

ASAO19 *Kava: A global phenomenon?* panel timetable

THURSDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2019, WHAREKAI, MARAE, UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND			
TIME	PRESENTER	TITLE	ABSTRACT
9.00am	Dr Apo Aporosa	<i>Kava: A global phenomenon?: Introduction to the panel</i>	Two decades ago Lebot, Merlin & Lindstrom (1992) predicted a time when kava would become a “world drug”. Since then, there has been a rapid growth of kava bars in the USA, venues that mimic small nightclubs and licenced cafes, which attract customers seeking to destress with an alternative to alcohol. Likewise, there have recently been pop-culture and online claims that kava is “officially trending”. However, such reports fail to include the growth of private kava venues in previously unimagined places like France, China, India and the UK, where diasporic Pacific communities embrace their traditional substance as part of cultural continuance, or as a means of engaging with their local (host) communities. This working session seeks contributions that address contemporary kava themes, ranging from its use in the Pacific today, to kava’s diverse manifestations in ever-changing contexts around the world.
9.15am	A/Prof. Matt Tomlinson Dept. of Social Anthropology University of Oslo, Norway	<i>Kava as a teaching tool</i>	This presentation is a reflection on the educational uses of kava sessions. I briefly discuss how young children learn kava-session protocol in Fiji, and discuss the work of scholars who have observed what general social lessons are received as indigenous Fijian kava sessions take place. I then describe my experiments with having students enact rituals modelled on kava sessions in university classrooms in the USA and Australia. Because kava is a narcotic and university administrators would frown on their consumption as a classroom exercise, I usually substitute juices. But I always have students carefully enact sessions according to the style practiced in Tavuki, Kadavu, Fiji, with appropriate chants, claps, and order of service. I reflect on the successes as well as the limitations of using kava as a teaching tool, and consider further ways in which knowledge of kava’s ritualized use may be an effective way for exploring wider topics in anthropology, Pacific Studies, linguistics, political science, and gender studies.

9.45am	Edmond S. Fehoko PhD Candidate, Faculty of Health and Environment Sciences, Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand	<i>Cultural practice in an educational space: Kava-drinking reinforces cultural identity and educational success in tertiary environments</i>	<i>Faikava</i> is a Tongan ceremonial practice that in recent times has been adapted and used as an informal and recreational activity, embedded within Church and other social activities in both Pacific homelands and Pacific diasporic communities. Predominantly a male cultural practice, the heart of <i>faikava</i> is social bonding and the fostering of camaraderie through establishing and re-affirming networks and relationships in the exchange of stories, knowledge and life-experiences, with these centred around the drinking of the Pacific culturally significant beverage, kava. This paper explores how the cultural practice of <i>faikava</i> can serve as a 'cultural classroom' within tertiary education spaces to aid academic achievement. <i>Faikava</i> as an epistemological site provides opportunities for Pacific students, particularly those born in diaspora, to (re)connect with, (re)affirm and maintain their cultural identity. As well as social bonding, such spaces generate critical discourse among students, which in turn, I will argue, result in greater retention, completion and academic success.
10.30am	MORNING TEA in Fale Pasifika		
10.55am	Daniel Hernandez PhD Candidate, Anthropology Department, University of Auckland, New Zealand	<i>Kava pedagogies: Critical thinking and conflict resolution</i>	This presentation draws from my doctoral research on urban Tongan kava gatherings. Kava is a millennial tradition amongst people of the Moana (Oceania) that is rapidly adapting to new realities. Kava roots are infused with water before drinking and used for a variety of purposes and functions (e.g., social, political, religious). Focusing on the most common and regular types of gatherings I explore the function of kava to produce and share community relevant knowledge through creating noa (balance/neutrality/liminality). I use ideas that come from both the Moana and from across Turtle Island/Abya Yala (America's) to explore the transmission of knowledge and negotiation of conflict in kava circles.
11.30am	A/Prof. J.D Baker Howard Hughes Project Manager, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Chaminade University of Honolulu, Hawaii	<i>Commodification and its subversion: Kava exchange and consumption in contemporary settings in Hawaii and the Mainland US</i>	In many ways, kava is a global phenomenon. As a consequence of this movement into new commercial and private venues, both manner and context of use continue to transform. However, kava has not become a commodity entirely stripped of its traditional social and cultural meanings and associated practices. While commodity exchange of kava is increasingly prevalent in the Pacific and elsewhere, this type of exchange is also subverted in many cases. On the one hand, I argue that the social meanings associated with kava are being transformed by its global movement and sale. Much of this is driven by the increased social distance between producer and consumer, and by commodity exchange marked

			<p>by reciprocal independence. One expression of this commodification is, to paraphrase bell hooks, “drinking the other” – the consumption of these “exotic” cultural materials and practices in commercial cafes or bars by a dominant culture, whose members are generally unfamiliar with those practices or the cultures from which they derive. On the other hand, in contemporary Hawaii and elsewhere, I argue that this impersonal exchange is being subverted in various ways, as kava is exchanged in ways marked by some degree of reciprocal dependence (i.e., similar to a gift). I argue that these subversions of commodity exchange are a continuation, but also in many cases a reconfiguration, of some of the social meanings associated with kava in societies in which its consumption originated. They also represent forms of resistance to neocolonialism and cultural commodification as people develop ways of navigating competing value systems and practices in contemporary social life. This talk seeks to explore these processes, drawing on field work in contemporary kava venues in Hawaii and the Mainland US, as well as on the well-established scholarship on exchange and of the appropriation of commodities for alternative social uses.</p>
12.00pm	<p>Dr Rachel E. Smith Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Anthropology, Stanford University, California, USA</p>	<p><i>Green Gold: The moral economy of Vanuatu kava markets</i></p>	<p>In this paper, I will outline a new research project on the moral economy of Vanuatu kava production, distribution and consumption. Now popularly known in Vanuatu as ‘green gold’, kava prices have soared in recent years, and kava contributes at least USD \$7.5m each year to Vanuatu’s economy. The majority exported to the USA, where kava bars have proliferated. In efforts to protect this valuable market, Vanuatu has introduced quality testing and standardization of its kava exports, but this process has proved controversial. I will draw on initial observations from a kava growing community in South Pentecost- where the most popular export variety, borogu, is from, to some kava bars in faraway USA where the kava is consumed.</p>
12.30pm	LUNCH (provide your own)		

1.55pm	<p>Zane Yoshida Director, South Pacific Elixirs Ltd, Fiji</p> <p>Dr. Andrew Kelly Executive Director BioPacific Partners Auckland, New Zealand</p>	<p><i>Anxiety, insomnia and pain management: The developing role of kava in addressing the opioid epidemic in Western pharmacology</i></p>	<p>Kava, through its active constituents called kavalactones, could provide a safe and natural alternative to pharmaceutical drugs prescribed for anxiety, pain and insomnia. Early indications also suggest that kava could assist in combating the ‘opioid epidemic’ in which thousands of Westerners have died following opioid over-use and dependence. Kava’s efficacy to the ‘opioid epidemic’ is believed to result from kava’s “anticraving” and non-addictive action (Steiner, 2001). Kava also demonstrates viability as an alternative to alcohol, assisting relaxation without marked euphoria, therefore countering many of the negative anti-social behaviours associate with fermented beverage use. These advantages have been well documented in Pacific communities and are assisting kava’s popularity in Western settings. A major inhibiting factor for kava as a Western medicinal commodity has been quality control and irregular supply due to limitations in village agricultural systems. This paper reports on a project from Fiji Kava, a newly listed company on the Australian stock exchange, in which high volumes of quality-assured kava extract will be used to support human clinical trials aimed at the development of therapeutic products targeting anxiety, insomnia and pain management.</p>
2.30pm	<p>Dr Apo Aporosa Research Fellow, Faculty of Health, Sport and Human Performance, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand</p>	<p><i>Kava, the Devil, and the Snake: Pentecostal Iconoclasm in Contemporary Fiji</i></p>	<p>In his book, <i>The Polynesian Iconoclasm</i>, Jeff Sissons (2014) explains that within a short period of time during the early 1800’s a number of island societies in eastern Polynesia desecrated or destroyed many of their temples and sacred icons as part of their process of rejecting traditional cosmologies and embracing Christianity. This included the renunciation of kava use and the destruction of kava related utensils such as <i>kumete</i> (kava bowls). Although some people within these societies recently have begun reengaging with kava and its related practices as part of cultural renaissance, scepticism remains. In Tonga, Samoa and Fiji (with Fiji having both Melanesian and Polynesian influences), iconoclasm was experienced with less intensity than elsewhere in Polynesia. For instance, although the early missionaries encouraged the destruction of weapons of warfare and objects linked to traditional worship, kava and its use was mostly ignored. Indeed, in the case of both Methodism and Roman Catholicism, kava was incorporated into Christian rituals. However, over the past thirty years, Pentecostal Christian groups have gained traction in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Their teachings call for the necessity to be ‘born</p>

			again', which often includes the rejection of traditional cultural conventions. For some, particularly in Fiji, the 'born again' message includes the renunciation of kava, a practice these Christian groups argue has its foundations in ancestral worship and 'the workings of the Devil'. After the preaching of anti-kava messages, Church services and rallies can conclude with fervent displays of kava utensil destruction. This presentation will consider the recent aspect of Pentecostalism, with its anti-kava ideology and associated destruction of kava-related implements, as a present day manifestation of a much older pattern of "Polynesian Iconoclasm".
3.00pm	Troy Wihongi Independent Study Hamilton, New Zealand	<i>The changing faces and practices of kava and kava users</i>	Kava has been integral to Oceanic Pacific live-ways for over a thousand years where it is linked to notions of mana (spiritual power). This presentation considers the changing use patterns of kava, particularly the 'Westernization' of kava practices by some indigenous users who live in diaspora; and the growing body of non-Pacific peoples who have taken up kava use, some who have adopted aspects of the traditional kava culture as part of that kava use. The presentation will initially focus on several non-Pacific kava user groups located in New Zealand, Asia and North America to provide a snapshot of their kava practices. This will be followed by commentary from several traditional kava users regarding their thoughts on that non-Pacific kava use. The presentation will conclude with observations on changes to kava use by traditional Pacific peoples living in diaspora, including the perceived status of kava's mana (spiritual agency) in those environments.
3.30pm	AFTERNOON TEA in Fale Pasifika		
3.55pm	Dr Dominik Schieder Department of Social Sciences, Siegen University, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany	<i>Fiji Islander kava practices and discourses in Japan and the United Kingdom</i>	Yaqona (kava) continues to feature prominently in the lives of many contemporary Fiji Islanders. While its ritual importance for indigenous Fijian culture, everyday use among Fiji Islanders of various ethnic descent and potential role as signifier of socio-cultural change has received attention from anthropologists working in Fiji (e.g. Abramson 2005; Tomlinson 2004; Toren 1994), there is a dearth of explorations of formal and informal kava practices and discourses in the Fiji diaspora. Based on fieldwork conducted in Japan and the United Kingdom between 2012 and 2016, this paper highlights different, often overlapping and at times contradicting aspects of kava use among transnational Fiji Islanders. Kava is integral to diasporic community life and consumed on

			<p>various occasions such as fundraising events and curry nights, Fiji Day celebrations or informal get-togethers. The later can take novel forms such as online circles, in which kava is enjoyed by geographically-dispersed Fijians mediated through Skype. Yet, while these examples suggest that kava remains an internally-valued and externally-celebrated feature of being Fiji Islander, kava transports more ambivalent connotations. For instance, interlocutors who preferred alcoholic beverages but nevertheless used kava irregularly, occasionally perceived its consumption as backward and emblematic of village life, i.e. non-negotiable with their modern ways of existence. Simultaneously, at the time of research there had been tendencies to commodify kava in Japan, for example as a main ingredient of a drink served at a Fiji-themed bar in the outskirts of Tokyo. Drawing on a number of illustrative examples, the aim of this paper is twofold: Firstly, to open the floor for a comparative discussion of kava consumption patterns and discourses which have been reported for Fiji and seem to be consolidated in the diaspora. Secondly, to reflect on the wider socio-cultural implications of these practices and discourses, i.e. what they reveal about transnational Fiji Islander sociality more generally.</p>
4.30pm	<p>Dr Martin Atkins School of Engineering, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand</p>	<p><i>Around the tanoa: Observations and perspectives from a “new” kava user</i></p>	<p>This presentation will discuss observations and provide perspectives from a “new” (i.e. non-Pacific) kava user. Experience from several years around the Tanoa, at many and varied settings will be drawn from to discuss some of the ways social <i>faikava</i> practices differ between various groups. The subtle differences in ritual, protocol, and talanoa will be examined. Important social benefits that have been observed will also be discussed. These include the promotion of social cohesion, cultural understanding, camaraderie, inclusion, and fellowship.</p>
5.00pm	<p>Todd M. Henry Masters student, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand</p>	<p><i>New Zealand’s contemporary kava culture in pictures</i></p>	<p>The use of kava is increasing in geographic locations found outside of the Pacific Islands where it has been used traditionally for many centuries. New Zealand is home to many Pacific Islanders who use kava on a regular basis, as well as a number of non-Pacific Islanders who have more recently discovered the benefits of kava. I will present a series of photographs that will provide visual insight into formal and informal kava clubs that exist among a variety of cultural groups as well as the production, consumption and distribution of kava in modern-day New Zealand. Through these visual representations I will explore the ways in which kava is currently being used, how Pacific Island kava traditions are being</p>

			maintained, and how kava culture may be changing within contemporary New Zealand society. I aim to utilise my photographs to provide viewers with an insider's perspective that will facilitate meaningful discussion around the current state of kava culture and usage in Aotearoa New Zealand.
5.30pm	<p>Lionel Taito-Matamua Design Tutor, School of Design, Victoria University of Wellington</p> <p>Professor Simon Fraser Architecture and Design Faculty, Victoria University of Wellington</p> <p>Jeongbin Ok Senior lecturer, School of Design, Victoria University of Wellington</p> <p>Mark Bagley 3D Printing Assistant, School of Design, Victoria University of Wellington</p> <p>Bernard Guy Lecturer, School of Design Victoria University of Wellington</p>	<p><i>Reinterpreting Artefacts: digital craft and non-traditional materials in the Pacific</i></p>	<p>This research represents the latest iteration of experiments that explore the serious issue of plastic waste in the Pacific. Using Samoa as a case study, we propose that distributed recycling combined with 3D printing offers an opportunity to repurpose and add new value to this difficult waste stream and engage diverse local communities in Samoa.</p> <p>Previous research in Samoa established the scope of the issue through interviews with stakeholders in government, waste management businesses, the arts and crafts community and education. Based on the information obtained from the fieldwork, potential product areas and designs were explored through material and 3D printing experiments using open-source equipment.</p> <p>The experiments informed the design of speculative scenarios for workable, economically viable, socially empowering and sustainable systems for repurposing and upcycling plastic waste; printed out in the form of useful and culturally meaningful 3D printed objects, artefacts and products.</p> <p>Building upon the outcomes and with a view towards implementation, this project focuses on new interpretations of artefacts associated with traditional ceremonial occasions and customs; in particular, the Pacific wide customs and traditions around kava ('Ava) ceremonies. The research takes a design approach to reinterpreting customary kava bowls (Tanoa fia'ava) in the form of 3D printed replicas made from non-traditional materials such as recycled plastics and wood filled PLA (polylactide) bio-polymer, thereby challenging what is socially and culturally acceptable for kava bowls. It raises many interesting questions such as; what role do materials and their heritage play in the perceived value of the artefact; to what degree can digital craft complement and extend traditional craft and design; does emerging technology have a place in traditional practices and can traditional artefacts be appropriated for other purposes?</p>
6.00pm	KAVA MIX, PANEL DEBRIEF AND TALANOA (till late)		

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