitative research allow many of the "goals of feminist research to be realized" (Bryman, 2004 336, Neuman, 1994). This implies that qualitative methods are more compatible with a feminist position than quantitative research.

Feminist researchers prefer to let the ideas emerge from the interviews, from the lives and examples of the interviewees (women) (Neuman, 1994). Some describe this method as the "paradigmatic feminist method" (Kelly, Burton and Regan, 1994 34). This is imperative in this research as I want to know my participants as much as necessary in order to understand their responses to my questions. For this purpose, I must create an environment in which they are likely to converse openly (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

### **Research methods adopted in the study**

Being confronted with a number of choices of which methodology best suits my research topic, was one of the most challenging decisions I had to make in this research. As previously discussed, all methods have strengths and weaknesses (Lidgard, 1992). In other words, although both types of research designs are important, each one fulfills different functions, the one mainly explanatory, and the other mainly descriptive (Sayer and Morgan, 1985). That is, while quantitative

research is mainly concerned with “descriptive, analytical breath of coverage”, qualitative research is renowned, above all, for its “explanatory power and for the richness and depth of information it generates” (Holland and Campbell, 2005 5).

Kwan (2001 8) adds that even though quantitative methods are weak in “reflecting the complexity and richness” of women’s lives, they can still be useful in providing a wide representation of the “social, spatial...inequalities” women come across anywhere. Hence, a conscious attempt to support a ‘mixed methodology’ that combines, for example, the quantitative data from the population census with qualitative analysis from in-depth interviews or other non-statistical sources is needed (Johnston *et al.*, 2000).

Therefore, employing both methods would fulfill the initial expectations of this study in not only understanding the Tongan women migrants’ experiences at their paid work, but also provide a descriptive ‘representative’ generalization of the Tongan women’s population in the New Zealand labour force.

Since feminist researchers emphasize the need for interviewers to participate and share their ideas with the interviewees and at the same time keep away from controlling the interview, they also argue that a “more open, loosely structured research methodology” is needed to learn about women in order to understand what they are saying, their thoughts, and their reasons for their own actions (Herbert and Rubin, 1995 37).

Consequently, semi-structured interviews using in-depth interviewing was considered as the most appropriate method to use in this task. Here, the interviewer has some opportunities to ask additional questions in reaction to what are seen as “significant replies” (Bryman, 2004 543). In-depth qualitative studies can reveal much about social processes that women experience, although the samples are relatively small and sometimes homogenous. This suggests that while in-depth analysis of small homogenous samples is a key to discovering the unique quality of the people’s lives,



the diversity of human experience will not be revealed if this approach is frequently used on the same population (Cannon, Higginbetham and Leung, 1991).

In spite of this, I still insisted on pursuing this technique with the hope that by employing this type of qualitative interview, I would be able to gain insight into the 'life history' of the Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand. This is critical in this research as it reveals what they think has happened to them, using their own words. At the same time, they expose their honest struggles, achievements and disappointments in trying to make a safe future in a world that is different from what they hoped for (Rountree and Laing, 1996).

### **Data gathering process and analysis**

When permission was granted by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' Human Research Ethics Committee to conduct this research, I started asking around some of my friends in Hamilton and Tonga, for potential participants. These participants were then recruited using 'snowball sampling' where "each person or unit is connected with another through a direct or indirect linkage" (Neuman, 1994 199). Some of my friends in Hamilton and Tonga whom I contacted prior to commencing the research, assisted me in identifying my potential participants, and it was from here, where I was introduced to other participants.

Some who were willing to join were either emailed to or hand-given an information sheet that explained the research and reassured them that their privacy would be protected. It also invited them to participate only if they were available and willing to do so. If they would, then we had to arrange a time and venue that best suited us. (see Appendix I).

As the underlying principles of this research design are in accordance with feminist approaches which ultimately aim to lend a voice to women's thoughts and opinions, and given that the main data collection was conducted through the use of interviews, issues such as confidentiality and anonymity were explained clearly to each participant before the actual interview was conducted. Although the formal fore-

letters were not necessary to my participants due to the trust built between us as Tongan women, informed consent was still used but was orally explained. An information sheet was also provided which introduced me, the research, the purpose of the interviews and indicated the rights of my participants to withdraw before or during the interviewing process. This ensured that the participants were carefully informed and that they understood the purpose of my interviews, and their rights as participants in this study. Each participant and I signed the consent form prior the interview (see Appendix II).

The majority of my participants did not bother to keep their copy of consent forms due to the trust built between us as Tongan women. The others did not need it, and wanted to get on with the interviews right away. It was either that they did not have time to hear my explanations, or they were just anxious to experience what it was like to participate in a university study.

The data for this study were collected over a two month period. The data gathering and analysis were guided by the overall question of this study which addresses the social and economic dynamics of the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand. The questions in the interview were oriented towards the collection of qualitative data which would record what the women experience at their paid work. It was expected that by using this technique, it would overcome some of the short comings of the census data. A copy of the interview can be found in the Appendix III.

### **Probes**

Some of the participants talked at length about things that were not relevant to the topic. I was able to change the subjects when they breathed, by using probes such as; 'what did you mean when you said?.' This was very successful as I was often able to bring the conversation back to the topic, but nevertheless failed at times as some women were enthusiastic about their ideas and not conscious of the time.

Ann Oakley (1979) sees human experience as “often not as neat and tidy” as the researchers attempt to make it. This understanding that each woman experiences life differently was amongst other factors that stimulated my interest in exercising feminist methodologies in this research to explore the ways these women defined their own experiences at paid work. These women were treated as informants and experts and the questions used were semi-structured, conducted in the context of a one-to-one discussion where they could speak more openly and in-depth about what they thought about the questions raised. All the interviews in Tonga and New Zealand were carried out in this way, and each interview lasted between half an hour and three hours.

All the interviews were recorded via a tape recorder and transcribed afterward. Selective coding was utilized after scanning through the information, and the data was organized into conceptual categories, under different themes (Neuman, 1994). These themes took into account the impacts of migration and work experiences of these Tongan women in New Zealand, and their reasons for having such experiences.

The statistical data on the other hand, were collected from the Statistics New Zealand population census 2006. These tables not only obtain the labour force data such as occupational distribution, but also more general characteristics of the Tongan women migrants’ in New Zealand such as their distributions. These data were analyzed using a ‘bivariate’ method of analysis, showing relationships between two variables at the same time (Paterson, 2005). These variables refer to the relationships between the places of birth and the different socio-economic positions of Tongans in New Zealand. As expected, these statistical data are merely descriptive and only present the positions of Tongan women migrants at paid work with no explanation of the reasons for such patterns. This is evident in the information collected by the five yearly censuses which relate to women’s activities. They are extremely “biased towards paid productive work and information on unpaid reproductive work, is not collected” (Larner, 1989 43). In-depth interviews were then drawn on to bridge the gap and gain insight into the experiences of these women’s experiences at paid work.

The ages of the women I interviewed ranged from 30 to 55 years. Table 1, below summarises information about the participants and indicates their pseudonyms, their places of birth, employment status, interview venues and, the dates and times of the interviews.

**Table 1: Interview Schedule for Tongan women**

<b>Pseudonyms</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>Employment/ Occupation status</b>	<b>Interview venues</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
<i><b>Tongan returnees (in Tonga)</b></i>					
Ane	Tonga	Secretary	Home	7/12/2006	6pm
Maile	Tonga	Self-employed	Home/Office	12/12/2006	10pm
Lesley	Tonga	Self-employed	Office	14/12/2006	Lunch
Tina	New Zealand	Self-employed	Home	18/12/2006	1pm
Kalo	Tonga	Unpaid	Home	18/12/2006	6pm
Sera	Tonga	Cleaner	Home	19/12/2006	7pm
Malia	New Zealand	Unpaid	Home	22/12/2006	10am
<i><b>Women migrants (in New Zealand)</b></i>					
Toa	Tonga	Lecturer	Office	27/11/2006	11am
Mele	Tonga	Coordinator	Office	2/12/2006	10am
Olivia	Tonga	Paid Foster Parent	Home	3/12/2006	9am
Soana	Tonga	Self-employed	Office	27/12/2006	2pm
Silia	Tonga	Teacher	Home	30/12/2006	8pm
Melenaite	Tonga	Nurse	My home	6/01/2007	9:30am
Helen	Tonga	Care giver	My home	8/01/2007	10pm

As previously noted, the interviews took place in two countries: i) Tonga and ii) New Zealand. Those interviewed in Tonga were all living in the main island of Tongatapu. This was very convenient for me as they were not far away from where I lived. The initial intention to interview only the Tongan woman migrants in Hamilton was for easy accessibility, and it turned out to be effective despite one trip to Auckland to interview Soana who was residing in Hamilton but is now working in Auckland. This was not expected to happen prior to commencing the interviews but I was looking for willing potential participants and she just so happened to be one of the most willing participants I contacted.

The venues for the interviews were determined by the women where they felt most comfortable. Most of the interviews in Tonga were carried out in the women's own homes. Part of the reason was that a few of them were running their own businesses

at home. This was not the case in New Zealand where most of the interviews were done in the women's offices. The dates and times of the interviews depended on their availabilities as well.

These interviews were implemented in either the Tongan or English languages, depending on what each woman preferred. The interviews were carried out in December 2006, and January 2007. The table shows a total of 14 women interviewed, of which seven were interviewed in Tonga and the rest in New Zealand. I anticipated interviewing both Tongan born and New Zealand born Tongan women, as I was very interested in hearing both sides' experiences at paid work in New Zealand, and interestingly, the two New Zealand born women were amongst those whom I interviewed in Tonga.

### **Encounters throughout the data collection processes**

During the interviews, I experienced both constraints and positive outcomes. These are outlined below.

#### **Constraints on participants**

The initial number of participants planned for this research was 15, of which 5 were Tongan women who have been working in New Zealand but have now returned to Tonga. The intention was to compare these returning women's experiences at paid work in Tonga with that in New Zealand. However, as it turned out, only 14 women were interviewed, which included seven women interviewed in Tonga and seven in New Zealand. As previously mentioned, I expected to interview two New Zealand born Tongan women in order to compare their experiences at paid work with those who were born in Tonga and these women were amongst those interviewed in Tonga. An important constraint on the interviews includes the riot that took place in Nuku'alofa in November 2006 just prior to my fieldwork and which proved to be one of the barriers in carrying out my research. Some women, who I thought would be of great assistance in my research, could not be found as their businesses were burnt during the event. Some of them even moved overseas.

On top of this, the Tongan soldiers guarding the town area where the burning took place, really challenged my work as a researcher and made it difficult to get access to my participants. Every time I passed through this area, I was stopped and they would interrogate me of my whereabouts and the purpose of my presence. It was frightening at first as I had to inform them of my name, the purpose of my visit and where I was going. The constant commotion was worrying and hindered me from getting into my participants' homes and offices. This was one of the reasons I had to interview one of my participants at her own home, because I did not have a working identity card in order to get into her office in town.

In addition, as my interviews in Tonga took place just before the closure of government jobs at the end of the 2006 calendar year, it was difficult to arrange the time and find potential participants since some of them had gone, or were already planning on going overseas, for holidays.

When I came back to proceed with my interviews in New Zealand, it was just in time for Christmas and New Year. Usually back in the islands, when it is New Year, a number of people attend church everyday for a whole week and a big feast usually follows after each service. This was also the case here in New Zealand. At first, it was difficult to find potential participants as many of them were busy attending church services and preparing food for the occasion.

Many of the informants even went outside Hamilton, particularly to Auckland, to spend time with their families and churches. I used several tactics to prevent cancellations on the day preceding the interviews but it was obvious that some women did not want to participate. As a result, their cancellations impinged on my interview schedule as I had to look out for other potential participants to replace them.

Other supplementary factors liable for restricting the amount and quality of data needed included the tape-recorder I used for recording my interviews. This was always placed in front of my participants. However, one of the participants was not

only sitting too far away from it, but her children were making a great deal of noise during the interview. It took me hours to repeatedly listen to the tape and be able to understand what she was saying.

The Geography Department also lent me their laptop as mine was out of service at the time of my research in Tonga. I transcribed and saved two interviews on it, but it was unfortunate that they could not be opened due to technical errors. Trying to reduce the time wasted on re-transcribing these interviews and of course afraid of losing more information, influenced me not to pursue with the transcribing until I got back to New Zealand.

Moreover, as the research process by necessity had to be carried out during my children's school holidays, the quality time for transcribing in particular, was very restrictive. Despite the difficulty, I managed to finish both the interviews and transcribing in the two months I had available.

In addition, the snowball technique had a drawback because it restricted the variety of my participants. People simply do not have "equal ability to provide detailed accounts of what they have been through and what they feel" (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998 93). Some of them, particularly those who are well educated, were able to converse in detail whereas a few of them only said a few words and waited upon me for the next question. Having experienced such cases in my interviews, I contacted friends and relatives to introduce me to other potential participants. However, owing to the period assigned for my interviews, I would fall behind schedule if I continued and with the supervisor's approval of the amount of data already collected, I ceased my interviews.

### **My positionality**

Many feminists claim that successful interviewing requires that there be a substantial "shared culture between the interviewer and interviewee". Not only should "women interview women, but women in the same position" otherwise, important information

“will not be reported or nuances will be ignored” (Herbert and Rubin, 1995 37). Therefore, my positionality as a Tongan woman and researcher fits well into this category.

Being well aware of my own culture is an advantage in this study as it eased my relationship with the participants. I was able to relate to them and knew when and how to react during the interviews, if need be. For that reason, I was able to extract a lot of relevant information from them.

Not only that, but because I am bilingual in both Tongan and English language, it was a real privilege on my behalf. Those participants, who could not converse in English, were interviewed in Tongan and vice versa for some who preferred English instead. Those interviews in Tongan, were transcribed and translated after that.

Being a university student, also had advantages and disadvantages as to how much information could be extracted from the participants. A few of them were reluctant to openly share their experiences with me because they were afraid that their contribution might not be enough and not conform to this study. For example one woman expressed her fear that her contribution might not be suitable and adequate for this study as she is not a well educated person herself. On the other hand, some participants were quite enthusiastic about this study and wanted to join, as soon as I approached them. They appreciated the offer of having to participate in an university study.

As a Tongan woman migrant and researcher, the majority of my participants felt at ease and was able to share their experiences. Only a few felt embarrassed to share some of their experiences and asked that I do not include some of their sayings in my report. Some of them felt insecure to share their true feelings and experiences because they thought I would know if they were lying and therefore, murmured in some of their answers and eventually did not finish what they were saying. I sometimes thought that may be if I were from a different nationality, they would be more open.



## **Gifts**

The customary practice of taking a food gift whenever visiting a Tongan household, was implemented during my interviewing process. These gifts were my tokens of appreciating their times spent to share their experiences with me. This was not surprising to the participants and since they had been notified prior to the interviews, their facial expressions and receptiveness, welcomed me and I was often offered a cup of tea and sometimes dinner, before or during the interview. The interviews varied greatly in length, the shortest being half an hour and the longest taking three hours. It was obvious from the interviews that the gifts did not affect the quality of information these women provided or the amount of information collected.

Having discussed the data sources and methods that I have used for collecting information on the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand, the next chapter discusses the findings of this research.

## **Chapter Five: Findings**

This chapter draws on the empirical data from the New Zealand Population and Dwellings census 2006 and the perspectives of women involved in the in-depth interviews to examine the social and economic dynamics of the Tongan women migrant's experiences at paid work in New Zealand. The census data gives a broader view but with little depth compared to that which is captured by the interviews.

The first section draws on the profile of the interviewees. The rationales for their migration to New Zealand are covered in section two. Tongan women's workforce participation in New Zealand is reported in section three. Section four presents the work histories of the interviewees in New Zealand and follows by an explanation of their work experiences after migrating to New Zealand in the fifth section. The last section compares the past work experiences of returning women (interviewees in Tonga) in New Zealand and their current work experiences in Tonga. A component of this section also compares the work experiences of New Zealand born Tongan with the Tongan born women in New Zealand.

### **Participants: a profile**

This section profiles the women who participated in the in-depth interviews to elucidate the dynamics of their social and economic experiences at paid work in New Zealand. Hence, the following discussions are divided into three main parts. The first part outlines their socio-economic characteristics and carries on to the second part to show their social networks in Tonga and New Zealand. The third section reveals their skills and qualification levels before and after migration.

### **Socio-economic characteristics of the participants**

Table 2 below is a profile of the participants and provides a broad outline of their demographic characteristics. The table shows that of the 14 women who were interviewed, two mentioned they were born in New Zealand and interestingly, they were amongst those who were interviewed in Tonga. Ten women were still married

at the time of the study, with three divorced and one who has never married. An average of two children for every participant was recorded with a range from none (for the individual who had never married) and five. The children's ages range from 1 to 30 years. In the case of the New Zealand based interviewees, two women had their children while in Tonga before migrating to New Zealand.

It is also interesting to note that the majority of the women (eight), irrespective of where they were interviewed, reported that they were living in nuclear families at the time of the study. This is illustrated in Table 2 with the majority being represented in the 'two-parent' households. Five women were living in 'multi-adult' households which include themselves and their relatives. Two of these five women are in a divorced relationship and one has never been married but is living with her relatives. Only one woman lives in a 'one-parent' household. This woman was previously in a marriage relationship but is now divorced. She and the woman who has never married, are heads of their own households.

While the discussion dwells on these women's family structures, it can be seen that those who are living with only their nuclear families play the role of either the sisters or daughters or wives or mothers in the household. Some even take more than one role. As one woman migrant stated, her roles has changed when she divorced her husband and lived alone with her daughter. She is now playing both roles and has responsibilities of the mother and father to her daughter.

**Table 2: Socio-economic Characteristics of Participants**

<b>Pseudonyms</b>	<b>Age groups</b>	<b>Birth places</b>	<b>Number of children in household</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Household structure</b>	<b>Labour force status</b>	<b>Employment/ Occupation Status</b>	<b>Year of First Arrival in New Zealand</b>	<b>Year of First Return to Tonga</b>
<i>Returnees (in Tongan)</i>									
Ane	35	Tonga	Three	Married	Two-parents	Full-time	Secretary	1999	2002
Maile	35-39	Tonga	One	Married	Two-parents	Full-time	Self-employed	1989	2003
Lesley	45	Tonga	Two	Divorced	Multi-adults	Full-time	Self-employed	1979	1983
Tina	31	New Zealand	Two	Married	Two-parents	Full-time	Self-employed	NZ born	2003
Kalo	30-34	Tonga	Two	Divorced	Multi-adults	Unemployed	Unpaid	1993	1994
Sera	43	Tonga	Three	Married	Two-parents	Part-time	Cleaner	2003	2004
Malia	30	New Zealand	One	Married	Multi-adults	Unemployed	Unpaid	NZ born	1999
<b>Pseudonyms</b>	<b>Age groups</b>	<b>Birth places</b>	<b>Number of children in household</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Household structure</b>	<b>Labour force status</b>	<b>Employment/ Occupation Status</b>	<b>Year of First Arrival in New Zealand</b>	<b>Income distribution</b>
<i>Women Migrants (in New Zealand)</i>									
Toa	46	Tonga	Four	Married	Two-parents	Full-time	Lecturer	1998	\$45 - 50,000
Mele	50	Tonga	Two	Married	Two-parents	Full-time	Coordinator	1998	\$45 - 50,000
Olivia	39	Tonga	One	Married	Two-parents	Full-time	Paid foster parent	1994	\$10 - 15,000
Soana	45	Tonga	None	Never married	Multi-adults	Full-time	Self-employed	1982	\$100 - 105,000
Silia	37	Tonga	Two	Married	Two-parents	Full-time	Teacher	1988	\$50 - 55,000
Melenaite	42	Tonga	Five	Married	Multi-adults	Full-time	Nurse	1986	\$25 - 30,000
Helen	34	Tonga	One	Divorced	One-parent	Part-time	Caregiver	1998	\$20 - 25, 000

These roles intensify for those who are living in extended families which vary from being cousins to even aunties, sisters in law and daughters in law. Alongside the different roles these women hold in their households, domestic chores like cleaning, cooking and washing were their most common responsibilities. Others such as caring for invalid parents, studying, babysitting and dropping and picking up children from schools, were important roles played by some of these women.

Nearly all the women who participated in the interviews, except those who were born in New Zealand, disclosed that their first arrival in New Zealand was as 'dependents' of either their husbands or sisters or brothers, and then they sought work later. Despite how already large these women's roles and responsibilities are, particularly the women migrants in New Zealand, most mention that they still provide for their families in Tonga. This may be in the form of sending money home through remittances or in goods. Some of these women first came to New Zealand as students but once they got their jobs, they started to support their relatives not only in New Zealand but in Tonga as well.

As it appears from their responses in the interviews, the majority are the breadwinners of their households, particularly among those whose husbands have other responsibilities in the communities. 'Community' work is defined in this study as any 'unpaid' work these women are involved in apart from their paid work. From their responses, all but one of the participants were involved in community activities. Examples of the different roles and responsibilities these women have in assisting their communities within New Zealand include tutoring primary and secondary students, contributing in fundraising events, playing sports and participating in drama groups, working with high risked young people, and conducting research.

This also applies to the returnees while they were in New Zealand as it was expected before the research was carried out that those women with higher qualifications, and whose husbands are involved in the community like church ministers, have greater participation with their communities than those who are not.

All interviewees in New Zealand showed that their roles have changed one way or another since they first arrived. Those who have experienced a major change in their roles attribute it to a number of factors. For example, some were students before but are now working and are the heads of their households. Some are income providers for their families in Tonga and some were single and stayed with their relatives before but are now married and have children, so their roles have changed. Some still perform the same roles and responsibilities as in Tonga because their husbands are either not employed or are still studying or are church pastors and not paid. These women therefore, had to work to provide for the family. Since these factors are central concerning their experiences at paid work in New Zealand, let me draw on some quotes to bring to light these observations.

I still have the same attitude when I was back home. I was able to help out the community. [However], I now have kids and my priority has changed. This time, I'm putting my children first before helping others (Silia).

Roles in the households in New Zealand are still the same. It seems as if you got hooked to that. I thought I'm the only person in the family who is capable of doing something. They don't have the privilege, they don't have the capability, so I might as well do it myself (Mele).

I first came here as a student, there was not much responsibilities because the focus was being on a student and completing your qualification study. When I moved to Hamilton, to Waikato, I think there was more involvement with the community there, and I think the more qualification you acquire, the expectations from the community to perform. I guess want to help out...but at the moment I'm sort of outgrown that, completing forms and all that...there are more of us now in terms of the roles...things have changed. – I think my responsibility [also] changed when my parents got older and my young sister was helping in looking after them full-time... (Soana)

With regard to these women's employment status, all but two were unpaid workers at the time of my study. One of them explained her reason for not working at the time was because of "differences in management" (Malia) and thought it was best to leave. In relation to all the participants' responses, their paid employment varied from cleaner to university lecturer. Four women are self-employed. When considering their qualification level, it is obvious that those with higher qualifications are

concentrated in the professional jobs like lecturer and coordinator. Others with lower skills and qualification levels work as a cleaner, paid foster parent and as caregivers.

With the exceptions of the two New Zealand born women, all the respondents migrated to New Zealand, the first in 1979, and reported to have returned a few times to Tonga before the study took place. Since this study focuses on the Tongan migrants, it is essential to recognize the duration of their stays in New Zealand as it impinges on their experiences at paid work. It is notable from Table 2 that more than half of the New Zealand based interviewees did not come to New Zealand until the 1990s. One claims to have been living in New Zealand for 25 years, despite occasional returns to Tonga since her first arrival. It is this same woman who is self-employed with income around \$100,000.

In terms of their personal incomes, three women were placed on the first category which ranges from \$10 - 30, 000. Another three were placed on the \$45 - 55,000 category with only one woman receiving \$100,000 or more.

### **Social networks**

Having identified the demographic characteristics of the women I interviewed, it is essential to recognize the different influences on their migratory behavior. According to their responses, they all followed the paths of their relatives who migrated to New Zealand before them with the comforting knowledge that a support network will be available if need be. However, each woman may experience these connections differently. These supports are either financial or social or a combination of both, before and after migration took place.

Apart from the New Zealand born women and one woman who first came to New Zealand on scholarship to study, the others came and stayed with their relatives until they were able to look after themselves. These relatives were either their brothers, uncles, grandparents or sisters. It became evident from some of the women's comments that their relatives who were in New Zealand before them, paid for their

coming. Some of these relatives also assisted in finding them jobs and looked after their children when they went to work.

Similarly, the relatives in New Zealand not only provided these women with social and economical support, but also act as motivators for the future migrants in Tonga. As one woman shared her father's story for coming to New Zealand, it emerged that it was that motivation which convinced her to come. She talks about how he worked in New Zealand and sent home money to pay for her school fees, good food and even built them a house to live in Tonga. This gave her the impression that New Zealand has many job opportunities and money, and so drove her to migrate here as she could get more money than she had in Tonga.

### **Skills and qualification levels**

Owing to the range of experiences these Tongan women migrants encounter at paid work in New Zealand, it is essential to at least have some understandings of the levels of skill and qualification they attained before and after migration. When these women were asked what the level of qualification they attained before migrating to New Zealand, four said they had secondary school qualification with only one woman saying 'none'. The other two already had their first degrees somewhere overseas before migrating to New Zealand but when it came to the interviews, all these women reported to have gained some qualifications since their first arrival. Of the four women who stated they had secondary school qualification before migrating to New Zealand, two are now holding university degrees. The other two, along with the women with no qualification, mentioned taking extra courses, particularly English, in New Zealand to improve their knowledge which eventually led to a raise in their salaries.

Concerning the level of skills these women had before migrating to New Zealand, all have stated they did have some skills. These skills varied from babysitting, cooking and shop keeping, to teaching. Most of the women mentioned they were teaching in Tonga at some stage in their lives which includes teaching Sunday school children



through to teaching high school students. Four women mentioned carrying on the same skills they had in Tonga, in New Zealand, although these may be combined with extra skills they have acquired after migration. The following quote is an example of the women's comments pertaining to this issue.

I do pick up new skills every year especially the strict way we used to teach back at home...[She has come up with different teaching strategies to make learning effective] especially the things that kids enjoy, which is totally different from what [she] used to do [at school in Tonga](Silia).

### **Migration: A rationale**

Ogden (1984 35) claims that, international migrations are usually determined by the complex interplay of “push factors at origin and pull factors at destination”, except of course in forced migration. Therefore, in order to understand the decisions which Tongan women made in order to migrate to New Zealand, it is necessary to first examine the reasons they gave for leaving Tonga in the first place.

### **Reasons for leaving Tonga (push factors)**

Most of the women who participated in the interviews declared that their plans for leaving Tonga were only for a limited period of time. Lidgard (1992 106) labels these type of women as “international circulars rather than permanent long-term migrants”. This implies that these women's duration of stay in New Zealand and the frequency of their returns to Tonga were formerly planned before they left Tonga. As one participant shared, “I had always wanted to come and do further studies. The whole intention was to go back to work in Tonga”. Apart from the New Zealand born women who participated in the study, six claimed that they were planning to be away for three months of visa as visitors, but ended up staying in New Zealand. If we reflect on the responses given by these women, this was expected to happen as the wage differences between Tonga and New Zealand are noticeable. Melenaite stated that her plan for leaving Tonga was to have come to New Zealand on a visiting visa but she extended it to a year later on, after observing the difference in what she used to earn from her work in Tonga. Since she was the only one who financially supported her family, she then decided to stay.

It is also interesting to note that the reasons for leaving Tonga in the first place were more around dissatisfaction with the quality of education services provided in Tonga and low wage levels. The women's responses showed that, with the exception of the New Zealand born women, six agreed that education was the most influencing factor determining their migration to New Zealand. This indicates that these women were discontented with the quality of education in Tonga which made them leave for New Zealand. The following remark best represents the responses given by these six women.

It was when my son's coming here to study that made me think to come with my family. I only have two sons [and I] have very strong ties with [them]. I know they will not get better education in Tonga than in here, so [its] here in New Zealand [that] they could get that [and that was] the major reason for us to move up here (Mele).

Leaving Tonga because of the dissatisfaction with the quality of education was coupled with other factors including women's rights to access land in Tonga. It is evidenced from Lesley's response to this question that the reason for her to leave Tonga was her mother's wish that she had to improve her education to be able to take care of herself in the future, given that the "land in Tonga belongs to her brother".

### **Reasons for migrating to New Zealand (pull factors)**

With respect to the women's responses in the interviews, their main reason for migrating to New Zealand was more towards social incentives than for financial inducements, which verifies Lee's (2003 16) statement when she categorizes education as the main reason for moving "temporary or permanently" from Tonga to New Zealand. As previously mentioned, six women agreed that education was their main purpose for leaving Tonga for New Zealand.

Whether migration was for better education or not, it is not as straightforward as it may look. One participant reveals her decision to migrate was for her children to have better education in New Zealand. This was not an easy decision for her because it means she had to leave behind her job and the life she grew up with. She

underlines the complexity of this process as something she had to consider very carefully before making up her mind whether or not to give up her job in Tonga, that she had for many years, in order to come and start a new life here in New Zealand. It was scary for her at first, but she managed to get over it. As part of her impressions of New Zealand, she saw it as a country of opportunities and therefore intended to come and work.

A few other participants cited work-related reasons often in combination with other factors such as, looking for better wages and visiting relatives, as the main causes of their migration to New Zealand. Olivia's main incentive for migrating was basically to have a better future than she had in Tonga and her initial plan was to come and work in New Zealand. Maile mentioned her motive for migrating to New Zealand in the first place was to visit her brother who was at university at the time. She ended up marrying and staying there, and eventually worked afterward.

### **Reasons for returning to Tonga**

Return migration is defined by King (2000 8) as a process whereby people "return to their country or place of origin, after a significant period in another country or region". He describes the reasons for these returns to be many and diverse in reality which suggests there are multifaceted reasons for a migrant to return home. As previously noted, the majority of the women who participated in the interviews mentioned their plans for leaving Tonga in the first place were initially only for a short period of time, which suggests their intention of retuning someday. It is therefore, not a surprise to observe that the most conspicuous reasons the women gave for returning is their attachment to Tonga irrespective of the duration of their absence. However, the attachment is interpreted differently by each woman. Reasons other than attachment were identified under personal reasons and compulsory return.

Along with those who returned due to being attached to the people and the environment in Tonga, their strong ties with their families in Tonga were by far the

most frequently cited reason that inspired them to return. As one of the New Zealand born Tongan women whom I interviewed in Tonga underlined,

[The initial reasons for returning to Tonga] were mainly family [reasons]. Both my parents were alive at the time, so there was a need for me to come home otherwise I would have stayed in New Zealand and worked (Malia).

This was also the principal cause amongst the Tongan migrants who were interviewed in New Zealand, when they were asked to identify the most important justification for their previous and possible future returns to Tonga. Some mentioned that they have returned a few times since their first arrivals for their close relatives' funerals or weddings. Another woman accentuates her return as more towards the need for her children to be raised in Tonga. As she explained,

I wanted my kids to be raised in a Tongan community, especially with the culture and traditions in Tonga. [I] like them to go through our Tongan culture, [such as] respect and also to have feelings of the environment and the education systems in Tonga. [I also wanted them] to have a knowledge of the Tongan language and be able to speak and write in it (Ane).

One of the New Zealand born women I interviewed in Tonga mentioned the reason for her return to Tonga was basically for her parents but since they have passed away, it makes her realize that there was nothing left for her to do in Tonga. Hence, as she puts it, it is time for her to move on especially after the riot that took place in Nuku'alofa last year (2006). She claimed that,

the economy is suffering, the political changes are going to take place in the next couple of years or so or the next ten years. I think its going to be a very unstable place to bring up my children. That's one of the main reasons why we're deciding to leave.

Along with the women's personal reasons for returning, besides gaining work experience after university studies, was trying to fulfill one's own vision. Maile is a pastor's wife and has been living in New Zealand for years. She talks about the reasons responsible for her return to Tonga as her own vision.

We just really felt to come and start up a church here in Tonga, so that's the main reason why we came. The other reason, I had always had a dream that one day I would start up my own early childhood centre and now, this is our first one that we have started out here in Tonga (Emma).

With reference to the last category of reasons for returning, one woman mentioned that she had no other choice but to return. She specified that her intention for leaving Tonga in the first place was to experience what it was like in New Zealand, and she planned to return before her visiting visa was expired. She did exactly what she planned for. However, for her second visit, she stayed on in New Zealand after the expiry date of her visa and ended up overstaying, which led to her deportation to Tonga.

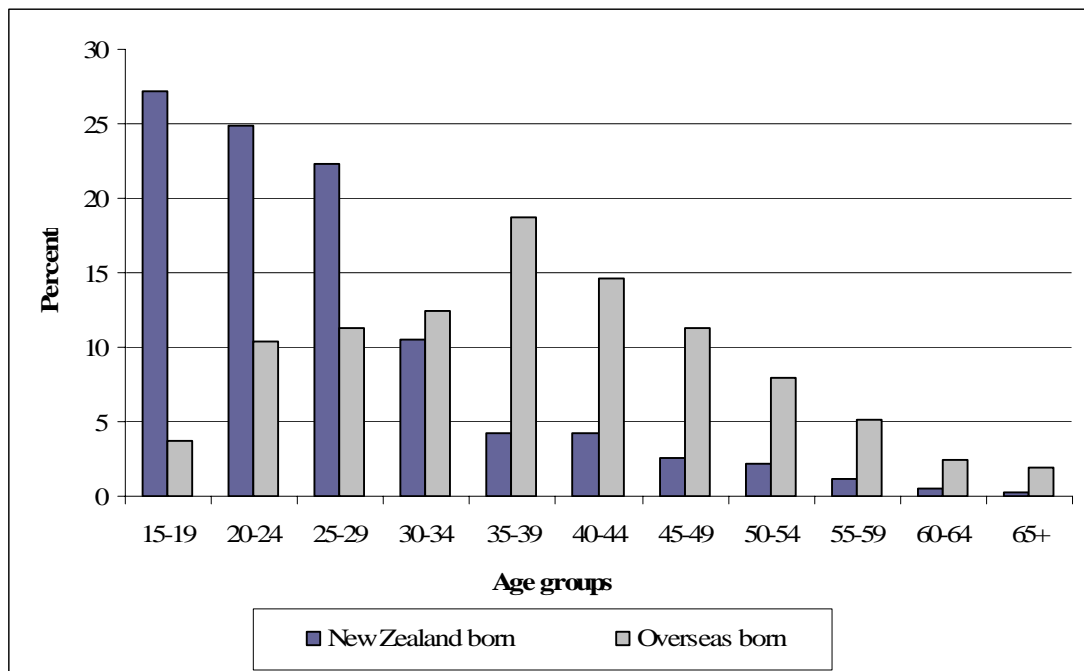
### **Tongan women migrants in New Zealand workforce: a case study**

It is evident from the previous discussions that labour migration is accountable for the migration of most Tongan women to New Zealand. As the focus of this report is constructed on the social and economic dynamics of women migrants' experiences at paid work, the data obtained from the 2006 census demonstrates how they are represented in New Zealand's workforce. The responses from the in-depth interviews assist in explaining the descriptive patterns provided by these census data. This section has four main components. The first one explores the labour force participation of Tongans in New Zealand. The second part looks at their employment status and the third follows to show their occupational status. The last part then describes their income distribution patterns in relation to their qualification attainments.

#### **Labour force participation**

The labour force consists of adults (aged 15 years and over) employed or unemployed and actively seeking employment (Statistics New Zealand, 2005b). Figure 5 represents the labour force participation rates of Tongan women by age group in 2006. It also illustrates that a greater proportion of overseas born Tongan women are participating in the labour force at age group 30-34 and over, compared to their New Zealand born counterparts. The New Zealand born Tongan women on the other hand,

seem to dominate the younger age groups. This is to be expected given the relatively young New Zealand born population.



**Figure 5: Labour force participation rates of Tongan women by age groups, 2006.**

(Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2007b)

Table 3 below shows the percentage of work and labour force status for total overseas born males and females plus the New Zealand born females', by age groups in New Zealand, in 2006. It indicates that New Zealand born women are more likely to participate in the labour force than the Tongan born women in 2006 although the difference is not large (56 percent and 53 percent respectively). When reflecting on the responses given by the women who participated in the interviews, it is apparent that the New Zealand born Tongan women take advantage from the presence of their extended families in New Zealand, to help them out in looking after their children when they go to work and by doing household chores.

**Table 3: Work and labour force status of Tongans in New Zealand, 2006**

	Males		Females	
	Overseas-born	Overseas-born	New Zealand-born	
<b>Total 15+</b>	<i>Percentage</i>			
Employed Full-time	58	36	31	
Employed Part-time	7	12	14	
Unemployed	5	5	11	
<b><i>Total in the labour force</i></b>	<b>70</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>56</b>	
<b><i>Not in the labour force</i></b>	<b>30</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100(10,007)</b>	<b>100(10,098)</b>	<b>100(4,593)</b>	

(Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2007b)

Also prominent are the employment rates of overseas born women -- greater amongst full-time employment than their Tongan women counterparts (36 percent and 31 percent respectively). This reflects the greater demand for job security amongst the overseas born Tongans with the intention of supporting their families and communities both in Tonga and New Zealand. This is done through sending remittances, part of the “concepts of *fatongia*, or obligations, to kin” (Lee, 2003 30). The following quotations illustrate this.

A third of the money that I earn goes to Tonga all the time since we came. Everything that happens in Tonga like funerals, I have to be there. I think they have a wrong impression of me thinking that I have a lot of money because I stay here and I think I have the responsibilities since I could be able to help financially especially with my family in Tonga. I also bring them here to see what its like up here, and see if there is something here they can take home (Mele).

You know, since leaving Tonga and since been on employment, I still provide different ways our cousins and their families in Tonga, provide financially, also we provide food. Not only Tonga, but I guess as Tongans, wherever they are, whether in the States, or Hawaii, or Australia, we do provide and support each other financially (Soana).

Other reasons for participating in the labour force include the ‘presence of children, particularly young children, in the household’ (Horsfield, 1988 6). This is especially among women whose husbands are also working. A few women who participated in the interviews mentioned that their participation in full-time employment was attributable to the presence of their extended families in New Zealand. Amongst the responses given by the participants, Silia’s comment explains this best.

At the moment, with the kids growing up, it’s more demanding. I can see both of us working full-time, it would be tiring for us. I was expecting to be like that, but I was doing the best that I could while I can, especially as a mother for these children. I need to be on part-time at some stage, was thinking of next year, but since mum and dad are still around, they can do that at the moment. I’m looking at part-time at some stage next year because of the kids, because my husband is working full-time but it’s something we’re actually looking at...you know how demanding the job is and the fact that the kids are growing up. We expect to have some more time with them.

Women in two-parent households were more likely to be working than their counterparts in one-parent households with very young children (Horsfield, 1988). This is because their husbands or partners can look after the children while they go to work.

Table 3 shows that the New Zealand born women (14 percent) tend to outweigh the overseas born women (12 percent) in part-time employment, although the difference is not large. The lack of extended families in New Zealand was amongst the most notable responses given by the participants. The majority explained how much they needed their relatives to help them in sharing the responsibilities of looking after their children while they go to work. This was particularly evident amongst women with young children and who were living in ‘one-parent’ households which suggests the importance of matching their working hours with their roles and responsibilities at home. Women like these were expected to experience this situation which is why they had to participate more in part-time than full-time employments. The following comment best illustrates this.



My daughter and I used to stay at my sister's place when she (daughter) was very young. This was before she attended school. I remember working 16 hours a day and the working hours didn't bother me. It's different now because we're living on our own and the working hours really clash with my household routine. Like when school term starts, she just wants me to pick and drop her off at school. It's very difficult for us women with children (Helen).

It is also apparent from these women's responses that irrespective of the number of children they have, their roles as mothers definitely impinge on their employment status and working hours. This is why Helen (a single mother from a previous marriage) left her full-time job and works part-time instead. As she explained,

Before my daughter attended school, I didn't mind the working hours and anytime suited me, because I could always leave her with my sister. However, at this stage, my role as her mum clashes with my working hours because I have to work at seven in the morning and off at three. This means, I have to drop her off her at my sister's place so she (sister) can drop her at school at nine and pick her up again at three in the afternoon. I would rather prefer another job. The working hours are great barriers to my time with my daughter.

Equally important, the proportions of overseas born men outweigh their female counterpart (70 and 53 percent respectively) in the total labour force participation, which suggests the traditional roles of women and men are the rule in a number of Tongan households in New Zealand. That is to say, women are considered to belong at home while men go to work to earn the living.

### **Employment status**

Table 4 below outlines the employment status of Tongans (aged 15 years and over) who participate in the labour force. Clearly, more overseas born males (6,522 people) than females (4,818 people) are employed in New Zealand, although the proportion of the total for each of them shows that both share a similar pattern of 84 percent of their total population who are engaged in paid employment.

**Table 4: Employment status of Tongans in New Zealand, 2006**

	Males	Females	
	Overseas-born	Overseas-born	New Zealand-born
<i>Total 15+</i>		<i>Percentage</i>	
Paid Employee	84	84	90
Employer	2	1	1
Self-Employed and Without Employees	4	2	3
Unpaid Family Worker	1	2	1
Not Stated	8	11	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 (6,522)</b>	<b>100 (4,818)</b>	<b>100 (2,070)</b>

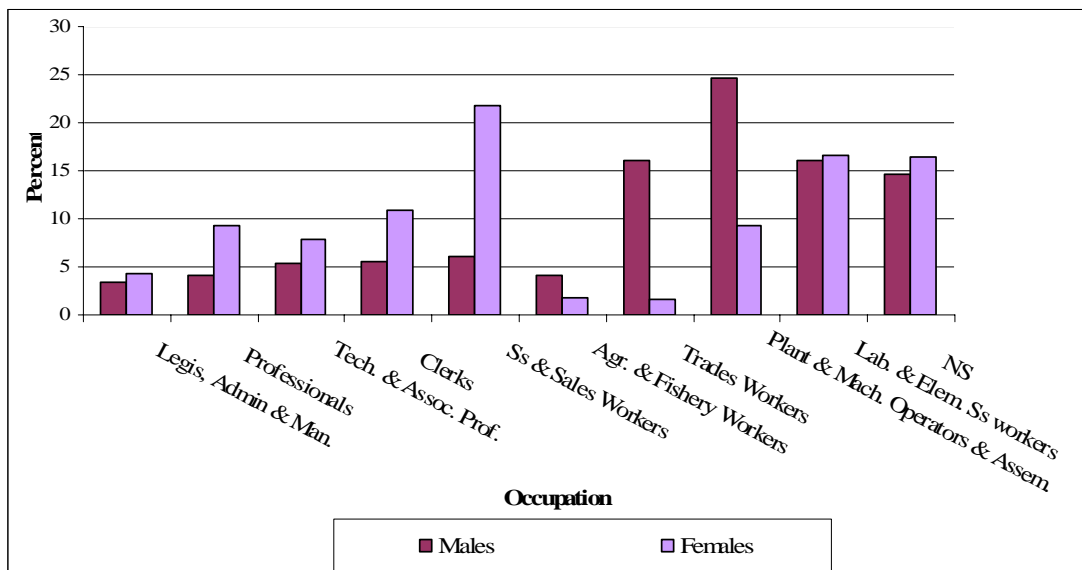
(Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2007b)

The New Zealand born women (90 percent) show a slightly higher proportion of the total as paid employees than their overseas born female counterpart (84 percent). I have mentioned earlier that the New Zealand born women participate more in the labour force at younger age groups. For this reason, it is no surprise that a greater proportion of them are employed compared to their Tongan-born counterparts. With reference to some of the responses given by the women migrants in the interviews, it is interesting to note that one of the reasons a few mentioned to explain this pattern is the lack of discipline of New Zealand born children by their parents. One woman assumed that the New Zealand born children are freer and parents' discipline is lacking which resulted in their children not valuing education but seeking work at younger ages once they finish or are still at high school, compared to the Tongan migrants' children. She considers the Tongan parent migrants to value their children's education more and expect them to participate in the labour force once they complete their tertiary education, in order to get a good and secure job in the future, to help their families not only here, but also in Tonga. This may account for the greater participation of New Zealand born Tongans in the labour force.

### **Occupation**

Two occupational areas of paid work in which women predominate, provide a more detailed insight into women's employment. The first is clerical work (11 percent

women and six percent men) which comprises “secretary-typists and clerks”, as well as “bank officers and; the second is service occupations” (22 percent women and six percent men) which include cooks, related housekeeping service workers and cleaners (NACEW, 1990 182). This is evident in Figure 6 which shows the different occupation status of both overseas born Tongan women and men in New Zealand.

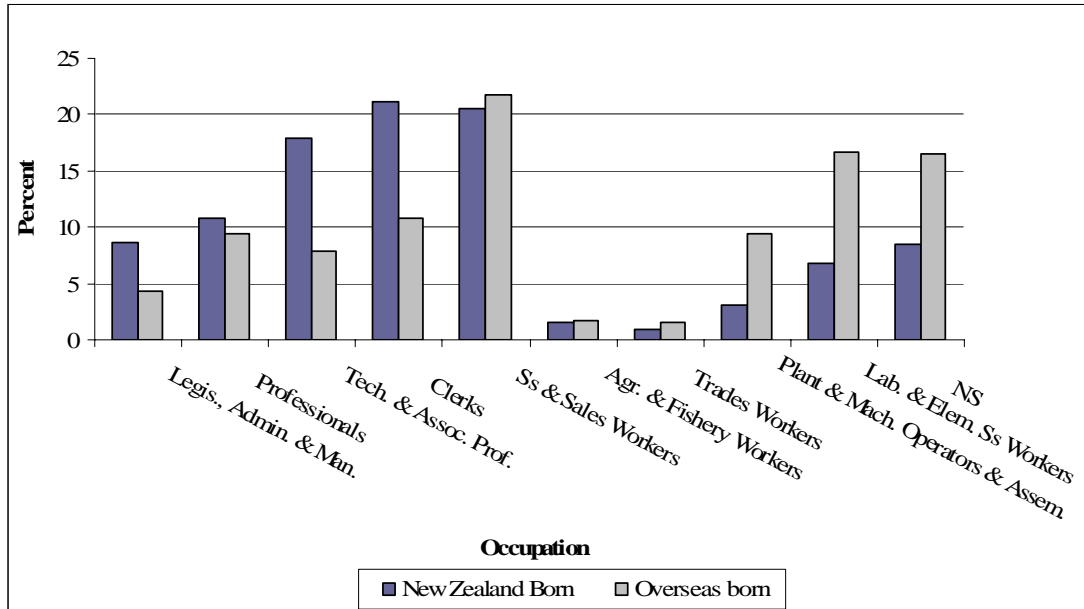


**Figure 6: Occupational status of overseas-born Tongans at age 15+, 2006**

(Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2007b)

As it indicates, the overseas born Tongan women had higher percentages than men not only at clerical and services work, but also at ‘white collar’ jobs such as professional occupation (9 percent and 4 percent respectively), technicians and associate professionals (8 percent and 5 percent). Overseas born Tongan women also outweigh Tongan born men at labour and related elementary work.

As revealed in Figure 7 below, New Zealand born Tongan women had higher percentages than overseas born Tongan women in ‘white collar’ occupations such as legislators, administrators and managers (9 percent and 4 percent respectively), professional (11 percent and 9 percent), technicians and associate professionals (18 percent and 8 percent), and clerks (21 percent and 11 percent).

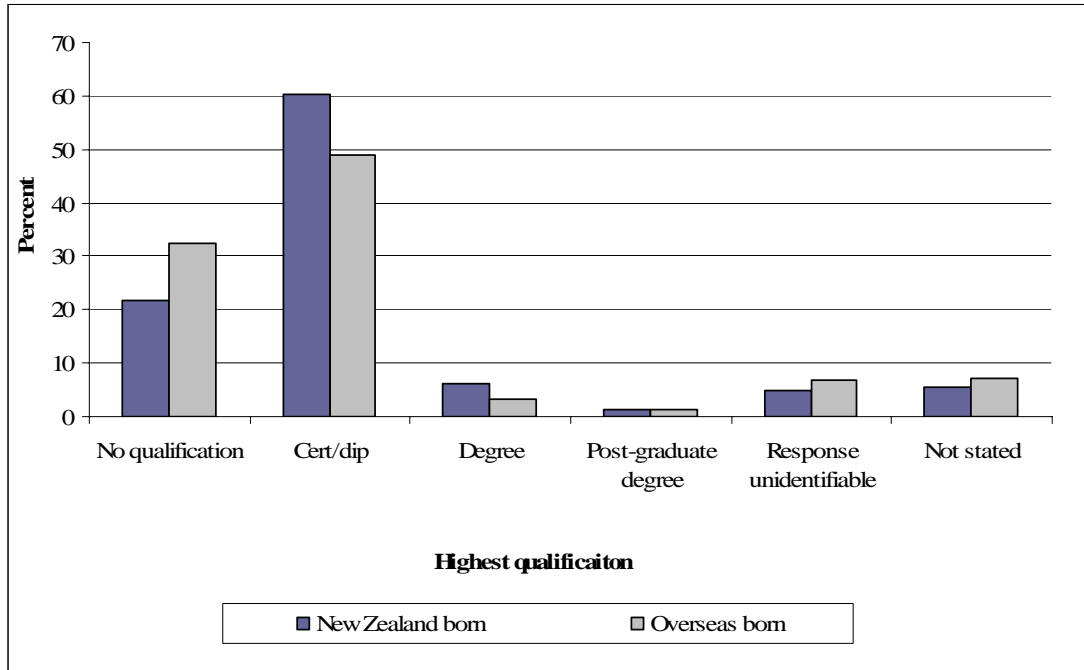


**Figure 7: Occupational status of Tonga women at in New Zealand at age 15+, 2006**

(Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2007b)

In contrast, overseas born Tongan women had higher percentages than the New Zealand born Tongan women as service and sales workers although they are almost the same (22 percent and 21 percent respectively); plant and machine operators and assemblers (9 percent and 3 percent) and; labourers and related elementary workers (17 percent and 7 percent).

When the relationship between education level and occupation is considered, it is evident that a high proportion of women in professional, technical, administrative, managerial and related occupations have tertiary qualifications. In other words, the low rates of postgraduate qualifications held by Tongan women migrants are reflected in their employment patterns, with the majority in unskilled occupations, including “production and processing (factory work), laboring and cleaning, and very few in professional and managerial positions” (Lee, 2003 56). This is illustrated in Figure 7 above and Figure 8 below, where overseas born Tongan women overtake the New Zealand born Tongan women (22 percent) on the ‘no qualification’ category compared to 32 percent of overseas born Tongan women.



**Figure 8: Highest qualification of Tongan women in New Zealand at age 15+, 2006**

(Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2007b)

In other words, most of the unskilled jobs within the service sector frequently involve tasks derivative of housework; for example jobs associated with food and cleaning which tend to involve “manual work and unpleasant conditions” are where the majority of overseas born Tongan women are concentrated (Larner, 1990 26).

Employment in this sector has perceived flexible working hours, particularly the opportunity to work in the evening or on shift. Often, the women involved in this sector, have low pay and are in unskilled work because their qualifications are not recognized” or because they have to work at night when their partners or other family members can care for their children (NACEW, 1990).

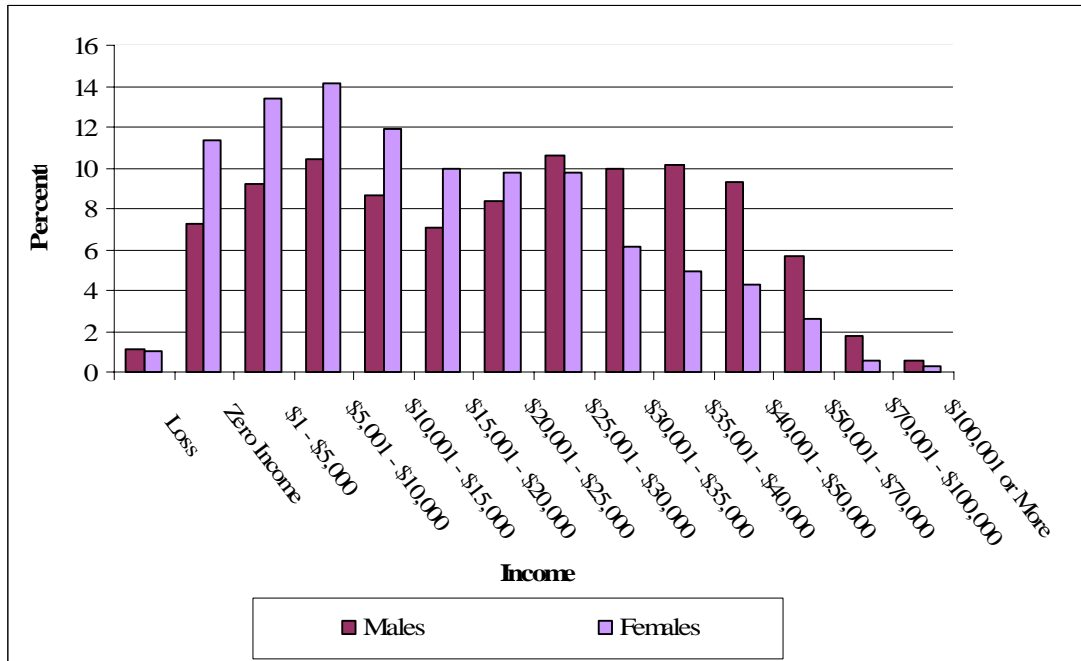
Interestingly, the occupation status of the Tongan women migrants who participated in the interview differs from the census data. Four women stated that they were working under the professional category, with the rest as services and sales workers. The women migrant’s responses in the interviews are not consistent with the census in this area as a few of them commented that Tongan women migrants have higher

qualifications and have more work experience than the New Zealand born women. Alternatively, some women mentioned the advantage of New Zealand born women over the migrant women because they are more familiar with the New Zealand systems. It can be observed that the group of interviewees is more skewed towards the professions than is the case with the overall population.

### **Income distribution**

When reflecting on the qualifications and occupation types of the Tongan women migrants, Figure 9 shows their income levels in New Zealand. Note this Figure excludes approximately 20 percent of the population that did not state their income. As the Figure indicates, Tongan born women were more likely to be in income bands under \$25,000. When compared to their male counterparts, Tongan women migrants are clustering in lower paid jobs.

Of the seven women I interviewed in New Zealand, six commented their incomes are positioned within \$10,000 to \$55,000 range a year. The care-givers were amongst this group. Their qualification levels were amongst the most obvious reasons they gave that have influenced this pattern. Only one of them, who already had a PhD, is in the \$100,000 to \$105,000 category.



**Figure 9: Personal income of overseas-born Tongans at age 15+, 2006**

(Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2007b)

### **Tongan women migrants: work history**

The work history data of the women migrants interviewed in New Zealand shows that they have a high level of job stability. The average length of employment without a break for their present jobs is four and a half years. For their previous jobs, the average length of employment without a break was two years. Three of these women either took the same job they first took after migration, or moved location but are still working on the same kind of jobs. The rest had changed their working hours from either working part-time to full-time or vice versa. Since all these women had returned to Tonga since they first arrived, a few mentioned taking other jobs while overseas, particularly in Tonga.

Olivia is now working as a paid foster parent in her own home, but was working on a farm before for three years and the flea market in Auckland for two years preceding her current job. She explains one of the rationales for leaving those jobs was the distance of those workplaces from her home. She complained about how much money she had to spend on petrol in order to go there and since she did not earn

enough money from it, she decided to quit and changed her job. Amongst other reasons, the following quotes are examples of the diversity in women's reasons for changing their jobs.

I was looking for a more permanent job (Silia).

I could easily notice racism in that workplace. They often let me do the hardest work, so even though the location was good especially that it was just across the neighbourhood, I left that job (Melenaite).

I think my responsibilities changed when my parents got older and needed more support. My responsibility to my parents was the priority and I left...(Soana).

I created the job myself because it has always been something that I always wanted to do (Soana).

Interestingly, the majority of women obtained their current jobs by applying for them. Others got theirs through friends and relatives who were working in the same workplace. Those who are still doing the same job they did since they first migrated to New Zealand highlight their reasons in the following quotations;

I like my allowance. During public holidays like Christmas, I receive double the amount I used to get on other days (Helen).

It's flexible enough in a way to help you fulfill other things to do with your family and community. You're in an environment where you're automatically encouraged (Toa).

I like it because I tend to meet a lot of academic people -- people that you thought you might never meet like professors, doctors in the conferences. I think I have extended my network through my work (Mele).

One thing about self-employed is that, you have the flexibility of being able to get up and go, rather than having to ask for leave and trying to justify what you do to be away from work (Soana).

## **Work experiences in New Zealand**

International migration may have "effects of the most profound sort", both on the countries of origin and destination. These effects may be of "several types: cultural,



demographic, economic and social” (Ogden, 1984 38). This section has three distinctive parts. Since the focus of the report is on the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand, the first part examines the effects of migration and paid work on their gender, identity and ethnicity. The second part explores the impacts of their gender, ethnicity and identity on their work experiences in New Zealand. The third part then compares their work experiences with the New Zealand born Tongan women and later with the returning migrants.

### **Impacts of migration and paid work**

Migration and paid work have challenged many women’s gender roles, ethnicity and identities in different ways. The following discussion shows how this may occur.

#### **Gender**

Migration has allowed women to take greater advantage of the economic opportunities they have than what they used to get in their places of origin (Liang and Chen, 2003). It is interesting to note that all the women migrants who participated in the interviews said they are proud of their work. This was particularly evident when they tried to compare the wage gap in Tonga and New Zealand. One of them said she never worked in Tonga before she migrated to New Zealand but has been working since she arrived in New Zealand. It was the wage that attracted her attention.

Despite the better opportunities migration and paid work offer these women migrants in New Zealand, it is important to be aware of the disadvantages they encounter. While all mentioned that they still financially support their families in Tonga, a few complained that their toils are misunderstood by their families in Tonga who believed them to be well-off since they live and work in New Zealand.

I think they have a wrong impression of me thinking that I have a lot of money because I stay here and, I felt I have the responsibilities since I could be able to help financially especially with my family in Tonga (Mele).

A few women take more than one job in order to fulfill their commitments to their family in Tonga. By doing so, they are marginalized as they have to work long hours in poor working environments in order to get money. One of these women told me that she dislikes her care-giving job because it is tiring but, because she needs money, she has to take it.

Despite the higher wages they earn in New Zealand in comparison to what they used to get in Tonga, they are disadvantaged when compared to migrant men and New Zealand born women. This will be shown in later discussions.

### **Identity: a reconstruction**

Migration and paid work have influenced the perspectives of migrants in different ways. This is an important part of this section as it explores the impacts of migration and paid work on the identities of Tongan women migrants who participated in the interviews.

Irrespective of the household type and structure they live in, or the number and ages of their children, they all declared the substantial impacts migration and paid work have posed on their households' roles and responsibilities. According to their responses, the majority of them commented on the changes in their roles and responsibilities after migration and since they became employed. All had extended their roles from not just the mother and wife, to being the source of income for their family not only in Tonga but also in New Zealand. This reflects one of their initial reasons for leaving Tonga in the first place, to help their family left behind in some stages in their lives. The following comment best summarizes this statement.

Since leaving Tonga and since been in employment, I still provide different ways for our cousins and their families in Tonga...provide financially, also we provide food (Soana).

The impact was also evident in the clashes of their working hours with their responsibilities at home. One woman complained about how she had to struggle with the time to drop off and pick up her daughter from school when she works. The

woman who is living in a 'one parent' household confirms her household roles and responsibilities to have doubled when her husband divorced her. As she unveiled,

I'm now staying with my daughter alone in our own house but we used to stay at my sister's place before. I'm basically taking over my ex-husband's responsibilities in the household (Helen).

Migration and paid work also reconstruct these women's identities. One woman commented how her workplace assumes because she is a Pacific islander, that she is physically fit, and thus, assigns her the hard and heavy work, opposite to others. She took it as being racially discriminating against her skin colour rather than because of her physical ability.

It was also expected that those women with husbands who are involved in the community like church ministers, have greater responsibilities with their communities than those who are not. As Melenaite exclaimed,

My husband is a church minister and is not working. We have five children. I'm the breadwinner of the family and also responsible for just about anything to do with our family affairs. I work five days a week...

Despite the range of her roles and responsibilities, she feels empowered by being the provider for her family and since her husband is not employed, he looks after the children while she goes to work

### **Ethnicity: a discourse**

As previously noted, racial discrimination was one of the difficulties these women encountered at their workplaces in New Zealand. The migration of Tongans to host nations around the world, particularly since the late 1960s, has created a diasporic population that is now at least equal to that remaining in Tonga. As they settle in their new homes, very few Tongan migrants completely lose their connections to their homeland; they remain between two shores. They may draw on their history to create a postcolonial awareness to offset disempowerment and discrimination in their experiences as migrants. Since they are a minority group in New Zealand, the

impacts of postcolonialism are significantly impinging on everyone who is not of the dominant culture (Lee, 2003).

This was contradictory to Mele's perspective as she revealed her experiences at her workplace to be different. She proudly testified that, she thinks it is socially constructed. What she meant was,

I think if you're careful enough and professional enough, I think you will not create things that people might not like in you and give you a lot of difficulties in your working. I think it all depends on you as a person and so you know who you are, know how to react in situations and know how to relate to people because regardless of colour or race, you can be a good person or a bad person.

### **Ethnic-identity: the impacts**

Due to the complexities of separating ethnicity from identity, this section conflates them in order to explain their impacts on these women's experiences at paid work.

### **Impacts on work experiences**

Previously, I discussed the impacts of migration and paid work on Tongan women migrants' identities in New Zealand. The impacts of these women's identities and ethnicity on their experiences at paid work in New Zealand, are just as important. All the women who participated in the interviews thought that upholding their culture and language empowered them at their paid work in different ways. The following comment is an example of the few ways these women's identities and ethnicity have strengthened them at paid work in New Zealand.

There's a lot of advantages of being a Tongan woman in New Zealand. First of all, when I grew up in Tonga and came to New Zealand, I know who I am, what we call in Tonga '*ilo'i 'e kita, kita* [knowing who you are] It's a very strong base to work here in New Zealand. Being bilingual is a strength. Because we lived in Tonga and grew up in a particular way where we are very strong in our culture and our language, we're able to transfer the skills across. It really takes you far when you work in a multi-ethnic society and dealing with people from different background (Soana).

Apart from the advantages of maintaining the Tongan culture and language in the workplace as Soana points out, one woman highlights her Christian belief as a significant influence on her work. This woman works as a paid foster parent in her own home. She said that one of the things the Social Welfare always ask her before entrusting her a child to look after, was if she was Christian. Her not drinking and smoking were also queried in order to make sure she would perform her work well.

#### **Strategies to balance their roles and paid work**

Despite the barriers encountered by some Tongan women migrants at paid work, the support from their families and everyone in their households in New Zealand, definitely makes the difference. One of the women who participated in the interviews mentioned that, although her husband does not work for cash, he still looks after their children when she goes to work. She also said it was good that their children are much older now and are "sharing the household responsibilities" with her. She insisted that her job does not affect her roles as a mother and a wife because she and her boss "understand each other". As a pastor's wife, she always asks her boss to let her know of the work schedule a week in advance so she can prepare for it. She emphasized her role to her church community as very important and does not want to miss her choir practice because of her work.

Alternative strategies were adopted by some women who sought jobs with better working hours that do not clash with the dropping and picking of their children from school. Other helpful comments from Olivia and Toa need to be considered.

I believe that once we put our heart into our work and with the support of the husband, then it can be done (Olivia).

I always make sure that work is done at home and there is also time for my children and family. I'm also good at delegating work. As the head of my department [at work], I delegate to co-workers what needs to be done. Same at home, I allocate my work so my children have a duty and responsibility to do (Toa).

### **Comparing work experiences**

This section is based on the responses given by the women who participated in the interviews. The first part compares the experiences at paid work, of Tongan women migrants with the New Zealand born Tongan women in New Zealand, and later on between the returning women migrants and the Tongan women migrants in New Zealand.

#### **Tongan women migrants and the New Zealand born Tongan women**

If attention is focused on comparing the experiences of Tongan women migrants and the New Zealand born Tongan women at paid work in New Zealand, it is interesting to note that each group of women have different backgrounds that helped shape them into what they have become today. This is classified in the following quotations.

The people who are born here, they know more of the systems than those who are migrating down here. They get what they want, regardless whether they go to school or not. I think we're tougher women because we live in a tough environment in Tonga, and we can survive any difficult situation here (Mele).

I think with the Tongans who came from Tonga, they have a better qualification to start off with in comparison to the New Zealand born Tongan women. We value so much our language. Of course you have your academic qualification, your skills that you learned from work, but at the end of the day, there is also the cultural knowledge and expertise as a Tongan. I've seen young Tongan women who were very successful in terms of paid work because of their qualification but not necessary because of their cultural skills, as well as their ability to write and understand the New Zealand context, because I think to work successfully in New Zealand, you need to have your own skills for your particular employment (Soana).

Most of the New Zealand born, have everything around them. They were brought up around those things, families were always supporting them but us who come from the islands, you are targeting to get some money for your family. Whole lot of relatives is out there and a community that you have to help out with, it's not just yourself. The people brought up here, are just basically for themselves, but with us, we have a whole lot of responsibilities (Silvia)

Apparently, all the women migrants perceive the New Zealand born Tongan women to have more privileges in New Zealand than themselves and implied that they did not conform to their parents' culture.

### **Returnees' experiences: comparative analysis**

The migrants' return is "often accompanied by considerable ambivalence" (King, 2000 19). On the one hand, they are going back home to meet their old friends and relatives they missed while away in New Zealand. Yet, they also begin to realize that people at home view them differently. This was by far the most common response of the returnees when they were asked to comment on their experiences at paid work in Tonga. One woman stated that,

When I first came, the first two years were difficult, because they're bit hesitant to allow Tongans from overseas to come in and *hange 'oku fiepoto* [trying to be smart and thinking you are the only one who knows best] but I was able to overcome those obstacles. There's a lot of barriers. At first, I kicked a lot of it in, but it really affected the way I work so eventually, I wrote a letter to the board and asked that they take into consideration the barriers that I was facing at work (Tina).

It was also obvious from the responses given by the returning women migrants in Tonga, when they were asked to compare their work experiences in New Zealand with those in Tonga, that the majority of them commented on the gap between the salary scales, yet, some still thought Tongan pay was enough. This quote best explains this.

It's a huge difference when you really compare what you got in New Zealand with what you get here, because sometimes I go without pay (Maile).

Interestingly, all the returnees complained about working in Tonga in one way or another. The dissatisfaction with the working atmosphere was amongst the most noticeable responses provided by the returnees when they compared working in Tonga with New Zealand. The essence of this statement is captured in the following quotes:

I think one of the things that I've learned from working in New Zealand rather than here in Tonga was compromise and communication. It's much more open because you come on a one-on-one basis person at the workplace, whereas here in Tonga, it is still a bit hard to communicate on a one on one basis. I don't know whether it's a cultural thing or may be it's a personal thing. I've worked in a couple of places here in Tonga and I've encountered the same thing in every workplace (Malia)

It has been a big challenge personally as a woman and especially one who grew up overseas, coming back to Tonga, trying to get the job done quickly as I thought, it slows me down a bit...but at the end of the day, it depends on how you handle it. For me personally, being a Tongan and as well being overseas for so long, I think I don't have a problem with... because I can read the European ways and as well as Tongan ways (Silia).

Having documented the findings from both the in-depth interviews and the population census, the next chapter discusses the relationships between the theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter Three and these findings.



## **Chapter Six: Discussion**

This chapter examines the findings from the previous chapter using the theoretical perspectives outlined in Chapter Three. There are four main components to this chapter; the first section addresses the theories of migration relative to the research findings and the second section analyses the findings in the context of gender theories. The third section repeats the tasks in section one and two but this time, around ethnicity and the fourth section is on identity.

### **Theories and Research Data: the reality**

#### **Different approaches to migration**

As previously discussed in Chapter Three, the traditional approaches to migration were influenced by the Neo-classical theorists portraying the capitalist economic system as being based on free markets, where the prices are “determined by supply and demand rather than controlled by a government” (Soanes, Spooner and Hawker, 2001 357). Therefore, the decision to migrate was based on the individual’s intention to maximize his or her personal gains. This implies that the market structure ensures that the country that offers better wages attracts migrant workers from countries with lower wages (Castles and Miller, 1993).

When comparing this to the responses provided by women who participated in the study, their migration to New Zealand in the first place, was more the result of social rather than economic incentives. This includes dissatisfaction with the quality of education and healthcare services provided in Tonga. Nevertheless, lower wage levels were also amongst the disincentives for some families to remain in Tonga.

Some of the women were not only motivated by the Tongan government offering them scholarships to study in New Zealand, and others migrated at their own expense, in order to gain returns on their human capital, acquired in the education systems in New Zealand. Buried in the capitalist system, this new education system

trains people to become members of the new middle-classes (Wallerstein, 1991b). Those women who were on scholarship, returned home once their education was completed and some re-emigrated later and ended up contributing their skills to the New Zealand workforce.

New Zealand was perceived by these women as a country that would give them the opportunity to achieve what they could not attain back in Tonga. Some initially travelled to New Zealand to visit relatives and ended up staying there. Better wages were important but this was not the foremost incentive for migrating to New Zealand among these women participants. This is clearly exhibited in Tongan-born women's responses as they disclosed that their first arrivals in New Zealand were as 'dependents': they sought work later.

Castles (2004 855) posited that what is crucial in economic theory often "did not shape migration". That is, migration was seen as not only as being influenced by the market, but also the governments of both the origin and destination countries. As an international market for labour has been created through the process of chain migration, it is difficult to manage or regulate it as word begins to spread from one family and one village to another through kinship networks. People were inspired by the possibilities of gaining better wages. Accordingly, when international migration sped up, the states are required to react by developing new policies to manage the new entries in the host country (Hollifield, 2004).

Some of the participants mentioned that their first migration to New Zealand was under the visa-waiver provisions set in August, 1986. Under this policy, the visa requirements for short term visitors were relaxed, and amongst the groups who took advantages of this policy were the young and educated. During this time, it was simply the plane ticket that migrants had to pay for and they did not have to apply for any visitor's visa in order to enter New Zealand. As Melenaite reveals,

I first came here in 1987 when entry to New Zealand did not require any visa. I initially came as a visitor for only three months but extended it later to a year, and eventually stayed on. Finding jobs at the time was very difficult. However, when I finally got my job at the vineyard, I started bringing my husband's relatives from Tonga.

It was not only this policy that the New Zealand government implemented at the time, but they also introduced the Reunification policy in 1986 to unify families who had been split as a result of migration to New Zealand (Brake, 1992).

There were more significant changes of immigration policy in New Zealand with the introduction of the General Skills Category (GSC) by the New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS) in 1995 (Trlin and Watts, 2004). A few of the participants gained their residencies through this policy where they had to acquire certain points in order to be qualified as skilled migrants. This of course, depended on a number of categories like the level of qualification attained, fluency in English and the number of years they have worked for.

Also notable, is an increasing awareness that migration needs to be understood not only in terms of economic causation, but also as a social process, in relation to, for example, changing family and gender relations (Johnson et al., 2000). While much migrant labour involves the temporary movement of individuals, more mature streams may lead to permanent settlement of migrants and their families, not least through the process of chain migration. Macpherson (2004) adds that these migratory movements generally arise from the existence of prior links between sending and receiving countries, with the family and community being crucial in migration networks. The family linkages often provide both the financial and the cultural capital which make migration possible (Castles, 2004).

Most of the participants concluded that their migration to New Zealand was socially and economically supported by family and relatives who were there before them. This includes looking after and seeking jobs for them. All these women said they still retain linkages with their families in Tonga, and those who have been staying longer

in New Zealand visit their families and relatives in Tonga periodically and remit them significant amounts of cash and goods.

One other form of transnational movement of Tongans that is organized by adults that directly involves “children and adolescents is the practice of fostering” (Lee, 2004 141). This is the sending back of adolescents to Tonga, with their parents’ hopes that they will learn the *anga fakatonga* (the Tongan way) and the Tongan language. This is an important way of reassuring that the children are familiar with their parents’ language and culture, and not lose them once they come back to New Zealand. As one participant points out, when children listen to their parents, whenever the parents tell them to study, they do it, and this also extends into the labour force. This is why she believes that the New Zealand born Tongans are leaving school to work at earlier age than the Tongan born, because parents can not discipline them enough.

In summary, through both the traditional sense of maintaining transnational links by the circulation of remittances, goods and people, or more recently through electronic means, people have proved that the distances and the remoteness of some homelands do not necessarily diminish the strength of transnational links (Lockwood, 2004).

### **Feminization of Migration: a tendency**

As Sharpe (2001) observed (see Chapter Three), migration of women was traditionally assumed to be for family reasons, to accompany male migrants in search of better economic returns. Castles (2004) on the other hand, argues that in economic migration, usually, it is not only young men who migrate but also women, searching for temporary work and often intending to return home once certain saving targets have been reached. On this basis, it is obvious that both men and women have the same impetus to migration, although often women see their plans as involving family support (Sharpe, 2001). Their decisions to emigrate were usually made within the context of the family and guided by the needs of the family economy, and were very much dependent on earlier migrants. Hence, once women settle down in their

country of destination, they were often seen as more reliable in sending remittances than their male counterparts.

However, when women find it difficult to make a living in the destination country, while at the same time struggling to contribute to their families in their home countries, some are encouraged to prolong their stay. This in turn encourages family reunion from their relatives in the origin country to join them. These relatives may come just to visit, study, or work in New Zealand on temporary permits, but later choose to stay on and change their residencies. As a result, many are often well placed to become permanent residents (Department of Labour, 2006).

Although some women started as independent labour migrants, Harzig (2001) notes many would certainly soon become part of the immigrant workforce. For whatever purpose their migration overseas was motivated, each woman performs vital functions and roles in their families in their destination country. Their family roles may include: mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, students and breadwinners or a combination of these.

As it appears from the participants' responses, the majority of these women were not economically dependent on their husbands, as has been traditionally observed in migration. These women were simply the providers for their families in Tonga and still perpetuate their roles after migration. However, the very few who were depending on their husbands or relatives when they first migrated here, sought work later to help out with the family and community obligations in Tonga and New Zealand.

For those who returned, a triumphant return home is possible. However, as Bedford (2000 118) points out, for many, "return can be an alienating experience". Thus, the migrants attempting to revive their ties with their homeland by visiting may find that they are "not unequivocally welcomed". They may be perceived as "bringing negative foreign influences, or accused of ostentatiously displaying their success" (Lee, 2004 143). This can be particularly devastating for young overseas-raised and

New Zealand born Tongan women (see Tina's comment on Chapter Five when she explained her experience when she returned to Tonga).

For those women who have children, and choose to return to Tonga, one of their concerns is for their children to learn and familiarize themselves with the Tongan language and culture. None returned to Tonga because they wanted to get better paid jobs as this was one of their incentives for migrating to New Zealand. Instead, they do so either because they wanted to have a 'work experience', or just make emotional connection with their families and relatives. Malia expresses this view:

One thing for sure, the people that come back, don't do it for the money. They come here for the love of the country or love of the family or whatever, but they end up working (Malia).

For whatever reasons they had for returning back to Tonga, the majority of these women were involved in paid work in Tonga. Despite the skills and qualifications they gained in New Zealand prior to their return some of them could not use them to their full potential as they were often ignored and turned down by their employers and colleagues, and this created difficulties for these women. Some women were nevertheless, brave enough to manage their own little businesses despite these barriers.

### **Gender relations**

Connell (1995b) observes hegemonic masculinity as the gender practice that guarantees the dominant position of men over women. Stichter (1988 335) regards this subordination of women to men's control in the household, to have "extended into the workplace". This reason is coupled with employers' prejudices about women's proper productive and reproductive roles. This is however, inconsistent with other studies showing that women are actually more productive than men at many types of jobs. The growth in service sectors of the workforce which serve to increase women's employment, also may benefit women. In other words, migrant females are likely to concentrate more on professional, clerical and services jobs than their male counterparts.

Confirmation of these ideas is revealed in the statistical data obtained from the New Zealand census 2006. However, it was quite noticeable that the two occupational areas of paid work in which women predominate -- clerical (eg. secretary typists and clerks) and services (including cooks, related housekeeping service workers and cleaners) -- are still outweighed by overseas-born Tongan women than their male counterparts. Thus, as Tivers (1985 29) concludes, paid employment is simply a “reinforcement of the domestic role (in the form of house-cleaning jobs or child minding)”. In comparison, a greater proportion of overseas-born Tongan men occupied the agricultural, trades work, plant and machinery work. In the case of personal income, Tongan-born men were proportionately more likely to be in the bands over \$25,000, while Tongan women migrants are clustering at lower paid jobs with personal income ranging from \$0-\$25,000. The income distribution and occupation status reflect the traditional roles of men in the public space as the breadwinners and the women in their private spaces – at home performing household tasks and rearing children.

Hypothetically, women have long dominated “certain forms of non-standard work” (Spoonley and Davidson, 2004 35). This is defined by Perera (2004 254) as “any work that is not full-time, not permanent or not waged or salaried”. Because of the lack of childcare facilities, together with the emphasis placed on domestic responsibility, most mothers work only part-time and therefore, are not able to obtain jobs with a high status and salary.

The Statistics New Zealand 2006, reveal that 32 percent of Tongan-born women were employed full-time, compared to the New Zealand born Tongan women with 28 percent. However there was not enough evidence on how this is related to these women’s household structures. The insights from the women interviewed on this matter vary from one to the other, but nevertheless reveal their labour force status as being highly determined by the structures of their households. Mele is a working mother of two children and a wife to a husband who is not working for cash. As she commented,

I never clean the house, and that has been done by my husband who is home all the time. Sometimes he did seasonal jobs to earn some money but that is basically his work and so I only concentrate on my work and my study and he understands that. My husband does everything for us.

This coincides with Levitt and Schiller's (2004 1015) proposition that, when immigrant women enter the workforce, men often begin to "share the responsibility of childrearing and housekeeping".

On the other hand, Helen, a divorced wife who is living alone with her young daughter, could not take full-time jobs as the working hours clash with dropping and picking up her daughter from school. She is looking out for a job that she can take that does not clash with her role and responsibilities in her household. Therefore, part-time jobs were the very type of employment that best suit her schedule, which supports Tivers' (1985 29) point that, women only choose jobs with "convenient hours or locations and jobs which they can integrate easily with domestic work and childcare".

### **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity is essentially an identity that reflects the cultural experiences and feelings of a particular group. As Spoonley explains,

for an ethnic group to exist, there needs to be cultural practices or beliefs that define it as different from other groups in society. Who is included in that group is defined by the membership of that group according to certain agreed criteria. It is not like 'race' where membership of a particular race is specified by others or dominant groups... In the case of an ethnic group, there needs to be some collective consciousness of difference and of being related to others who share those differences. For most, this difference is culturally defined and in ways that are not always obvious to an outsider. Indeed, some ethnic groups are invisible to the wider society and it is only within the group that are feeling of ethnicity prevails (Spoonley, 1993 39).

Castles and Davidson (2000) point out that not only the members of a particular group can define ethnicity, but also the dominant group's use of its power to impose social definitions on minor groups.



Anae's (2001 115) study of New Zealand born Samoans observed that, only the island-born experience of growing up in the homeland is perceived as the "true island" culture. Likewise, Soana, a Tongan woman migrant who participated in my interviews, agreed that those born in Tonga have different experiences from those born here in New Zealand. She assumes that some of them are accustomed to the Tongan culture, but not to the extent of those who were born in Tonga. Here, she refers to the 'true' Tongan as someone who understands his or her own culture well. This even extends towards the workplace. As she stated

I'm very strong in my culture. Being bilingual is a strength to go to work. New Zealand is a multi-ethnic society but it's trying to cope with the diversity of culture. So, if you don't know your culture, how can you be strong and be able to articulate the values that Tongans have? I see my Tongan as a source of strength. When we were in Tonga, we valued the western way of thinking and when we are here in New Zealand, it's the other way around. I think we come to realize that we value so much our language. Of course you have your academic qualification, your skills that you learned from work, but at the end of the day, there is also the cultural knowledge and expertise as a Tongan. I've seen young Tongan women who were very successful in terms of paid work because of their qualifications but not because of their cultural skills.

The higher proportion of Tongan-born women who were employed full-time reflects their financial obligations to their families and communities in Tonga. The New Zealand born Tongan women on the other hand, were more likely to be employed part-time than their Tongan women counterpart (19 percent and 10 percent respectively). This indicates the presence of their related kin in New Zealand, supporting them in looking after their children and doing household tasks so they can go to work. It is also interesting to note that there was a greater proportion of New Zealand born women in legislation and administration, professional, technical and associated professions, and clerical occupation status, compared to those born in Tonga. These were the outcomes of greater proportions of women with higher qualifications amongst the New Zealand born, coupled with their familiarity with the social and economic systems in New Zealand, compared to those born in Tonga.

Immigrants often encounter difficulties when settling in a new country and seeking suitable employment. Such difficulties include the English language, processes of social and cultural adjustment, non-recognition of overseas qualifications and discrimination which can all affect the employment opportunities of new immigrants. They tend to cluster in similar sectors of the labour market with similar incomes and similar prospects. Many newly arrived settlers lack the social capital necessary and they end up taking poorly paid jobs. However, as these immigrants stay longer, their unemployment rates may decline (Castles, 1996, Ongley, 2004).

This is evident in the occupation status of Tongan-born women in New Zealand. They are more likely to occupy the unskilled jobs within the service sectors with poor working conditions. These are very poorly paid jobs and women engaging in them, usually have low qualifications, but the working hours are very flexible (see Figure 7 in Chapter Five). When these women encounter financial complications, they tend to form ethnic bonds and associations with their own kin, village and church-based groups for insurance against their uncertain prospects (Castles and Miller, 1993, Lee, 2003, Macpherson, 2004). This was evident in the women's responses that nearly all of them participate in community activities.

It is also evident from the responses given by some of the women in the interviews, that being involved with Tongan communities not only here in New Zealand but Tonga as well, gives them security against losing their culture and increases their bond with their families and communities. Whether it be through remittances, contributing to fundraisings or sending children back to Tonga to learn the *anga fakatonga* (Tongan way), they are resisting the mainstream culture. In this way they are not fully assimilating themselves in the dominant culture. The type of activities these women may be involved in their communities and which reinforce their culture, to name a few, vary from: tutoring, preaching, being part of a church choir, contributing in local or fundraising activities for Tonga to remitting money/goods.

The role of nation states regulating the situation of immigrants and minorities within their borders also influences the lives of ethnic minorities. Most approaches have fallen into two categories: assimilation and differential exclusion. A third approach – pluralism or multiculturalism – has become significant only quite recently. Castles and Davidson define ‘assimilation’ as a way of

encouraging immigrants to learn the national language and take on the social and cultural practices of the receiving community. The underlying belief was that the immigrants’ descendants would be indistinguishable from the rest of the population (Castles and Davidson, 2000 61).

Recalling the discussions in Chapter Five, language is clearly the main barrier that most Tongan women migrants encounter at their workplaces. This is particularly common among those with no qualifications. Some of them are encouraged by their employers to take English courses as part of the mainstream culture, in order to improve their understanding of what and how to do their work properly, which will eventually move them up on the economic ladder.

However, as many early migrants’ descendants were born in New Zealand, they are more confident and familiar with the society and have no need to put up to the assimilationist expectations of the dominant culture in the way that their parents did. They now have “greater amounts of social capital, large and more comprehensive social networks, higher personal incomes, and more secure jobs in stable and growing sectors of the labour market” (Macpherson, 2004 150).

Mele supports this statement when she explains that the people who are born in New Zealand, “know more of the systems than those who are migrating” from Tonga. Silia adds that these people have the privilege as they were brought up around those things, and their families were always around to support them. This support may vary from social to economic support. It is therefore, not surprising that more New Zealand born Tongan women are concentrated in higher skilled jobs compared to the women born in Tonga (see Figure 6).

In addition, as is clearly represented in the 2006 Census data on employment status of Tongan women in New Zealand, both the New Zealand and Tongan born women share one percent each who are self-employed, those born in New Zealand have more women at age 15+ compared to their Tongan counterpart (a total of 4,818 and 2,070 respectively). However, as the Tongan born women stay longer in New Zealand, they are more likely to establish their own businesses. Krishnan, Schoeffel and Warren (1994: 53) point out that being self-employed on one hand, provides the migrants with a sense of “personal responsibility, autonomy and possible opportunities for upward mobility [and on the other], self employment is an option imposed on them by lack of positions in the paid labour market or lack of skills”.

Soana commented on how she feels that “one thing about being self-employed, is that you have the flexibility of being able to get up and go rather than having to ask for leave and trying to justify what you do to be away from work”. In addition, since she has been studying and working in New Zealand since early 1982, she knows the system well.

Another important issue that has been raised in this study is changing economic conditions. When the New Zealand born Tongan women have become upwardly socially and economically mobile (Macpherson, 2004), the practice of maintaining the cluster of relationships changes because they are no longer dependent on kin as the primary source of insurance against hard times. Thus, where these networks are maintained, it is often for personal and social rather than economic reasons. Tina said that it was only her parents that sent money back to Tonga, since she was little. Conversely, Silia explains that for those coming from the islands, the practice is different.

We are targeting to get some money for our families. Whole lot of relatives are out there and a community that you have to help out, it's not just yourself. The people brought up here, are just basically for themselves, but with us, we have a whole lot of responsibilities.

### **Identity crisis**

As migrants settle in their new home, they tend to develop changes in their “personal identity”. At any point in their lives they can think of themselves as relating to a number of identities – in gender terms (concerning gender roles and gendered behaviour), in terms of a stage in a life-course, in terms of age and family status, in terms of economic identity (related to occupational identity), in terms of linguistic, and other cultural identities and in terms of ethnic identity. Therefore, migrants whether “individually, or in groups, are open to new influences” (White, 1995 2). For this reason, it is impossible to define a Tongan identity as “each individual has her or his own definition of that identity, shaped by her or his life experiences” (Lee, 2003 3).

As discussed earlier on, migration has changed many Tongan-born women in a number of ways. These include their roles and responsibilities not only in their households, but also at their workplaces, although some are still maintaining the same roles and responsibilities they had before migration. This is seen in some women being the breadwinners for their families in Tonga, and still carrying that same role here in New Zealand. Some who first came to New Zealand as single women, ended up marrying and later became mothers, except a few who are still single. Those with children are encountering the clashes in working hours with their roles in their households. Some first came as dependents of their own kin and sought work later. These jobs also vary from care-giving to university lecturers. Most of these women entered New Zealand as temporary visitors but become New Zealand residents afterward.

hooks (1989 ) also emphasizes that when oppressed people struggle to create their identities, they are resisting the power of the dominant group. Similarly, some reveal

how they struggle at their workplaces because of what they are perceived as by the mainstream culture. They struggled in trying to assimilate to this culture and some are eventually encouraged to resist by carrying their Tongan ways into their workplaces.

Lee (2003) also indicated that amongst the migrants in New Zealand, Tongan identity is important but not as important in their lives as other aspects of their identities, and sometimes it is just taken for granted rather than self-consciously asserted. When talking to Silia, she asserted how she uses respectful behaviour as part of her *anga-fakatonga* or Tongan ways at her workplace. She explains when there is disagreement or misunderstandings between her and anyone in her workplace, she does not speak up in front of everybody because she does not want to let that person down, but talks to him or her when there is no one around. Helen agrees that it is important to be respectful and she is, but when she is not nicely treated at work, she talks back to whoever that mistreats her.

These discussions highlight the relationship between the theoretical approaches discussed in Chapter Three and the effects of migration on Tongan women's identities, ethnicity and gender relations. The following chapter concludes this study.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

The employment experiences of Tongan women migrants have received little attention in the literature. Therefore, this study documented the dynamics of their social and economic experiences at paid work in New Zealand. The study was guided by the theories of population geography, feminist geography and postcolonialism. The inter-relationships of these theories contributed to explain the influence of migration on these women's gender, and ethnic-identities in New Zealand.

Mahler and Pessar (2006) stated that migration studies are best accomplished by employing multiple research methods. The data from both the New Zealand 2006 population census and responses from the in-depth interviews have helped to shed light on the research questions. By using feminist methodologies I was able to gain insights into these women's experiences through their own interpretations. This was important as the information collected by the five yearly censuses is highly biased towards paid productive work, and does not collect information on unpaid reproductive work which predominantly carried out by women (Larner, 1989). The following summary is provided in order to answer the research questions addressed in this study. This study provides a base for future research and therefore, some recommendations on these areas follow after the summary.

### **What are the work experiences of Tongan women migrants in New Zealand?**

The findings highlight some key elements on the positions of Tongan women migrants in the New Zealand workforce, in comparison to their male counterparts and the New Zealand born Tongan women. The experiences of women migrants who participated in the interviews reflect the influence of migration on their gender relations, ethnicity and identity.

**What kind of paid work do these women have or have had?**

With regard to the kind of paid work Tongan women migrants have or have had in New Zealand, the New Zealand 2006 population census data reveal that a higher percentage of them were engaged in the professional and services jobs than their male counterparts, who are mostly concentrated in lower skilled jobs like trade work and, plant and machinery jobs. The greater proportion of Tongan born men than women who are participating in the labour force reflects the traditional role of men as breadwinners of their households while women are often responsible for domestic duties. When compared with the New Zealand born Tongan women, the Tongan-born women are more likely to be represented in the 'lower skilled' category. Their lack of familiarity with the socio-economic systems in New Zealand was the most common reason given for this situation. Another factor that affected their ability to participate in the labour force was the presence of their extended kin to assist them in their house-based activities and help look after their children when they went to work. This was particularly evident amongst those with young children. Their financial commitments to their family and relatives back in Tonga are also reflected on their labour force participation rates with higher percentages of them employed full-time compared to the New Zealand born Tongan women.

**What kind of incomes do these women have or have had?**

The New Zealand 2006 population census indicates that overseas-born Tongan women were highly represented in income bands under \$25,000 compared to their male counterparts.

New Zealand Tongan born women were more likely to participate in the workforce at a younger age than Tongan born women. When considering the level of qualification attainment on the employment or occupation status of Tongan women in New Zealand, a greater percentage of overseas born Tongan women migrants attained no educational qualifications compared to the New Zealand born. The higher percentage of them are represented in lower skilled occupations.



### **What are their age characteristics in the workforce?**

The New Zealand census data also reveals that the labour force participation rates of overseas-born Tongan women are highly represented in ages 30 and above, particularly in the 35-39 age group. A very small proportion of these women is represented in the 15-19 age group compared to the New Zealand born women. All the women in the interviews were over the age of 30 with the majority between the age of 30 and 34. This result may reflect the age at which Tongan women migrate to New Zealand and the tendency of women to migrate at a mature age.

### **What is the employment history of Tongan women migrants in New Zealand?**

The work history of Tongan women migrants in New Zealand highlights the type of jobs they have or had, how long they have been in those jobs and the likely reasons they left their previous jobs or are remaining in their current jobs.

### **What jobs have they had?**

The work history data of the women migrants interviewed in New Zealand shows that they have a high level of job stability but that a number had changed their working hours from either working part-time to full-time or vice versa.

### **How long have they been in their current/last job and why?**

The average length of employment without a break in their current jobs is four and a half years with only two years in their previous jobs. Of the seven interviewees in New Zealand, three are still taking the same job they took since they first migrated to New Zealand. This reflects the flexibility of their working environment in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities at home and their workplaces. A number of factors accounted for those who left their previous jobs including the distance of the workplace from their homes and, the presence of children and extended kin in New Zealand.

## **How does migration and paid work in New Zealand affect the ways Tongan women are identified?**

It is evident that as a minority group in New Zealand, Tongan women have encountered different experiences particularly at paid work. Among other barriers they encountered at paid work, racial discrimination was commonly cited by the participants. Apart from the problems, it is important to note that the social networks in New Zealand always provide social and economic security to women. Relatives are responsible for seeking work and/or support women until they are able to support themselves.

Those who want to retain their involvement with Tongans and still maintain their Tongan identity in New Zealand desire changes to reduce some of the difficulties they experience. To a number of these women, being a Tongan woman migrant means standing up for who they are and trying to survive in a country outside their own. On this basis, some revalue and appreciate their culture more. Others learn how to cope with the new society by accepting the norm and trying their best to adapt.

Most of the interviewees have played different roles after migration. A few are still performing the same roles they played in Tonga before migrating to New Zealand. With regard to their responses, all of them still support their families and communities in Tonga one way or another, whether it be through sending remittances or goods, or sometimes both. This reflects on their first intentions to migrate in the first place, which was to help their families who are left behind in the islands. They still identify themselves as more connected with their families in Tonga than to New Zealand.

### **Potential research area**


This study has documented the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand, although the extent of research is still small. Understanding this

situation would have been enhanced by further research looking at how the length of stay in New Zealand affects Tongan women migrants' experiences at paid work.

Permanent and temporary migrants may also exhibit different patterns of occupational attainment at their places of destinations (Liang and Chen, 2003). In the case of Tongan women migrants in New Zealand, further research is recommended including a deeper investigation of the issue of entitlements to resources in New Zealand which may contribute to their experiences at paid work.

## Appendices

## Appendix I

<b>Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning</b> Te Wahanga Aro Whenua School of Arts & Social Sciences Te Kura Kete Aronui The University of Waikato	<a href="http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography/">www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography/</a>	 THE UNIVERSITY OF <b>WAIKATO</b> <i>Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato</i>
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### THE INFORMATION SHEET FOR TONGAN WOMEN MIGRANTS IN NEW ZEALAND

Master's Thesis Research

Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning

University of Waikato

Private Bag 3105, Hamilton

#### **“Experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand”**

Researcher: Sinama Fa'anunu  
Contact Phone: (07) 210753140 (NZ) or (00676) 21965 (Tonga)  
Supervisor: Dr. John Campbell (07) 838 4466 extension: 8089

Thank you for considering the prospect of participating in this project. This research is for my Master of Social Science Degree at the University of Waikato.

#### **What does it mean to be a participant in this research?**

You are asked to participate in one semi-structured interview. This interview will be a discussion between you and me and will last in approximately an hour, at a venue and time that will suit both of us.

#### **What are your rights as a participant in this interview?**

All the materials from the interview will be kept in confidence and only I and my supervisor will have access to the tapes and transcriptions. Your anonymity will be guaranteed at each stage of the research through the use of a pseudonym in the place of your name and by disguising any identifiable features concerning your individual circumstances. You are free to

refuse to answer any question or to withdraw from the project up to three weeks after the interview. You can also ask further questions about the research during your participation. The transcripts and tapes will be destroyed 2 years after the completion of the thesis.

### **What will we talk about?**

A copy of the questions I will be asking you are provided so you can think about them beforehand. The interview will be divided into three themes, in order to find out information about you before you first migrated to New Zealand, your arrival and your working experiences in New Zealand. The interview will be tape recorded and later transcribed by me.

This research is interested in addressing the following questions:

### **Overall question:**

What are the social and economic dynamics of the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand?

1. What are the work experiences of Tongan women migrants in New Zealand?
  - What kind of paid work do these women have or had?
  - What kind of incomes do these women have or had?
  - What are their age characteristics in the work force?
  
2. What is the employment history of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand?
  - What jobs have they had?
  - How long have they been in their current/last jobs and why?
  
3. How does migration and paid work in New Zealand influence the ways in which Tongan women are identified?

### **What will the information be used for?**


The data collected from the interview will be analyzed and the results will be used in my Master of Social Science thesis. Upon completion of my thesis, a copy will be provided in the University of Waikato Library for access.

**If you want to be involved?**

If you still agree to be involved in the interview, you can sign the consent form to show that you are now agreeing to participate. However, if you have changed your mind and decided not to be involved, please contact me at (07) 210753140 (in New Zealand). For further clarification regarding any part of this research, you may contact my supervisor, Dr. John Campbell on +647 838 4466, extension 8089. You can also contact Charlotte Church of the FASS Human Research Ethics Committee at [charl@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:charl@waikato.ac.nz) if you have any queries, complaints, comments or concerns about the research.

Best regards,

Sinama Fa'anunu.

<p><b>Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning</b>  Te Wahanga Aro Whenua  School of Arts &amp; Social Sciences  Te Kura Kete Aronui  The University of Waikato</p>	<p><a href="http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography/">www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography/</a></p>	 <p>THE UNIVERSITY OF  <b>WAIKATO</b>  <i>Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato</i></p>
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## **INFORMATION SHEET FOR TONGAN WOMEN RETURNEES IN TONGA**

Master's Thesis Research  
Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning  
University of Waikato  
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton

### **“Experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand”**

Researcher: Sinama Fa'anunu  
Contact Phone: (07) 210753140 (NZ) or (00676) 21965 (Tonga)  
Supervisor: Dr. John Campbell (07) 838 4466 extension: 8089

Thank you for considering the prospect of participating in this project. This research is for my Master of Social Science Degree at the University of Waikato.

#### **What does it mean to be a participant in this research?**

You are asked to participate in one semi-structured interview. This interview will be a discussion between you and me and will last in approximately an hour, at a venue and time that will suit both of us.

#### **What are your rights as a participant in this interview?**

All the materials from the interview will be kept in confidence and only I and my supervisor will have access to the tapes and transcriptions. Your anonymity will be guaranteed at each stage of the research through the use of a pseudonym in the place of your name and by disguising any identifiable features concerning your individual circumstances. You are free to refuse to answer any question or to withdraw from the project up to three weeks after the interview. You can also ask further questions about the research during your participation. The transcripts and tapes will be destroyed 2 years after completion of the thesis.



### **What will we talk about?**

A copy of the questions I will be asking you are provided so you can think about them beforehand. The interview will be divided into three themes, in order to find out information about you before your last return to Tonga, your experiences upon arrival in Tonga and your work experiences both in Tonga and New Zealand. The interview will be tape recorded and later transcribed by me.

This research is interested in addressing the following questions:

#### **Overall question:**

What are the social and economic dynamics of the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand?

1. What are the work experiences of Tongan women migrants in New Zealand?
  - What kind of paid work do these women have or had?
  - What kind of incomes do these women have or had?
  - What are their age characteristics in the work force?
  
4. What is the employment history of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand?
  - What jobs have they had?
  - How long have they been in their current/last jobs and why?
  
3. How does migration and paid work in New Zealand influence the ways in which Tongan women are identified?

#### **What will the information be used for?**

The data collected from the interview will be analyzed and the results will be used in my Master of Social Science thesis. Upon completion of my thesis, a copy will be provided in the University of Waikato Library for access.

#### **If you want to be involved?**

If you still agree to be involved in the interview, you can sign the consent form to show that you are now agreeing to participate. However, if you have changed your mind and decided not to be involved, please contact me at (00 676) 21965 in Tonga. For further clarification


regarding any part of this research, you may contact my supervisor, Dr. John Campbell on +647 838 4466, extension 8089. You can also contact Charlotte Church of the FASS Human Research Ethics Committee at [charl@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:charl@waikato.ac.nz) if you have any queries, complaints, comments or concerns about the research.

Best regards,

Sinama Fa'anunu

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## Appendix II

<b>Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning</b> Te Wahanga Aro Whenua School of Arts & Social Sciences Te Kura Kete Aronui The University of Waikato	<a href="http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography/">www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography/</a>	 THE UNIVERSITY OF <b>WAIKATO</b> <i>Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato</i>
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University of Waikato  
Masters Thesis Research  
Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning  
Private Bag 3105, Hamilton

### **“Experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand”**

Sinama Fa’anunu (Ph: 07 210753140)

Supervisor: Associate Professor John Campbell (Ph: 07 838 4466 extension 8089)

### **CONSENT FORM**

1. I am undertaking a research project for my Master of Social Science thesis. The aim of the project is to explore the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand.
2. I would like to interview you about the social and economic dynamics of your experiences at paid work in New Zealand.
3. The interview will take approximately an hour.
4. When I am not using them for writing my research report, the tape recording and transcript will be stored in a locked cupboard in my University office. They will be destroyed 2 years after the completion of my thesis.
5. If material from the report is published in an academic article, care will be taken to ensure that your anonymity will be preserved.

6. If you agree to take part in this interview, you have the following rights:

- To refuse to answer any particular question, and to terminate the interview. You may withdraw from the research up to 3 weeks after the interview. If you choose to withdraw, your tape-recorded material will not be used in any publications.
- To ask any further questions about the interview or research project that occurs to you, either during the interview or at any other time.
- To provide information on the understanding that is confidential to the interviewer and the supervisor.
- To remain anonymous - anything that might identify you will not be included in the research report.
- To discuss further the conditions of your consent at any stage.
- To make any complaints you have about the interview or the research project, you can contact my supervisor or contact the FASS Research Ethics Committee.

“I consent to be interviewed for this research on the above conditions”

Signed: *Interviewee* \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

“I agree to abide by the above conditions”

Signed: *Interviewer* \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix III

<b>Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning</b> Te Wahanga Aro Whenua School of Arts & Social Sciences Te Kura Kete Aronui The University of Waikato	<a href="http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography/">www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/geography/</a>	 <p>THE UNIVERSITY OF <b>WAIKATO</b> <i>Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato</i></p>
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### “The experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand”

#### The guiding questions fall into three different themes :

Identified name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### *A. Situations before migrating to New Zealand:*

1. What were your roles in your family and communities in Tonga?
2. What type of paid work did you have in Tonga?
3. What type of qualification did you gain before you first migrated to New Zealand?
4. What kind of work skills did you have?

#### *B. Experiences upon arrival in New Zealand:*

1. When did you first arrive in New Zealand?
  - Where and who did you stay with?
  - Who accompanied you to New Zealand?
  - Who financially supported your coming and staying in New Zealand?
  - What was your initial reason for migrating to New Zealand? Were there other reasons? (*this includes your intention for e.g. to work or as a dependent first and later joint the work force*)
  - What were your first impressions of New Zealand before you came?
  - How long did you intend to stay in New Zealand for?
  - Do you have any intention of going back to Tonga? If NO, why not? If YES, explain the reasons.
2. How many people currently live in your household? How are they related to you?
3. What roles do you take on within your household?
  - What are your household responsibilities?
4. What roles do you take on within your communities? (*for examples; your church, town, paid work setting etc*).

5. Do you still support your family and communities in Tonga? If NO, why not? If YES, how, and in what ways?
  - What about your family and communities in New Zealand? If NO, why not? If YES, how, and in what ways?
6. Has your role in your household and communities changed since you first arrived in New Zealand? If NO, explain why not. If YES, how, and in what ways have they changed? How have these changes influenced your economic contributions to your family and communities in Tonga and in New Zealand?

**C. Work experiences in New Zealand:**

1. What job(s) have you had and how long were you in them?
  - How did you get those jobs?
  - Why did you leave those job(s)?
2. If you're currently not in paid work, what are the reasons for this?
  - What sort of work are you looking for?
3. Have you ever had any other job overseas since your first arrival in New Zealand? If NO, why not? If YES, where, what and why?
4. What job(s) are you currently working in?
  - Who is your employer?
  - What was your initial reason(s) for choosing this job(s)?
  - Are you taking more than one job? If NO, why not? If YES, what are your reasons for this?
  - Do you like this/these job(s)? If NO, why not? If YES, in what ways? (*this includes working hours etc*)
  - Have you ever experienced any *difficulties* at your workplace regarding your gender, ethnicity and identity? (*this includes your roles, skills, qualifications etc*) If NO, how come? If YES, in what ways? (*How do these create barriers on Tongan women migrants from becoming successful at paid work?*) How do you deal with these situations?
  - Do you ever feel your skills are of good use in this job? If NO, why not? If YES, in what ways?
  - Have you developed more skills doing this job?
5. What kind of incomes do you have or have had? (*before tax*)
6. What are the advantages of being a Tongan woman migrant at your paid work setting?
7. Do you have any difficulties in balancing paid work and your roles and responsibilities in your household and community? If NO, please explain why. If YES, in what ways? How have you or would you deal with these difficulties?
8. How did your first impressions of New Zealand (before you came) compare with reality?

9. Do you think there are discrepancies between the experiences of Tongan women migrants and New Zealand-born Tongans at paid work in New Zealand? If NO, why not? If YES, how, and in what ways?
10. Anything else you would like to share about the experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand?

**Probes : “*what do you mean...?*”**

“Tell me more about...”

“Can you give me an example of...?”

“How did you feel about...?”


**Checks : “When you say...do you mean...?”**

**Prompts : a nod a smile**

“Oh really?”

“Yes?” “And then...”

**Thank you for participating in this interview!**

<p><b>Department of Geography, Tourism and Environmental Planning</b>  Te Wahanga Aro Whenua  School of Arts &amp; Social Sciences  Te Kura Kete Aronui  The University of Waikato</p>	<p>www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects  /geography/</p>	
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**“The experiences of Tongan women migrants at paid work in New Zealand”**

**The guiding questions fall into three different themes :**

Identified name: \_\_\_\_\_

***A. Situation in New Zealand before returning to Tonga:***

1. When did you first arrive in New Zealand?
2. What were your initial reasons for migrating to New Zealand?
3. What were your roles and responsibilities in your household and communities in New Zealand?
4. What kind of work or paid work did you do in New Zealand?
5. What type of qualifications and work skills did you develop in New Zealand?

***B. Experiences upon arrival in Tonga:***

1. When did you first return to Tonga?
2. When did you last return to Tonga?
  - How many times have you returned to Tonga?
  - Who accompanied you on your return(s)?
  - What were your initial reasons for returning to Tonga? Were there other reasons?
  - Where and who did you stay with?
3. How many people currently live in your household in Tonga?
  - How are you related to them?
4. What roles do you take on within your household in Tonga?
  - What are your household responsibilities?
5. What roles and responsibilities do you take on within your communities in Tonga? (*this includes your church, paid work setting etc*)
6. How comparative are your roles and responsibilities in your household and communities in Tonga with those in New Zealand ?
  - How have these differences/similarities influenced your economic contributions to your household and communities in Tonga?

***C. Work experiences in Tonga:***

1. What job(s) have you had since your first return to Tonga?
  - How long were you in it?
  - How did you get that job(s)?



- Why did you leave that job(s)?
2. If you are currently not in paid work, what are your reasons for this?
    - What sort of work are you looking for?
  3. What job(s) are you currently participating in?
    - What were your initial reasons for choosing this job(s)?
    - How did you get this job(s) ?
    - Do you have any other job? If NO, why not? If YES, what is it and why do you take other jobs?
    - How many hours do you work each day?
    - How long have you had this job(s)?
    - Do you ever feel your skills are of good use in this job(s)? If NO, why not? If YES, how and in what ways?
  4. Do you like your job(s)? If NO, why not? If YES, in what ways?
  5. How would you compare your income in Tonga with what you received at your paid work in New Zealand?
  6. Have you ever experienced any barriers at your workplace regarding your gender (a woman) and identity? (returnee, roles, skills and qualifications etc.) If NO, how come? If YES, in what ways?
    - How do you or would you deal with these situations?
  7. Do you have any difficulties in balancing paid work, and your roles and responsibilities in your household and communities in Tonga? If NO, explain the strategies that you use to successfully balance paid work, and your roles and responsibilities in your household and communities. If YES, please explain these difficulties.
  8. How would you compare your experiences at paid work in Tonga with in New Zealand?
  9. How did your thoughts of what Tonga would be like (upon your return) compare with reality?
  10. Have you ever considered going back to work in New Zealand?.
  11. Anything else you would like to share about the experiences of Tongan women returnees at paid work in Tonga?

**Probes : “*what do you mean...?*”**

“Tell me more about...”

“Can you give me an example of...?”

“How did you feel about...?”

**Checks : “*When you say...do you mean...?*”**

**Prompts : *a nod*      *a smile***

“Oh really?”

“Yes?” “And then...”

**Thank you for participating in this interview!**

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