

**THE VOICES OF TOKELAU YOUTH IN  
NEW ZEALAND**

*Na mafialeo onā Tupulaga Tokelau i Niu Hila*

**By**

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## ABSTRACT

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Tokelau is a minority group within New Zealand's larger Pacific community. New Zealand has a special relationship with the three small and very isolated atolls groups which make up Tokelau. The Tokelauan population in New Zealand is nearly five times that of the homelands. As a contribution to the global 'Youth Choices Youth Voices' study of youth acculturation, this research also contributes to the experiences of Pacific youth in New Zealand. The focus of this study is on Tokelauan youth and explores the perceptions of a group of Wellington based Tokelauan youth on their identity, sense of belonging, connectedness and hopes for the future. Also, the views of a group of Tokelauan elders are presented to set the background for the youth voices to be understood. The aim of this qualitative study was to capture the unheard voice of the Tokelauan youth, to explore their stories and experiences so that the information provided will inform policy and programme planning for Tokelauan youth, as well as Pacific and other minority groups in New Zealand.

Using *talanoa* methodology, a combination of group *māopoopoga* and individual in depth interviews, valuable knowledge was shared giving insights into the experiences, needs and future aspirations of Tokelauan youth in New Zealand. Feelings of how Tokelauan youth construct their identity and sense of belonging in this new homeland were also explored. The findings were that while youth each have their own experiences, shaped by their own environment in New Zealand, all strongly identified themselves as Tokelauan revealing a strong physical, emotional and spiritual connection to the homeland. The shared stories of their families journeying to New Zealand in search of better life for their children and for Tokelau, strongly influence their sense of identity and belonging. Regarded by the elders as 'the lucky generation' and 'future of Tokelau' they felt a sense of responsibility to pass on the *fakaTokelau* to the next generation. The main agencies these youth connected with were the family (the core group), the *Kāiga Tokelau Porirua* (community group) and the *Mafutaga Tupulaga* (youth) sports groups, church and schooling. They expressed a real passion for cultural engagement, but raised questions about the lack of youth participation in decision making, and how this might influence future cultural security. Education was important to these youth and

for the future of Tokelau. Their lack of connection to schooling and education was of most concern to them and they strongly emphasised their desire and need for more family and community support in their education. Finally, all involved in the *talanoa* saw the need to engage in further studies.

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*Te Atua fakafetai mo tau fakakahoa.  
Ke malama pea.*

I was not alone on this journey and this journey is not mine alone. This journey is a continuation of our past – fishing to provide for the village so that they live for tomorrow. The past provided me with the courage and strength throughout this journey. From the onset I was blessed with the love and support of many great people who equipped me with the knowledge, tools, resources and support to ensure the journey is successful.

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## GLOSSARY

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### Words

<i>Agānuku</i>	Customs and tradition, culture
<i>Akoga Amata</i>	Tokelauan early childhood centres
<i>Aliki Faipule</i>	Head of government
<i>Alofa</i>	Love, to love, to feel affection for, be kind, feel sorry
<i>Auala</i>	Pathway, road, way, avenue, method
<i>Āumāga</i>	Village work-force comprising males of the village
<i>Atunuku</i>	National (the three atolls), country
<i>Faipule</i>	Elected Minister responsible mainly with external affairs
<i>Fakaaloalo</i>	Respect, politeness, honour, courtesy
<i>Fakalavelave</i>	A time when support is needed (and provided) by other family members for weddings, funerals.
<i>Fakamāoni</i>	Truthful, honest, trustworthy, reliable, faithfulness, integrity
<i>Fakamāopoopo</i>	To bring together, gather, collect
<i>FakaTokelau</i>	Tokelauan way
<i>Fale</i>	House, dwelling
<i>Fātele</i>	Action song dance
<i>Fatupaepae</i>	Literally the ‘foundation stone or rock’ – Title to the female elder who resides at the family residence. Also, the women’s committees are known as the <i>Fatupaepae</i>
<i>Fenuatanu</i>	Cemetery burial site
<i>Fiapoto</i>	Arrogant, self-important
<i>Fono</i>	Meeting, council
<i>Fono fakamua</i>	General Fono; national or inter-atoll assembly which is the parliament of Tokelau comprised of elected councils from each atoll
<i>Fono a matai</i>	Council of family heads
<i>Hā</i>	Holy, forbidden, sacred, restriction
<i>Hiva</i>	Dance, dancing
<i>Ilāmutu</i>	A kin term indicating a brother’s sister’s male child – the brother refers to his sister’s sons as <i>ilāmutu</i>
<i>Inati</i>	Distribution system of resources, communal sharing
<i>Kahoa</i>	A traditional fishing lure, from the mother of pearl shell
<i>Kāiga</i>	Family, household (nuclear, extended or community). See also, <i>Kāiga Fakafo</i> ( <i>Fakafo organisation</i> ), <i>Kāiga Matauala/ Atafu</i> , <i>Kāiga Nukunonu</i> , <i>Kāiga Tokelau Hutt Valley</i> , <i>Kāiga Tokelau Porirua</i> , <i>Kāiga Tokelau Wellington</i>
<i>Kaukāiga</i>	Extended family
<i>Kipakipa</i>	Young <i>Tifa</i>
<i>Lomātutua</i>	Elderly women

<i>Loto</i>	Will, wish, feeling, courage, heart
<i>Lumanaki</i>	Future, time to come
<i>Mafaufau</i>	Mind, thinking
<i>Mafutaga</i>	Fellowship, group, gathering of people
<i>Mafutaga a Tupulaga Tokelau</i>	Tokelau national organisation for youth
<i>I Niu Hila</i>	
<i>Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau</i>	Porirua Tokelau Youth Organisation
<i>Porirua</i>	
<i>Māoopopoga a tupulaga talavou</i>	The gathering of youth
<i>Mālie</i>	Humourous, heartwarming, to energise and uplift
<i>Mamalu</i>	Sacredness
<i>Māoopopo</i>	Oneness, unity, gather together, cooperate, communal
<i>Māoopopoga</i>	Gathering of people
<i>Matai</i>	Family head
<i>Matauala</i>	Referring to Atafu community. It's also the name of the Hall in Porirua
<i>Mātua</i>	Mother/s, parents and elders
<i>Mātua hā</i>	Sacred mother defined as the father's sister (the father's daughters call their father's sister (paternal aunt)
<i>Mātua tauaitu</i>	Father's sister – similar to the <i>mātua hā</i> (sacred mother) the <i>mātua tauaitu</i> (spirit-holding mother) has a spiritual power to curse
<i>Moni</i>	Real, true, pure, genuine
<i>Motu</i>	Atoll, islets
<i>Nuku</i>	Village, atoll
<i>Pā</i>	Traditional fish lures made of the mother of pearl shell which is used by Tokelauan master fishermen to fish for bonito
<i>Punifenua</i>	Mature <i>Tifa</i>
<i>Ofaga ote gagana Tokelau i Aotearoa</i>	Tokelau Early Childhood Association of Aotearoa
<i>Pahehe</i>	Appreciation of participation (likened to a bus fare)
<i>Pahina a Tokelau</i>	Tokelau Congregational Christian Church (Porirua)
<i>Pālagi / pāpālagi</i>	European, Caucasian
<i>Pehe</i>	Song
<i>Pokihi</i>	Box used as a drum for Tokelau dancing also called a beating box
<i>Pulenuku</i>	Head of the village and responsible for internal affairs. Also referred to as village ruler, mayor, and is the head of the village elders' council
<i>Tagi</i>	Cry, ( <i>Tagi</i> – also name of a play by the <i>Tupulaga</i>
<i>Takitaki hiva</i>	Person leading a dancing group
<i>Talanoa</i>	Talk, discuss (Tokelauan and Tongan)
<i>Talanoaga</i>	Discussion, conversation as, <i>Talanoaga o te Kāiga</i> (family meeting)
<i>Tama</i>	Boy/s; child of both parents
<i>Tamā manu</i>	Literally young or small bird, term used to refer to a person who is less fortunate

<i>Tapu</i>	Taboo, sacred, forbidden
<i>Tatalo</i>	Pray, prayer
<i>Taulelea</i>	Man, men
<i>Taupulega</i>	Village authority; council of elders which controls village affairs
<i>Tautala</i>	Talk, speak
<i>Tautai</i>	Master fisherman – There are Tokelauan rules of the sea based on the most senior practitioners which every fisherman observes
<i>Te Umiumiga a Tokelau Hutt Valley Incorporated Society</i>	The Hutt Valley organisation of people from the three atolls of Tokelau
<i>Tokelau Tugaki</i>	Tokelauan community radio station (Wellington Radio Access 783)
<i>Tu Tangata</i>	Literally ‘standing tall’ (Maori). <i>Tu Tagata</i> is also the name of the Pacific TV programme
<i>Ulu o Tokelau</i>	Titular head of government
<i>Tifa</i>	Mother of pearl shell which is highly valued for making skipjack lures
<i>Titi</i>	Traditional dancing leaf-skirt worn by both men and women when performing traditional dancing
<i>Toeaina</i>	Old man, elder/elders – a <i>toeaina</i> is respected because of the wisdom and authority conferred on him by experience
<i>Tuātina</i>	One’s mother’s brother, maternal uncle (the mother’s son refer to his mother’s brother/s as a <i>tuātina</i> )
<i>Tuku</i>	A short choreographic sequence to complete a <i>fatele</i> (dance)
<i>Tupulaga</i>	People of the same generation; today most often used to denote youth
<i>Tupuna</i>	Grandparents, ancestors
<i>Ulu</i>	Head, leader – titular head of government, families
<i>Vā lelei</i>	Good relationship
<i>Vā</i>	Relationship; in between, relational boundary
<i>Vā fealoaki</i>	Respectful relationship, sharing and helping

This glossary lists the most frequently used non-English words and phrases in this thesis. The translations are sourced from Simona’s *Tokelau Dictionary* (1986), Hooper’s *Tokelauan* (1996), Boardman’s *Vocabulary: Tokelau-English and English-Tokelau* (1969), and my own knowledge of the Tokelauan language. The phrases are taken directly from Tokelauan songs, proverbs and common sayings. The translations of the Maori and Samoan words were sourced from Maori and Samoan language speakers respectively. The Tongan words were sourced from original documents, and have the same Tokelauan equivalents, and are therefore used interchangeably.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN)
DOL	Department of Labour
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
GF	General Fono
HRC	Health Research Council
ICCPR	International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights
ICSEY	International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth
IT	Information Technology
KA/KM	Kāiga Atafu/Matauala
KF	Kāiga Fakaofu
KN	Kāiga Nukunonu
KTHV	Kāiga Tokelau Hutt Valley
KTP	Kāiga Tokelau Porirua
KTW	Kāiga Tokelau Wellington
LMS	London Missionary Society
MIRAB	Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MPIA	Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
MTT	Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau
MTTNH	Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Niu Hila
MTTP	Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua
MYD	Ministry of Youth Development
MYL	Mind Your Language
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
OGTA	Ofaga ote Gagana Tokelau Aotearoa
PIC	Pacific Islands Congregational
PIECCA	Pacific Islands Early Childhood Council Aotearoa
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PRG	Pacific Research Guidelines
SMS	Short message service
SPG	South Pacific Games
TNSP	Tokelau National Strategy Plan
TTW	Tupulaga Tokelau Wellington
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Funds for Women
WYD	World Youth Day
YCP	Youth Connectedness Project
YVYC	Youth Voices Youth Choices

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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*O! he Tifa, He Tifa Fou!*

*He Tifa Ola*

*E kipakipa kae momoko ke Punifenua*

*He Tifa mai na Namu o Tokelau*

A fresh *Tifa*

A lively *Tifa*

A *kipakipa* aspiring for *Punifenua*

*Tifa* from the lagoons of Tokelau

The *Tifa* is a treasure from the ocean that is much admired and valued in Tokelau. It is the shimmering Mother of Pearl shell. The *Tifa* is cut into several *Pā* fishing lures and can only reveal its fullest expression once attention is given to fashioning it and preparing it for fishing. Each *Pā* is designed, cut and shaped individually. Every single *Pā* is unique, and can be described individually and people know which *Tifa* these come from, as there are several types of *Tifa*. Each *Pā* is lovingly crafted, turned into a lure, dressed in its own plumage and then ready to catch bonito for the village (Faiva, 2004).<sup>1</sup>

To me, Tokelauan youth today are just like the *Tifa*. They symbolise the Tokelauan heritage – our past, present and future. Prior to Christianity and western schooling systems arriving in Tokelau, Tokelauan youth were educated in the Tokelauan values and beliefs and these were reinforced in every daily life event – the *fakaTokelau*. For example, as noted by Thomas, Tuia and Huntsman (1990) Tokelauan history and knowledge, values and beliefs, were stored and passed on in their music and dances and were grounded in concepts of the family and community, the land (the three islands of Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu) and the sea and the stars (cosmology).

When I first began framing this research about the experiences of Tokelauan youth connectedness today, which is part of the wider project of *Youth Voice: Youth Connectedness*,<sup>2</sup> I started looking back at my own journey as a young Tokelauan girl who had come to New Zealand for education in 1975, then returned to work for the Tokelau Administration at the head office in Apia. I remembered my feelings of fear and trepidation as I left my family and went to live in New Zealand – at that time, very much the unknown. I recalled how on my return to Samoa in 1981 we Tokelauan youth would sit and discuss our New Zealand experiences long into the night and argue about where Tokelau was ‘going’ and, what development would

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<sup>1</sup> See also Vulu & Faiva (2010).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix One.

mean for Tokelau and for us, the people of Tokelau. I remembered how our group had prepared and presented a play voicing our concerns about the future of Tokelau: while this had been a very empowering experience this had also been a very emotional one as we dared to ask the questions which I am sure our elders thought about, but never put to words. We spoke of the many conflicts we had experienced between our Tokelau lives and life in New Zealand, the different expectations of male and female behaviours and youth issues.

Looking back, I now asked myself – why had we written this play? Was this because as youth we did not have a *place* in *fakaTokelau* to voice our concerns? Was a play the only way we could present our views given the Tokelau norms that elders speak and youth listen? Or, was it because we hoped to capture the attention of as wide a group of people as possible and let them know our fears? In the play, we had combined narratives, songs and dance to convey our messages; just as in the old days when these were the main ways of sharing information and recording our Tokelauan histories. In fact, looking back, I realised that we had packaged our development messages within a traditional medium which had ensured our audiences stopped, listened, shared and argued the messages we knew to be important.

More recently, I had been at the monthly meeting of the Hutt Valley's *Te Umiuimiga a Tokelau* when an elder suddenly stood up and said 'we have to do something about our youth'. There had been a stunned silence as he began outlining his fears for our Tokelauan youth. As he listed the number of youth suicides which had taken place in that year alone, he was voicing the unsaid things – which we as a community avoided to raise earlier at these meetings. We knew what he was talking about. In the following discussions there had been tears and anger and great sorrow. Our meeting decided that we needed to talk about this with the youth, seek their views on these matters and learn what we elders could do to address these issues. It was decided that a youth camp should be held to discuss these issues and that this should be organised and run by the youth.

The camp was held and proved to be a very important time. The main issues raised by the youth included: a wish to learn more about the *fakaTokelau* culture and language especially the roles of male and female; a desire to have more family time with their parents and, educational support to assist them achieve the better

educational outcomes, which they knew they needed to ensure good employment and, a good life for their families and for the Tokelauan community in the homelands and New Zealand. Of the three areas of need, the wish for more time with parents was a humbling reminder of the importance of the family and family relations. Since that time, there have been a number of weekend youth activities. At one which I had attended, the male youth went fishing along the Petone foreshore with their fathers and elders, while the young girls stayed back at the centre and learnt from the women how they should divide their brothers' catch of fish correctly (as in the *inati* system) and the correct customs and language which should be used in doing this. If I was to describe that day, I would say that the youth – most of whom were New Zealand-born - had shown a hunger to learn the *fakaTokelau*. In addition, the elders had been amazed and warmed by the youth interest. All had been empowered as they shared their knowledge and skills.

These and other events reinforced that this study of Tokelauan youth connectedness in New Zealand must be set within the family and community context to be fully understood. Tokelauan elders should have a role in this study not only because this was culturally appropriate but because the family and community ways of organising would influence the ways Tokelauan youth connected in New Zealand today as well as whom they connected with.

As I started to frame this study I focused on what challenges Tokelauan youth might face today. I knew these would be influenced by factors such as the much larger size of the Tokelauan community in New Zealand compared with Tokelau itself, the increase in the number of 'NZ-borns' and increasing multi-ethnicity.<sup>3</sup> How might these factors influence youth views of the *fakaTokelau* and what it meant to be a Tokelauan? Would they feel less Tokelauan and more *pālagi*? Were they learning the *fakaTokelau* at all? And, what kind of *fakaTokelau* were they learning? I knew the influences of globalisation – seen in the movement of people, ideas and technology – would also impact on youth views. For example, when I was young, our main contact with the world outside my home atoll of Fakaofu had been the radio spots relayed through Samoa – three times a day and mainly on news and the

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<sup>3</sup> In the NZ Census 2006: 43% (2,958) reported to be Tokelauan; 33% (2,475) reported to be of Tokelauan and one other ethnic group, 14% (957) reported as being Tokelauan and two other ethnic groups

weather. Often, we knew little about what was happening on Atafu or Nukunonu. In fact, our three atolls had developed our own distinct ways of doing things even down to some language differences (see Lemihio, 2003). By way of contrast, Tokelau now connects instantly to the global world via satellite: telephone calls and email communication have become an ordinary part of daily life today. The frequent travel between Tokelau and New Zealand today was also a huge contrast from the time when I was one of the very few from Fakaofu who had been to New Zealand.

Tokelau's special relationship with New Zealand posed another perspective to this research; how this might make for a different experience for Tokelauan youth, as compared with youth of other Pacific ethnicities. Briefly, Tokelau together with Niue and the Cook Islands, comprise the realm of New Zealand with the Governor General (as representative of Her Majesty the Queen New Zealand's Head of State) as the Head of the Realm.<sup>4</sup> The Cook Islands and Niue have self-governing status. Both countries may undertake bilateral and multilateral treaties with other countries including New Zealand (Townend, 2007, p.147). By way of contrast, Tokelau is a dependent territory of New Zealand. Although Tokelau has some freedom to deal with its own affairs under delegated authority, New Zealand has the ultimate power as a colonial state. For example, Tokelau is an observer at the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and is an associated member of the Forum Fisheries Agency and the World Health Organisation. However, Tokelau is represented by New Zealand at most global forums (Townend, 2007, p.137). Surely, I thought, this relationship would point to New Zealand making special consideration for Tokelauan people both in Tokelau and in New Zealand? At the same time, I could see how this relationship might bring with it feelings of dependency and influence peoples' feelings of self-determination and control over their lives today and, in turn, their identity as Tokelauans.

Undoubtedly, Tokelau's special status had made for a different migration experience compared with other Pacific nations. For example, Tokelauans enjoy free entry into New Zealand, hold New Zealand passports and use New Zealand currency. There is a constant flow of family between Tokelau and New Zealand and on to other parts of the world to visit family for health, education and recreational purposes. Reports are

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<sup>4</sup>Governor General Hon Anand Satyanand used the greetings of the six languages of the Realm in his swearing in at Parliament on 23 August 2006, and does so in all of his public presentations.

that those wishing to travel to and from Tokelau now need to book their passage at least six months ahead of time.

I had also listened in to some quite heated discussions about the future of Tokelau following the two referendums on Tokelau decolonisation. The fact that only Tokelauans living on Tokelau had been permitted to vote was an ongoing source of contention. In addition, views were that this measure had effectively divided (and some said questioned) the bond between the New Zealand and the homeland communities.

New Zealand policies regarding the Tokelau Islands have been various. For example, the Tokelau Resettlement Scheme can be seen as reinforcing a belief that the Tokelau Islands were not a viable entity. On the other hand, the Scholarship Scheme in the 1960s and 1970s, of which I was a student, could be interpreted as a strategy to build the capacity of Tokelauan people towards the aim of self government, much in line with the Samoa scholarship scheme of earlier years. The perceived underpinning rationale for the New Zealand strategies (whether to ‘bring them all to New Zealand’ or ‘educate them to be the future leaders for Tokelau’) must have influenced youth feelings of identity as well as their aspirations for the future. Whether the early New Zealand schemes fit into the category of ‘choice’ or ‘forced’ migration has been the subject of much discussion in the Tokelauan community of late. Whatever the motives, both schemes saw Tokelauan people leaving their familiar and secure way of life to journey to what was a less familiar and safe life in New Zealand (MFAT, 2005). Tokelau’s place within New Zealand’s bi-cultural frameworks is another issue here, as is her place within the national vision of New Zealand as a multicultural society. Finally, there are questions of how New Zealand has viewed Tokelau – as one people (embracing Tokelau and New Zealand) or as two related but fundamentally separate entities?

A contrast of the New Zealand strategy can be made with the experience of Olohega – the fourth island of Tokelau which was annexed by the United States of America in the 1920s. Otsuka and Wong (2007) describe the experiences of those evicted from Olohega (renamed as Swains Island) to American Samoa and on to Hawaii to work in the pineapple plantations. Findings were that in order to provide what they thought was the best for their youth, these families focused on the English language

and much less on the *fakaTokelau*. As reported, a visit to Hawaii by a Tokelauan Cultural Group had reawakened understanding of what had been lost in this process, especially amongst the younger generation who comprised up to third generation Hawaii-born. The reclaiming of their Tokelauan knowledge has now begun for the people of Olohega and this is being strongly supported by the people of the Tokelauan homelands.<sup>5</sup>

## **Data**

As I began my search for the data about Tokelauan youth, results showed a significant amount of general data about Pacific youth, however, very little of this data is disaggregated by Pacific ethnic group. Furthermore, where Pacific data is broken down, the practice in New Zealand has been to do this by the ‘four largest population groups’ - namely, Samoa, the Cook Islands, Tonga and Fiji. As a result of this practice, it can be said that the Tokelauan people are actually a minority group within the larger category of Pacific people. Because of this, Tokelauan voices are seldom heard, despite the fact that Tokelau has a special relationship with New Zealand.

A second finding was that there is dearth of qualitative data about the Tokelauan community in New Zealand. The available data showed a discouraging picture of the lives of the Tokelauan community and youth today. Clearly then, life had not been easy. For example, Tokelauan youth (and families) had low educational outcomes and so they earned lower incomes and were more vulnerable to unemployment; they experienced significant health issues including those related to mental health (Mila-Schaaf, Robinson, Schaaf, Denny & Watson, 2008) and, lower rates of social participation. Surprising to me was the data which showed a four percent decrease in the ability to speak the Tokelauan language. This is in spite of the successes of the Tokelauan language nests and the Tokelauan youth groups which I have observed and been a part of. The data also suggested that Tokelauan ‘feelings of identity’ may be weakening in New Zealand. If so, this was serious, given the place of language and culture in the development of a secure identity<sup>6</sup> and, the relationship of identity with educational and social participation in all fields of

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<sup>5</sup> See also TVNZ One (2009).

<sup>6</sup> See for example Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2000) and Gegeo (2009).

life. For example, Purkey (1970) has emphasised the positive relationship between self concept, feelings of belonging and well-being and, school achievement.

I could see there were questions which needed to be asked including: did these youth have a strong sense of identity in New Zealand? And, did this influence the ways they participated (connected) with other communities and institutions in New Zealand – including other Tokelauans, other Pacific ethnic groups, new settler communities, the *Tangata Whenua* (Maori) and *pākeha* New Zealanders?

To me, there was urgency in carrying out qualitative research to explore and document the views of Tokelauan youth about their experiences and factors influencing their lives today. In my view, the exclusion of the Tokelau voice has:

1. Devalued the Tokelauan people, their knowledge and marginalized Tokelauan youth and their families (see Gegeo, 2009);
2. Presented an incomplete and inaccurate picture of the Tokelau experience, resulting in policies and programmes developed on inadequate information;
3. Influenced or reduced the opportunities for Tokelauan youth – who are the nations’ future leaders – to develop leadership skills;
4. Created the potential for a disconnected and dysfunctional Tokelauan community because of the neglect of language and culture (see Sharples, (1985) and;
5. Neglected New Zealand’s responsibility in accordance with New Zealand’s Treaty of Partnership with Tokelau.<sup>7</sup>

All together this lack of focus on the Tokelau experience represents a loss of knowledge and understanding of the lives of New Zealand’s migrant people – now a diasporic group – by which to inform future policies and programmes.

### **This Study**

This research of Tokelauan youth voices is one of two Pacific case studies<sup>8</sup> which are part of the Youth Voices, Youth Choices project (YVYC).<sup>9</sup> The YVYC project

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<sup>7</sup>See Principles of Partnership between Tokelau and New Zealand. (n.d). Retrieved November 11, 2009, from <http://www.tokelaulaw.tk/MainSections/TreatiesArrangementsofConstitutionalSignific/PartnershipbetweenTokelauandNewZealand/tabid/776/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> The other, larger component is ‘Pacific youth connecting through the Poly Club.’

combines national and international research initiatives aimed at examining factors influencing the lives of migrant youth and their communities, including their feelings of ethnic and national identity, language use and proficiency, peer contact, acculturation preferences, family and adaptive outcomes such as school adjustment and behavioural problems and life satisfaction. This study of Tokelauan youth adds to the global knowledge of migrant youth experiences.

Points which suggest a different Tokelau experience include: Tokelau's place as a non self governing territory under New Zealand, her role as a minority group within the wider Pacific population in New Zealand, the issue of Tokelau's future as a nation and, the role of New Zealand Tokelauan and the homeland population in this process. That the Tokelauan population living in New Zealand is now almost five times larger than the population of the homelands is a factor in these discussions.

A number of factors influenced my research perspective. Firstly, that this information was vital for the design of future initiatives for Tokelau youth and the Tokelau community. Secondly, that securing the youth voice would be a challenge given the *fakaTokelau* respect for seniority which meant that often the youth voice was not heard, despite the fact that youth were the future leaders of Tokelau and the group most likely to be influenced by the rapid changes taking place today. Third, was the extreme diversity of the Tokelau youth population today, including an increasing number of New Zealand born youth, increased multiple ethnicity and the lack of data on the number of youth who have been to Tokelau or the influence of this experience. This last factor was of important given the relationship between physically connecting with the homeland and the feelings of social identity and sense of belonging this brings (see Lemihio, 2003). Finally, given the fundamental importance of the family in the *fakaTokelau*, I knew that a participatory approach must be employed to enable youth voices to be heard within the family and community context. This approach was appropriate and necessary given the relationship between elders and youth in the *fakaTokelau*.

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix One. See also Youth Choices, Youth Voices. (n.d). Retrieved May 6, 2010, from <http://cacr.victoria.ac.nz/projects/research-projects/youth-voices-youth-choices>

## **Research Objectives**

To explore the experiences of Tokelauan youth in New Zealand today, their perceptions of identity, sense of belonging, connectedness and, hopes for the future.

### ***Research questions:***

1. What are the experiences, needs and future aspirations of Tokelauan youth in New Zealand?
2. How are Tokelauan youth feelings of identity and belonging, learnt and shaped in New Zealand today – (a new homeland far away in terms of space and time from the Tokelau homeland) - and what agencies are youth connecting to?
3. What needs to be done to ensure Tokelauan youth are in a position to achieve their aspirations, and contribute to the development of their families and communities (in New Zealand and/or Tokelau)?

## **The significance of the study**

This research contributes to the growing body of literature about the experiences of Pacific youth in New Zealand. Secondly, while this study will provide information to inform policy and programme planning for Tokelauan youth specifically, it may also have relevance for other Pacific ethnic groups in New Zealand. Thirdly, this case study presents a gift to the Tokelauan community: this case study is a record of the perceptions of a small group of youth about their lives in New Zealand at this point in time.

Overall, the study will add to the global data about the experiences of acculturation and identity formation of a:

- a) Pacific ethnic group which is a minority within the Pacific community as well as within the mainstream;
- b) Community, whose nation comprises three atolls which are separated from each other, and the outside world, by vast stretches of Ocean. Over time, each of these three atolls of Fakaofu, Atafu and Nukunonu have developed their own history and ways of doing things; <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For example, Fakaofu has been influenced by both the Catholic and London Missionary Society (LMS), which has links to Samoa and Uvea (Wallis Islands and Futuna). Nukunonu is predominantly

- c) Group of youth who might never have been to Tokelau but whose knowledge and feelings about the homeland have been constructed in New Zealand and, based on the stories, songs and dances shared with them by their elders.

Verkuyten (2005) and Gezentsvey (2008) use the term ‘ethno-cultural continuity’ to describe this phenomenon - which takes into account the importance of continuity or the imagined history, culture and homeland of many.

### **Chapter outline**

This introductory chapter (one) is the first of seven chapters for this thesis. Chapter Two, which is in two parts, sets the Tokelau context for this study. The first part is a review of the current status of Tokelau including, population, social and economic data, the *fakaTokelau* and the historical development of the relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau. The second part of Chapter Two focuses on New Zealand’s Tokelauan community, followed by questions about the future of Tokelau. Chapter Three is the literature review and focuses on migration and acculturation theories, followed by a review of some of the literature on Tokelau and Pacific migration and migrant communities. This chapter presents more fully the concept of ethno-cultural continuity as applicable for the Tokelau situation in New Zealand. Chapter Four presents the research design and the research process adopted to meet the research aims. The ethics process and research limitations are also addressed in this chapter. The research findings are presented in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five, presents the perspectives of elders and community leaders as gathered in the group *talanoaga*. These include their views of the homeland, migration experiences in the 1970s and 1980s, and future hopes for the Tokelauan community, a *Kāiga* Tokelau in New Zealand and in the homelands. The focus of Chapter Six is on the youth voice – their experiences as Tokelauan youth in New Zealand. This chapter presents the collective voice from the group *talanoaga*. Chapter Seven captures the further views expressed in in-depth interviews with a selection of youth drawn from the group *talanoaga*. The final chapter concludes the study with a summary of the research findings and suggestions for further developments.

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a Catholic community originally linked to Uvea and the London Missionary Society is strongly predominant in Atafu, originating from Samoa.

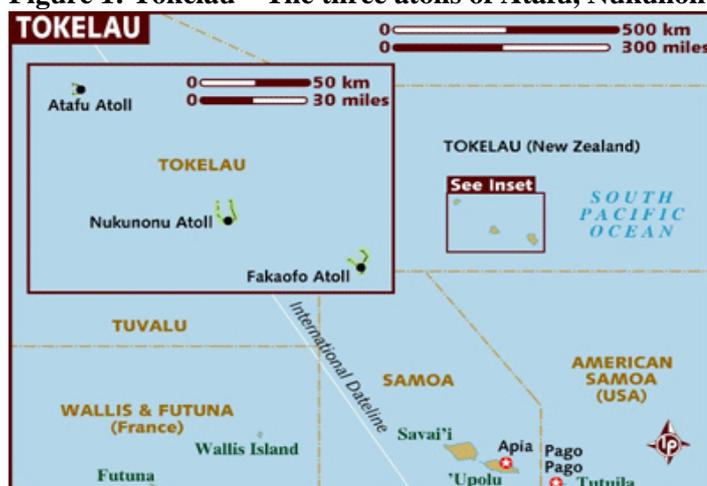
## CHAPTER 2: TOKELAU

<p><i>Pehe</i> (Song):</p>	<p><i>Aue! te alofa e</i>  <i>Aue! te alofa lahi e</i>  <i>Toku fenua tena</i>  <i>He fenua taikole</i>  <i>E tumua koe i loto o toku loto e</i></p>	<p>Oh! My love          Oh! I love you very much          That is my island          It's a small island          You are first in my heart</p>
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### Introduction

This chapter sets the Tokelau context for this study and comprises three parts. Part one is a review of the social, cultural and economic situation of the Tokelau homelands today including relations with New Zealand. Secondly, is a profile of New Zealand's Tokelauan community with a special focus on youth. Finally, some questions about the future of Tokelau are presented. Three overarching points set the context for this research. The first, is that there are significantly larger numbers of Tokelauans living in New Zealand today than in the homelands. Second, is the nature of the relationships between the New Zealand Tokelauan community and those in the homeland. Third, and coming through very strongly in this chapter, is that the very isolated position of the homeland atolls (from each other and from Samoa, their nearest neighbour) is a factor in and reinforces the enduring importance of the *fakaTokelau* and the traditional institutions of *Taupulega* (the Council of Elders) supported by the *Fatupaepae* (women's groups) *Āumāga* (male group) and *Tupulaga* (youth) in ensuring basic needs are met and, a good quality of life for all.

**Figure 1: Tokelau – The three atolls of Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu<sup>11</sup>**



Source: Retrieved May 8, 2010, from [www.greece-map.net/oceania/maps/tokelau-map.gif](http://www.greece-map.net/oceania/maps/tokelau-map.gif)

<sup>11</sup> The fourth, Olohega, now under US mandate, lies 100 kilometres south of Fakaofu.

As noted, Tokelau is a dependent territory of New Zealand. Although Tokelau has some freedom to deal with its own affairs under delegated authority, New Zealand has the ultimate power as the colonial state. In the past five years two referendums have been held on the issue regarding the decolonisation of Tokelau (2006 and 2007). Results fell short of the two thirds majority needed to change the situation. However, the fact that participation in these referendums was limited to those living in Tokelau continues to be a subject of serious debate, and this is discussed further in this chapter.

### **Part One: The Tokelau Homeland**

Tokelau comprises the three<sup>12</sup> coral atolls of Atafu which is 92 kilometres north of the second atoll of Nukunonu, which in turn is located 64 kilometres north of Fakaofu the third (see Figure 1). From North to South, the Tokelau group extends approximately 200 kilometres, each with a strong history of protecting the needs of their own communities. Not only are the three atolls distant from each other, each is extremely small: Atafu measures 3.5 square kilometres, Nukunonu is 4.7 square kilometres, and Fakaofu is 4 square kilometres for a total land mass of 12.2 square kilometres. Each of the atolls consists of a number of coral reef-bound *motu* (islets) surrounding a lagoon, with land rising no more than five metres above the sea level (Tolosa, Gillet, & Pelasio, 1991, p.2). Tokelau is very vulnerable to hurricanes and tidal waves. The atoll soils are poor with limited sources of fresh water apart from rain. By way of contrast, Tokelau's rich marine resource is spread over almost 290,000 square kilometres. These ocean resources ensure food security and protein in the family diet has major developmental potential of a fishing industry. Coconuts and pandanus fruit, fish and other seafood, pigs and chickens are the main ingredients of Tokelau food (Hoëm, Hovdhaugen & Muruvik, 1992, p.5).

Tokelau has strong social and cultural ties with Samoa and, until the introduction of Information Technology (IT), Samoa was Tokelau's main avenue for communicating with the outside world. The *MV Tokelau* is the main transport that travels fortnightly from Apia, Samoa to and from Tokelau and between the atoll groups. Air links between Samoa and Tokelau by amphibian aircraft from Tuvalu were re-established

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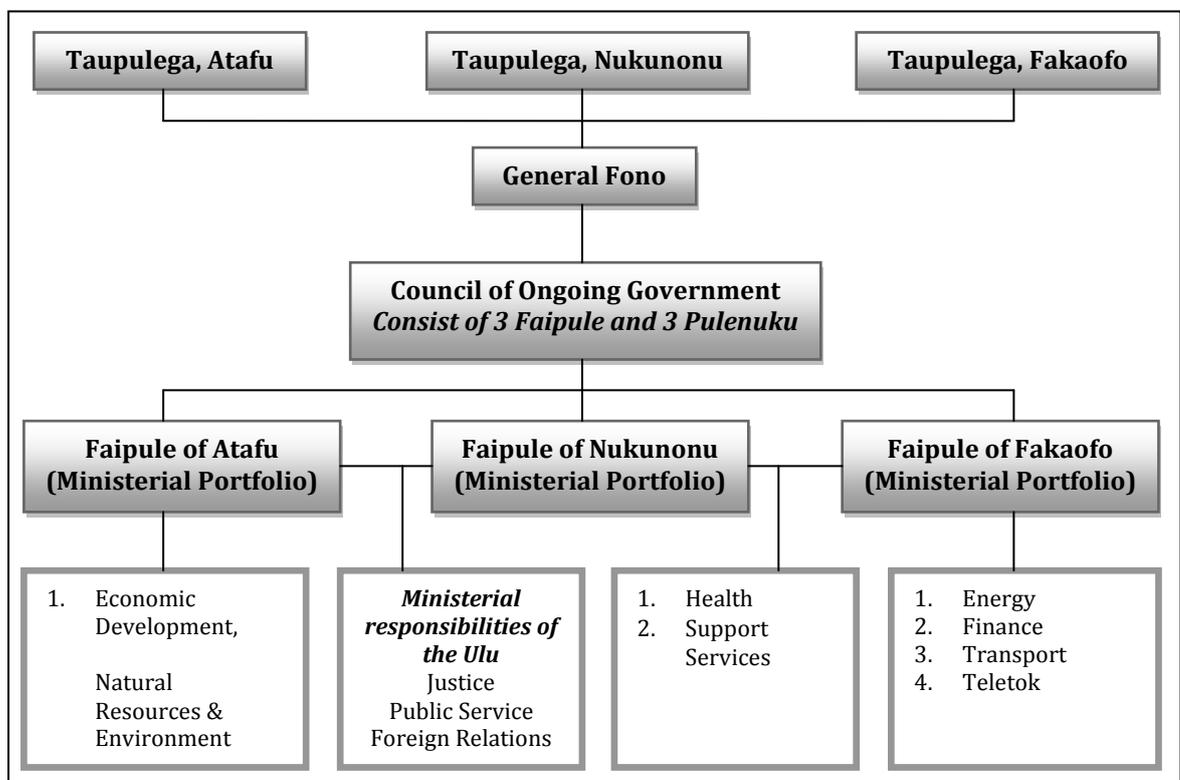
<sup>12</sup> The fourth atoll of Olohega remains under United States of America jurisdiction. This is another source of contention.

in the 1980s, but this venture ended within twelve months (McLean & d'Aubert, 1993).<sup>13</sup> Air flights are available for emergencies. Presently, Samoa is the main centre for higher education and medical treatment and the commercial and administration centre for Tokelau. The Tokelau Administrative Office in Apia links to the office of the Tokelau Administrator and the Tokelau unit, located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAT) in Wellington.

## Government

Stories about the pre-contact period paint a picture of social stratification, chiefly lines and fights for ascendancy (Fox, 1995 cited in Hoëm, 2004). The formal ending of Fakaofu's overlordship by colonial decree in 1915, saw the transformation of the chiefly systems. Today Tokelau's unique system of national government combines the authority of the traditional atoll based *Taupulega* with modern systems of elected representation. These systems also take account of the historical separateness and rivalries by giving priority to ensuring each atoll has equal participation in government and development processes.

**Figure 2: Tokelau Government Structure**



Source: Office of the Council for Ongoing Government (2010).

<sup>13</sup> New Zealand and Tokelau are revisiting the viability of building airports in Tokelau.

As seen in Figure 2: the first layer of government is the *Taupulega*, the Council of village elders. The *Taupulega* are responsible for the basic services on their islands, such as education and health and, the committees established for this purpose. Delegates from each *Taupulega* meet together as the General Fono (GF) which is the administrative and legislative assembly for Tokelau and has responsibility for national issues. The GF delegates are elected for a three year term. There are five women delegates to the GF. However, only in Nukunonu and Fakaofu do women sit on the *Taupulega*.

The next tier is the Council of the Ongoing Government of Tokelau, which comprises three *Faipule* (equivalent of cabinet ministers) and three *Pulenuku* (equivalent of village mayors).<sup>14</sup> These officers are elected every three years and are under the direction of the GF. The three *Faipule* are Tokelau's official representatives outside Tokelau and the *Pulenuku* are mainly responsible for *nuku* (village) issues. It is the custom that each of the three *Faipule* have a turn to act as *Ulu o Tokelau* (titular head of government). As a result, the capital or seat of the Tokelau government rotates regularly between the three groups. For example, Aliko Faipule Foua Toloa from Fakaofu was the *Ulu* in 2009 and so the GF was hosted by Fakaofu in that year. In 2010, the *Ulu* is Aliko Faipule Kuresa Nasau of Atafu and so the GF will be held on Atafu (Fono Fakamua, 2010).

The final tier in the Tokelau governing systems is the Tokelau Public Service which as seen in Figure 2 is divided into three major ministerial portfolios.

In the 1990s the New Zealand government delegated administrative and legislative powers to Tokelau's GF. In 2004, these powers were transferred to the *Taupulega*. At the same time, ultimate administrative and legislative decisions are vested in the Wellington based Administrator who manages the relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau (Huntsman & Kalolo, 2007; Townend, 2007).

### **Social and economic situation**

Table 1 sets out some demographic, social and economic data for Tokelau. As seen, at the last census, the Tokelau population numbered 1,466 – and was fairly evenly spread by atoll (See Appendix Two). The population is a very young and a very

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<sup>14</sup> *Faipule* is often referred to as Minister and the *Pulenuku* as the Village Authority.

mobile one, influenced by factors such as return migration, youth overseas on scholarships for example.

**Table 1: Social and Economic Data (2010)**

<b>Population</b>	Total: 1,466. Evenly spread by atoll (524 Atafu; 483 Fakaofu; 426 Nukunonu. Almost 50% under 15 years (n: 684)
<b>Movement of usual Tokelauan residents</b>	In 2009 a total of 936 (444 females and 492 males) left Tokelau and 984 returned (472 females and 512 males)
<b>Language</b>	Tokelauan is the main language (1027 speakers); English (622 speakers) Samoan (537) Tuvaluan and Kiribati also spoken.
<b>Religion</b>	The Catholic and Tokelau Congregational Christian <sup>15</sup> are the two main religions. On Fakaofu both religions are present. Nukunonu is predominantly Catholic and Atafu is predominantly Tokelau Congregational Christian Church.
<b>Education</b>	Education is compulsory at 5 – 16 years. Schools on each island. Early childhood education (ECE) available.
<b>Health</b>	There are three hospitals -one on each <i>nuku</i> ) The Director of Health is nationally based and report directly to the Minister of Health.
<b>Employment and human resources</b>	Government is the main employer, employing 10% of the population. In line with the traditional sharing system ( <i>inati</i> ) employment options are shared by family as much as possible.
<b>National income</b>	Two million dollars per annum from fishing licenses. \$13 million p.a. from New Zealand (80% of national income) <sup>16</sup> . Remittances (cash and goods) and handicraft sales. The Tokelau Trust Fund (est. 2000)

Sources: Statistics New Zealand and Office of the Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau (2006); Office of the Council for Ongoing Government (2010); K. Kelekolio (personal communication, April 5, 2010); Hobbs (2005); NZAID (2009).

As seen in Table 1, most of the population speaks the Tokelauan language (70 percent) and, most speak more than one language (K. Kelekolio, personal communication, April 5, 2010). Tokelauan is the language used in schooling as well, with English being the second language of instruction. There are linguistic, cultural and genealogical connections with Samoa as a result of the history of migration between the two countries and there are also linguistic links with Tuvalu (McQuarrie, 2007). Reports are that traditional songs and dances are proving to be effective mediums for teaching the Tokelauan language and culture today.<sup>17</sup> Preschool and primary education are well established in Tokelau although significant numbers of students go off island to Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand for secondary and tertiary study. The same is true for health. While each of the three islands has a

<sup>15</sup> The Tokelau Congregational Christian Church was formerly the London Missionary Society (LMS) under Samoan leadership since the arrival of Christianity in Tokelau in the 1840s.

<sup>16</sup> See NZAID (2009).

<sup>17</sup> Reports are that video recordings prepared from the *Matauala* (Atafu schools) and *Tialeniu* schools (Fakaofu) (2008) are proving very effective.

hospital, a large proportion of the Health budget is spent on a health scheme whereby patients with major health needs are referred to Samoa and New Zealand.

Reports of a serious shortage in teaching and medical staff suggests on-going challenges to provide quality services: the Tokelau Government has appealed to New Zealand and other countries for assistance here. As with other Pacific nations, church leaders play an influential role in Tokelau life. Differences of religious practices by *nuku* are a reflection of past influences. For example, Nukunonu is predominantly Catholic (Catholic Missions from Wallis and Futuna), and Atafu is predominantly Tokelau Congregational Christian Church (Samoa influence). Both are present on Fakaofu.

Copra was Tokelau's main income earner for many years. Today, the Tokelau economy relies heavily on aid mainly from New Zealand. At the same time, Tokelau generates significant amounts of national revenue by licenses to fish in Tokelau's Exclusive Economic Zone (Office of the Council for the Ongoing Government, 2010) and, the Tokelau Trust Fund (established 2000) which totals \$52 million (T. Vulu, personal communication, February 5, 2002). Tokelau invests some of its fishing zone revenue in this fund. Remittances and the sale of traditional handicraft goods are the other major sources of income (MFAT, 2005; Hooper, 2006). The concepts underlying the MIRAB (see Bertram & Watters, 1985) system align well with the Tokelau ways of supporting each other. A MFAT report notes that Tokelau recognises the value in holding on to the traditional values of self-help and self-reliance that have continued through Tokelau's transition from a largely subsistence economy to a monetary economy (MFAT, 2005). Hooper (2008) notes a change in the kinds of goods exchanged – from traditional to introduced and purchased goods (p.336).

### **Climate Change**

Climate change including sea level rising are impacting on Tokelau (McLean & d'Aubert, 1993). Anecdotal reports are that the more frequent cyclones and changing sea level patterns are adding to the peoples' feelings of uncertainty about life and about the future of Tokelau:

...several Tokelauans told us of uncertainty, bewilderment and genuine fear about the future for their families, lands and livelihood. This fear was heightened and reinforced by the experience of two recent storms in Tokelau, Tropical cyclone OFA in February, 1990 and Tropical Cyclone VAL in December, 1991, which raised in people's minds questions such as: Is this the start of the greenhouse effect? (McLean & d'Aubert, 1993, p.2).

The more intense cyclones and storms are eroding coastal areas and resulting in the disappearance of some species of plants. There are reports also of smaller islets disappearing altogether. The increased erosion is putting crops at risk and changing weather patterns are resulting in a bleaching of the coral and the disappearance and migration of some species of fish.<sup>18</sup> This situation impacts on food security and the economic valuing of Tokelau's Exclusive Economic Zone (Office of the Council for the Ongoing Government, 2010). Affected also, is the ability of the *Āumāga* to provide fish for their sisters to distribute so as to maintain the wellbeing of the family.

### **Cultural systems**

The Tokelau creation stories are similar to other Pacific stories of the deeds of Maui and the Gods and legends from the pre-contact era paint a picture of regular warfare as chiefly lineages vied for ascendancy (Fox, 1995, as cited in Hoëm, 2004). Tokelau's draft Constitution, finalised in 2003-2006,<sup>19</sup> captures some of these influences which shape the Tokelau world view. Olohega is included in this document:

We, the people of Tokelau, declare,

Tokelau is permanently founded on God. This foundation is made manifest in the villages and when the people cooperate and live together peacefully and happily,

At the dawn of time the historic islands of Atafu, Nukunonu, Fakaofu, and Olohega were created as our home. Since the days of Maui and Tui Tokelau the land, sea, and air have nurtured our people, and God has watched over us (Townend, 2007, p.153)

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<sup>18</sup> Ulu o Tokelau (personal communication, September 21, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> This was drafted by two Tokelauan lawyers and, the noted Constitutional Advisor Professor Tony Angelo.

Tokelau's language and institutional systems indicate there were periods of continual interaction with other Pacific Islands in the early years. Scientific evidence indicates considerable coming and going from neighbouring islands such as Samoa, Tuvalu, Uvea (Wallis and Futuna) (Huntsman & Hooper, 1996; Macgregor, 1937; Matagi Tokelau, 1999; McQuarrie, 2007).

### ***The fakaTokelau***

As is well documented the *fakaTokelau* places high value on *māopoopo* (meetings and communal discussions), co-operation and age (Hooper & Huntsman, 1975; Hoëm 2004; Lemihio, 2003; Thomas, 1986):

Tokelau society depends upon co-operation effort for its maintenance. Whether in *kaiga* groups, in village work groups, or in the collection activities of the 'sides' which carry out sport and cultural competitions, the Tokelauan acts as a member of a group rather than as an individual. A strong cultural emphasis is placed upon the importance of unity and co-operation, and societal wellbeing tends to be equated with these feelings of consensus, unity and 'collectivity orientation (Thomas, 1986, p.164).

As with other Pacific countries, the family is the central institution in the *fakaTokelau*: families are the basis of national and village decision making and the strength of the *nuku* (village) comes from its people. Tokelauan scholars such as Lemihio (2003) and Kupa (2009) stress the *fakaTokelau* commitment to ensuring all people – especially the *tamā manu* or the less fortunate – are well provided for. The *inati* system whereby resources are shared by all is an example here. Huntsman (1971) sees the *fakaTokelau* as promoting equal opportunity for all to participate in the life of the community while Vulu and Faiva (2010, p. 68) note that members provide for and support each other unconditionally.

### ***Family (Kāiga)***

Tokelauans belong to more than one *kāiga* (kin group or family) on their mother's and father's side (Huntsman & Kalolo, 2007, p.12). Kupa (2009) describes the *kāiga* as "families and the traditional sacred relationships between members" (p.158). The *kāiga* provide for the basic needs of family members such as by planting the family land and sharing their fishing catches (Huntsman & Kalolo, 2007). Within the family and in every aspect of life, utmost respect is given to the senior members. For

example the *matai* (family head, usually bestowed on the eldest son) and the *fatupaepae*<sup>20</sup> (the eldest daughter), are two prominent family figures. Huntsman and Kalolo (2007) describe the relationship between these two elders as a brother and sister couple: they honour, respect and support each other within the *kāiga* and outside the *kāiga*. They write:

The brother and sister relationship was the core of the Tokelau kinship universe (p.12).

Huntsman stresses the strict behavioural rules observed between brothers and sisters in which the sister is accorded a sacred or spiritual power (Huntsman, 1969, p.220, as cited in Hoëm, 2004, p.14). For example, it is forbidden for brothers and sisters to wear each other's clothes and, the language used to each other must be respectful. The brother is called a *tuātina* by his sister's sons who in turn are referred to as *ilāmutu* (see also Matagi Tokelau, 1991; Macgregor, 1939). The sister on the other hand is termed *mātua tauāitu* signifying an existence of spiritual power and or *mātua hā* by her brother's children. *Mātua* is 'mother' in Tokelauan and *hā* is *tapu* or sacred. The sacredness of this covenant is also reflected in the sister's relation with her brother's children as well as the kin relation between the brother and his sister's children (Faiva, 2008). While all brother and sister relations are special the *fatupaepae* and the *matai* are the most prominent relationships and are highly honoured within the family. Family roles and responsibilities are designated by the *tupuna* (ancestors) and defined by age and gender as seen in this *fatele* (action song):

<i>Fatupaepae o te kāiga x2</i>	<i>Fatupaepae</i> of the family
<i>E felau fakahoa te katiga</i>	She distributes the land produce
<i>E felau fakahoa te utuga</i>	She distributes the catch
<i>Tama tane o te uta fenua</i>	Males work the land
<i>Tama tane o vaka o utua</i>	Males (brother/s) on the canoe / fishing
<i>Taofi ke mau ia kupu a tupuna e</i>	Hold fast to the words from the <i>tupuna</i>

The *fatupaepae* resides at the family home and is responsible for distributing the family resources provided by her brother and other male members from the family land and fishing expeditions. The *fatupaepae* also supervises the activities of the female members of the family and calls the meetings of the family (*talanoaga ate*

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<sup>20</sup> *Fatupaepae* means corner stone or foundation stone signifying women's role as the rock of the family

*kāiga*). Her roles include maintaining harmony within the family, to advise the *matai* and to make sure family members carry out the decisions made by the *matai* council and/or *taupulega* (Huntsman & Kalolo, 2007). The *matai* is the family voice outside the family setting, at meetings for example, of the *matai* council and the *Taupulega*. The *matai* resides at his wife's family home, if married, but takes his catch of fish to his sister for distribution. The *matai* manages and is responsible for the family land and resources.

### ***Village Institutions***

The three main village institutions are the *Taupulega* (Council of Elders), the *Fatupaepae* (the women's group) and the youth (*Tupulaga*). It is the expectation that all members of the community join their appropriate group:

#### *1. Taupulega – Council of Elders*

The Tokelauan values and beliefs are reflected in how communities observe the words of their elders (*tautua te kupu a te mātua*). This message of respect to elders is emphasised in a popular *fatele* (action song) performed by *tupulaga* in Tokelau and New Zealand:

<i>Oku taina e</i>	My brothers sisters
<i>Taofi tau agānuku</i>	Hold on to your culture
<i>Manatua na Toeaina</i>	Always remember the elders
<i>I to tatou mulivaka</i>	At the back / stern of our canoe

In this *fatele*, the positioning of the *toeaina* (elder) at the stern of the canoe reflects the place of the elders as the holders of knowledge, wisdom and a duty to pass this knowledge on to the young. From the back of the canoe, the elders steer, advise, and instruct those on board, so as to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all. Each person on the canoe has a role to play to ensure that the canoe arrives at its destination (Toloa & Gillet, 1989).

As discussed, the *Taupulega* are responsible for village administration and for ensuring the social, economic, spiritual and cultural security of all families. There are differences by *nuku*. For example, the Fakaofu *Taupulega* comprises male elders aged 60 years and over and non-Tokelauans are permitted to join. Unlike the other two atolls, Fakaofu has a separate *Fono a matai*.

## 2. *Women's Group - Fatupaepae*

The women's group or *Fatupaepae* on each atoll usually comprises all women aged 17 years and above (those under 36 years of age may also belong to the youth group). The *Fatupaepae* are responsible for the health and wellbeing of children and families, the cleanliness of the *nuku* and for supporting the activities of the *Taupulega*. Each *Fatupaepae* is headed by a President and as with the *Taupulega*, the *lomatutua* (elder members) hold a respected place and are consulted on all matters. Today, the *Fatupaepae* hold annual national conferences where they share their concerns and promote women's affairs. In recent years there have been changes in the role of Tokelau women largely, influenced by New Zealand's ratification of CEDAW in 1985 (Fono Fakamua, 2010; New Zealand Government, 2002). Generally, Tokelauan women's requests for more opportunities to participate in decision making today has been met with some resistance not only from males but by women as well. In 2010, Tokelau submitted its first Women's Policy Strategic Plan (2010-2015) to the General Fono. This milestone achievement signified a shift in traditional views of development and women's roles in development processes.

## 3. *Āumāga – Men's group*

The *Āumāga* is the group where males learn the knowledge and skills they need to be the future leaders of Tokelau and to provide for their families (Hooper & Huntsman, 1996, as cited in Meredith, 2009). The *Āumāga* are an autonomous body. Officers are elected and leadership roles are usually taken by the older males. Again, differences are evident. For example, on Fakaofu, the *Āumāga* comprises males between the ages of 17-60 years while in Atafu the *Āumāga* consists of all males who are not *matai*. Nukunonu does not have an *Āumāga*. However, all *taulelea* and *tama* (married men and unmarried men) on Nukunonu are under the responsibility of the *Taupulega* (Meredith, 2009). The *Āumāga* are responsible for tasks such as communal fishing, land harvesting and village development programmes including construction, building sea walls, and other work needed to beautify the *nuku*. The *Taupulega* usually directs the work programme of the *Āumāga* (McQuarrie, 2007).

## 4. *Tupulaga maopoopoga (Youth group)*

*E goto he fetū, kae tu he fetū* (Tokelau proverb)

As a navigational star sinks into the horizon, another one rises to take its place.

Originally, a main focus of the *māopoopoga a Tupulaga Talavou* was to use sports as a means to promote learning and understanding, participation and inclusion as well as to enhance the value of *māopoopo*. However, the activities of the *Tupulaga* have broadened considerably. Today, more recognition is being given to youth leading these groups and voicing their views on important issues (Faiva, Pulotu-Endemann, Suveinakama, & Puni, 2006). In 2008 a National Youth Coordinator was appointed to develop the *Tupulaga* structure, policies and programmes. Youth groups participate in inter-atoll sports and cultural events and teams are also joining the New Zealand bi annual cultural festivals and sports tournaments.

### **Contact Experience**

Reports are that the atoll of Olohega was discovered during the exploring expeditions of the 1600s and from that time on there were expeditions from France, the United States and Spain. Missionary activity, both Catholic and Protestant, in the early 1860s coincided with the most tragic incident in the known history of Tokelau (Hoëm, 2004) in 1863, when sailors engaged in the Peruvian slave trade raided the three atolls. Estimates are that more than 45 percent of the population (mainly males) was lost in this raid (Maude, 1968, as cited in Hoëm, 2004). Blackbirding ended with the introduction of the British law to stop the kidnapping in the Pacific in 1872 (McQuarrie, 2007). The influence of the missionaries saw the incorporation of Christian beliefs into the Tokelauan spiritual systems. In 1889, Tokelau became a British protectorate and was annexed in 1916 to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Olohega was annexed to the United States in 1925. In 1926, Tokelau came under the New Zealand Administration of Samoa, and under the Tokelau Act (1948) New Zealand gained sovereignty of Tokelau. When Western Samoa became independent in 1962, rather than becoming affiliated with Samoa or the Cook Islands, Tokelau requested that it continue its association with New Zealand.

The years of the New Zealand administration have been uncertain. Indications are that New Zealand has not seen Tokelau to be a viable nation given factors such as its small size and population, limited resources, isolation, and vulnerability to cyclones. Until the 1950s contact with New Zealand was usually through short term visits by officials. Apart from this, Tokelau was ‘left largely to itself’ (Hooper, 1982, as cited in Hoëm, 2004). New Zealand’s seemingly lack of coherent planning or high

aspirations for Tokelau, must have rubbed off also on the Tokelauan people - including youth's sense of belonging. Be that as it may, in the 1960s three New Zealand assisted schemes marked the start of the Tokelau migration journeys to New Zealand; the employment scheme for unmarried youth, the scholarship scheme and the resettlement scheme. Each is discussed:

*Halahala ki Vavau*                      Go search in Vavau  
*Kae mau ki pale o Tokelau*        But keep to the garlands of Tokelau<sup>21</sup>

First was the Assisted/ Bonded Migration Scheme. As part of New Zealand's post-war migration programme<sup>22</sup> the first group departed Tokelau in 1963. These were mainly single women who went to work in hospitals as domestics (Green, 1998, p.126; Sallen, 1983, p.33). A total of 30 single Tokelauans migrated under this scheme from 1963-1965 and all were provided with accommodation and employment.<sup>23</sup> Second, was the New Zealand/ Tokelau Scholarship Scheme which was introduced in 1963. One hundred and eighty six awards were granted over a twenty year period under this scheme (Sallen, 1983). Accounts suggest there were deep misunderstandings about the purpose of the scheme. For example, while Tokelauans saw the scholarships as a way of educating youth who would then return home to contribute to the development of Tokelau, others saw the scholarships as being New Zealand's way of addressing the rising population of the small atoll group and, of bringing young people to New Zealand first as they would adapt more easily to life here than would their Tokelau elders (Sallen, 1983, p.176). The Director of Education Kirifi noted in 1983:

The Scholarship system appears to lack a clear purpose, is unwieldy to operate and is, arguably, not producing the results which will ultimately benefit Tokelau (as cited in Sallen, 1983, p.231)

The students on the other hand, found their efforts to meet the expectations of their families and villages very difficult as they tried to adapt into a new school system and to New Zealand life. Pass rates were low and some students reported being

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted from a Tokelauan song. See also Huntsman & Kalolo (2007).

<sup>22</sup> In response to New Zealand's labour market needs, this scheme assisted migrants from Greece, Dutch and other European countries.

<sup>23</sup> Tokelauan males were employed in the timber industry in the central North Island mainly in Tokoroa.

punished for speaking Tokelauan. Few actually returned to Tokelau. Sallen (1983) notes:

...many scholarship students reached an understanding that the learning they accomplished in New Zealand had been focused on preparing them to become New Zealand adults and that their scholarship education promoted disengagement from Tokelau (p.47)

Looking back, some students said they felt let down by and burdened by the expectations they felt – from both New Zealand and Tokelau:

I was not just going to school in New Zealand like they said, it was a whole long way of changing me, a process I had to go through, a process they do not know about... (p.88)

Others said they felt that they had lost their Tokelauan-ness ‘along the path of their scholarship journey’ (p.153):

I lost my family by coming to New Zealand so young...I can never regain that loss...I am on the outside of my family now. I am there observing them, but I am not really part of my family anymore.

...(if there were) better schools in Tokelau...children stay with their families and grow as part of their family...The sense of being from the outside is more poignant for me when I see [siblings] with my parents...The loss of a loved and loving child’s relationship with parents is too high a cost for an education.

That aside, 85 out of the 120 scholarship students remained in New Zealand<sup>24</sup> while some migrated to Australia. Almost all those who stayed in New Zealand reported they were employed and supported their families in the homeland so, maintaining their family links (Sallen, 1983, p.182) Other reports are that these students have also played a major role in mediating the *fakaTokelau* – New Zealand relationships including support to youth clubs and other avenues for youth concerns to be heard.

The Tokelau Resettlement Scheme was the third, and aimed at bringing young family groups to New Zealand. Lemihio (2003) recounts how her parents came to New Zealand in the 1960s for “a better life and access to more life choices and opportunities” (p.152). Stories about these migration journeys emphasise that the

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<sup>24</sup> This figure was based on Sallen’s count in 1982.

migrants *fai fai mea fakatahi oi nonofo fakatahi* (did things together and lived close together in their houses and suburbs). Further, as described by Vulu and Faiva (2010, p.60) earlier arrivals provided spiritual, cultural, emotional, economic and physical supports to later arrivals.

In total an estimated 500 migrated to New Zealand under these three schemes and estimates are that in turn, this group assisted more than another 500 migrants. In each case, the nature of their acculturation experience was influenced by factors such as the place and time of their arrival, type of employment and, the numbers or presence of Tokelauan and/or Pacific people in their new communities. For example, males who went to work in the Tokoroa timber industry tended to socialise and marry into the local Maori and Pacific communities. Over time also, migrants started to establish their own atoll specific groups, which they felt most comfortable with. Factors such as these influence how Tokelauan youth see themselves today. For example, do they feel kinship with the Maori, share a Pan Pacific identity, or feel that they have more in common with other new settlers to New Zealand? Or, do they identify with a Pan-Tokelau concept, or as being from Atafu, Fakaofu, or Nukunonu?

## **Part Two: The Tokelauan Community in New Zealand**

Table 2 shows the Tokelauan population in New Zealand numbers almost 7,000 and represents around 3 percent of New Zealand's total Pacific population of almost 270,000. The bottom line is that the Tokelauan community in New Zealand is now five times that of the homeland. The population is also very young; 56 percent are under 15 years of age and the median age is 19 years. The increasing diversity of the population is seen in the data that shows that 70 percent were New Zealand-born and while 43 percent identified solely as Tokelauans, 50 percent identified with one or more other ethnic group. Over 50 percent live in Wellington.

Table 2 indicates over 40 percent are Tokelauan language speakers. Although the four percent drop in the inter census period is a concern, the fact that 16 percent of those under 5 years are Tokelauan language users augurs well for the future of the language and customs. The work of the Tokelau language nests (*Ofaga ote Gagana*) has been important here, as has Government's 'Mind Your Language' programme (2007).

**Table 2: Profile of the Tokelauan community in New Zealand**

<b>Number and description</b>	
<b>Population</b>	6,817 (around 3% of the total Pacific population in New Zealand) 70% (4,626) are NZ-born. 56% are under the age of 15 (median age of 19 years) 43% identify solely with Tokelau, 36% identify with one other ethnic group and 14 % identify with two other ethnicities.
<b>Location</b>	51% (3,462) reside in Wellington (59% of this group reside in Porirua and 31% (1,065) in Lower Hutt). There are smaller Tokelau communities in Auckland, Rotorua, Taupo, Manawatu, Christchurch and Dunedin. Wellington hosts the largest Tokelauan population in the world.
<b>Tokelauan language</b>	In 2001, 44% were able to speak Tokelauan. There was a 4% decrease in 2006. Of the overseas born 3 out of 4 (73%) spoke Tokelauan and 1 out of 4 (24%) NZ-born. 16% of those under 5 year olds are Tokelauan language users.
<b>Religion</b>	86% (5,514) affiliate with a religion denomination. Overseas born have a higher representation than NZ-born. Catholic is the major denomination.
<b>Educational Qualifications</b>	63% (2,145) have a formal qualification (66% females and 58% males. 69% of this group is NZ-born and 55 percent are overseas born.

Source: Statistics New Zealand (2006a; 2006b), Pacific Profiles, Population Characteristics

The completion of the *Gagana Tokelau: The Tokelau Language Guidelines* in 2009 and the translation of the Bible into the Tokelauan language in the same year are other significant achievements for language teaching and maintenance (MPIA, 2009). Notable here is Article 2 of the draft Treaty of Free Association between New Zealand and Tokelau signed by the General Forum in August 2005 and approved by the New Zealand Cabinet in November, 2005 which notes:

New Zealand and Tokelau recognise that Tokelau's unique language and culture are a source of strength and identity both in Tokelau and among Tokelau communities in New Zealand, and New Zealand undertakes to work with Tokelau and to support an agreed programme to ensure their retention and development.<sup>25</sup>

The continuing importance of the church in the daily lives of the Tokelauan community in New Zealand, is seen in the data that shows that 86 percent of the Tokelauan population affiliate with a religious denomination. Locally based

<sup>25</sup> Draft Treaty of Free Association between New Zealand and Tokelau (Council for the Ongoing Government for Tokelau). Retrieved July 16, 2008, from <http://www.tokelau.org.nz/selfdeter/treaty.html>

churches such as The *Pahina a Tokelau* (Tokelau Congregational Christian Church) in Porirua are highly valued places for the spiritual life of the Tokelauan community, as well as a place to socialise with other Pacific people. Churches are taking a more robust stand in promoting youth leadership. For example, the Catholic Archdiocese supported the youth contingent to Sydney to attend the World Youth Day 2008. At the same time, there are reports that an increasing number of youth are moving from the two main churches (Protestant and Catholic) to join apostolic movement such as the Hosanna church.

Tokelau sits on a number of national level decision making processes such as the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs' (MPIA) Advisory Board and 'Mind Your Language' initiative. At the same time, there are views that Tokelau's participation has not been equal to their place as a non self-governing territory with New Zealand;<sup>26</sup> that while significant support continues to be directed to the homeland, there has been less focus on the Tokelauan community in New Zealand and, that New Zealand has tended to deal with the two communities separately rather than seeing the binding relationships between the two. The Referendum process is an example of this.

### **Community resilience**

As with other Pacific migrant groups, the *fakaTokelau* has been adapted and reshaped as migrants have acculturated to life in New Zealand (Le Mamea, 1987). In this process, the Tokelau family and village systems have maintained their strength and vibrancy, as well as the *fakaTokelau* spirit of self help and sharing. Thomas (1986) notes that Tokelauans congregate to share their knowledge, resources, dances and narratives, connecting them with the homeland and the new place. However, compared with the homelands – where *fakaTokelau* values and beliefs underlie every daily life activity – New Zealand based communities work harder to pass on the *fakaTokelau*, especially given the increasing numbers of New Zealand-born youth. The communities' tremendous commitment to maintaining the *fakaTokelau* is seen in the establishment of six community cultural centres. Events such as the biannual Easter Tournaments, the *Ofaga ote Gagana Tokelau I Aotearoa*

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<sup>26</sup> Pacific data is usually broken down into the four largest Pacific ethnic groups. As a result, Tokelau data is not routinely disaggregated and reported on, which might be expected given her status with New Zealand.

(Tokelau language nests) and the *Fatupaepae* (Women’s groups) are other examples. Growing numbers of Tokelauan youth are also joining with other Pacific youth in cultural performances such as Wellington’s *Tu Tangata* Festival (Pasikale & Tupuola, 1999; Thomas, 1986; Wylie, Hipkins & Hodgen, 2008) and, in 2007, over 8000 youth attended the Tokelau Hutt Valley Sports and Cultural Association festival. This was the biggest *Mafutaga Tupulaga* Festival ever.

Two points can be made about these community driven initiatives. First, while most are regionally based, these usually affiliate into national groups – priority is given to joining, linking in and consolidating as in the *māoopopoga*. For example, the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Porirua* (MPPT) affiliates into the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Niu Hila* (MTTNH), the national group for youth. The second relates to the saying that Tokelauans wear many hats. For example, members of the *Kāiga Tokelau Porirua* might meet as the *Kāiga* (elders) group and then reform again as the *Mafutaga Tupulaga* (youth). There is an ongoing coming together and separation according to purpose.

**Table 3: Tokelauan community ventures**

Venture	Description
<i>Kāiga Tokelau</i> Wellington (KTW)	Longest established Tokelauan community group (1960s)
<i>Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau</i> (locally based youth groups)	Youth Groups. The seven <i>Mafutaga Tupulaga</i> are located at Auckland, Rotorua, Taupo, Manawatu, Porirua and Hutt Valley  Each links into the national body, the <i>Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Niu Hila</i> (MTTNH)
<i>Ofaga ote Gagana Tokelau</i> (Tokelau language nests)	There are five <i>Ofaga ote Gagana</i> (4 licensed centres and 1 informal play group)  These link into the OGTA, which is the national body
Women’s groups	There are two women’s groups ( <i>Fatupaepae</i> and <i>Tiale Puapua</i> ).  Both affiliate to PACIFICA Inc, the national Pacific women’s NGO.
Tokelau Radio (Tokelauan language and bilingual broadcasts)	<i>Tokelau Tugaki</i> (managed by the <i>Kāiga Tokelau</i> Wellington) Mainly in the Tokelauan language.  <i>Tifa Ola</i> (Public Health Programme, Wellington Based)  NiuFM (Auckland based) Tokelauan and English

Sources: OTGA minutes 2007, MTTNH report 2009; Te Umiumiga a Tokelau Hutt Valley Incorporated Society & Tokelau Hutt Valley Sports & Culture Association (2008).

Table 3 lists some of the community based initiatives which will be discussed. As seen, most network with other Tokelauan groups. A few link into Pacific mainstream groups to fulfill their purpose (for example, the Tokelauan Language Nests are affiliated with the Pacific Island Early Childhood Council of Aotearoa (PIECCA) and the *Fatupaepae* link into Pacifica Inc.). Others are starting to draw more heavily on mainstream expertise, as for example the Radio stations.

### ***Kāiga Tokelau Wellington (KTW)***

The *Kāiga Tokelau Wellington (KTW)* is the longest standing Tokelauan group in New Zealand. It was started in the 1960s by earlier migrants with a view to uniting all Tokelauan people in a pan-Tokelau grouping. Over time, this emphasis changed to accommodate individual *nuku* or atoll groups as will be seen. The aims of the KTW are: to promote harmony and good relations between Tokelau groups in Wellington; to promote culture, values and language groups in Wellington and outside the Wellington region and to encourage cooperation and sharing amongst the Tokelau groups and the wider community. The KTW liaises and acts as an advisory group between the KTW, the New Zealand Government and the wider community.

**Figure 3a: The *Kāiga Tokelau Wellington* in the 1960s<sup>27</sup>**



The analogy of the Tokelauan *fale* (house) (Figures 3a, 3b and 3c) is used to symbolise the development of the *māoopopoga* of the *Kāiga Tokelau Wellington* (KTW). Initially, the KTW was seen to be a meeting place for all Tokelauans under

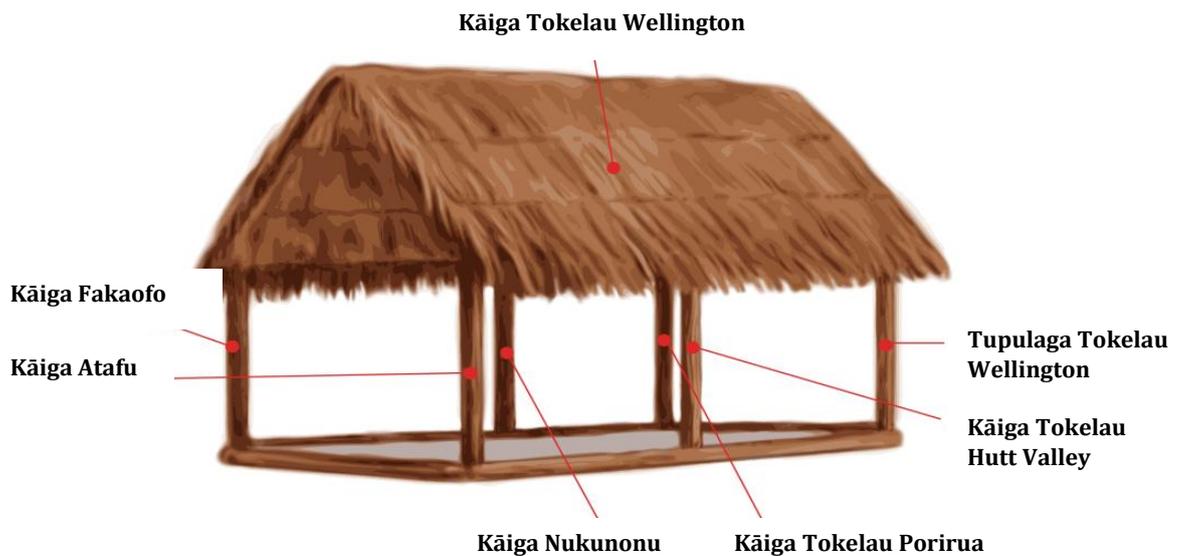
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<sup>27</sup> In the 1960s there was one *māoopopoga* for all Tokelauans (despite which atoll they came from).

the leadership of the elders. In Figure 3a the thatched roof represents the KTW in its role of shelter and umbrella. The un-named posts signify that the *fale* is open to all.

In the late 1970s to the early 1980s the organisation of the *Kāiga Tokelau* Wellington changed in response to community needs (see Figure 3b). Communities began to develop their own atoll groups (*Kāiga Fakaofu*, Atafu and Nukunonu) which though separate, sat firmly within the KTW. Next, and in line with the homeland, *tupulaga* (youth groups) were formed, in this case the *Tupulaga Tokelau* Wellington, Porirua and Hutt Valley. As the KTW thatch roof continued to serve as the umbrella or connecting point, these six groups became the supporting posts for the *fale*. These posts (groups) held and strengthened the roof (KTW) and in turn, the group activities contribute to the wellbeing of the Tokelau community.

**Figure 3b: The Kāiga Tokelau Wellington in the mid 1980s<sup>28</sup>**

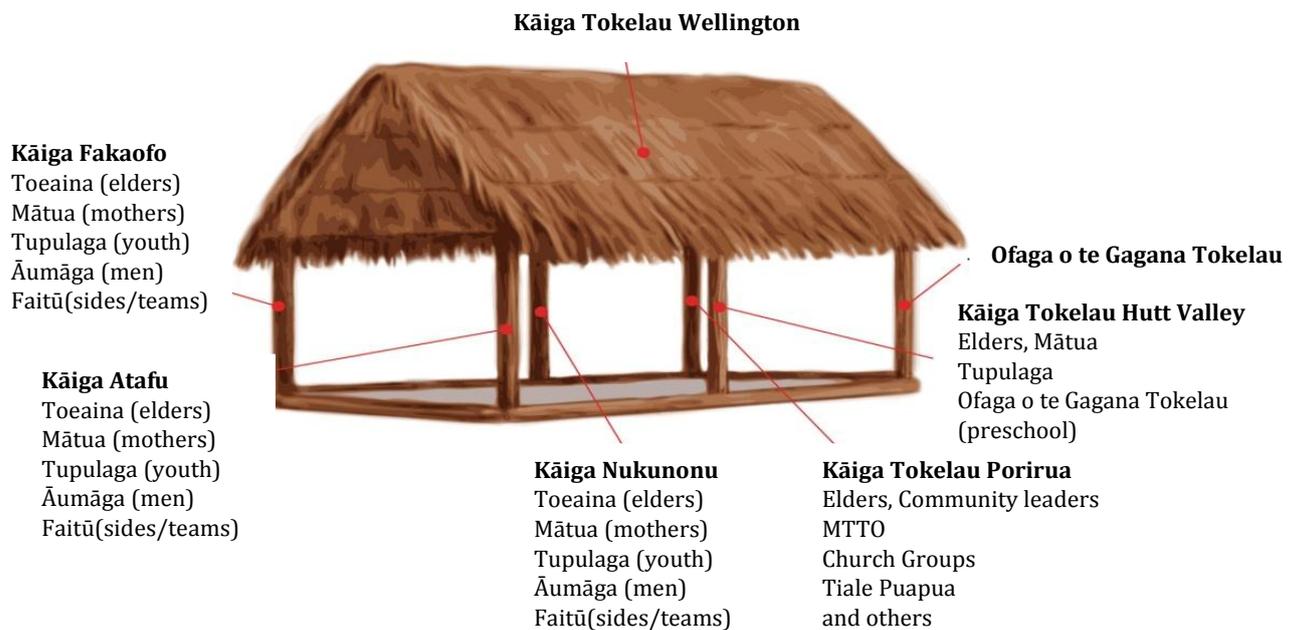


As membership grew, the activities of each group started to diversify and some of these are noted in Figure 3c. For example, the *tupulaga* (youth) expanded their activities by affiliating into regional and national level groups. In addition, this was the time when language nests were introduced in Porirua and the Hutt Valley and again, these joined together into a national OGTA. During these years also, the KTW secured and manages a place for Tokelau in the community radio station – the

<sup>28</sup> Figure 3b demonstrates the development of the KTW when more people arrived. The roof of the *fale* represents KTW who is the umbrella group for the other *māopoopoga*. The six pillars represent the atoll groups, *Kaiga Tokelau Porirua* (KTP), *Kāiga Tokelau Hutt Valley* (KTHV) and the *Tupulaga Tokelau* Wellington.

*Tokelau Tugaki*. During these years also, the Atafu *māopoopoga* achieved their dream of having their own community hall in Porirua (1987) and the Hutt Valley community (known as the *Te Umiumiga a Tokelau Hutt Valley Incorporated Society*) built their own hall for community meetings in 1997. Both these halls are crucial home bases and meeting places for the Tokelauan community, especially for *tupulaga* activities.

**Figure 3c: The Kāiga Tokelau Wellington**



***Youth (Tupulaga) Local and National***

The *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua* (MTTP) demonstrates the way Tokelauan youth groups organize. The main focus of the MTTP is culture, language maintenance, sports activities (for example, teams in the national sevens tournament and local netball competition), homework centres, and educational assistance for members.

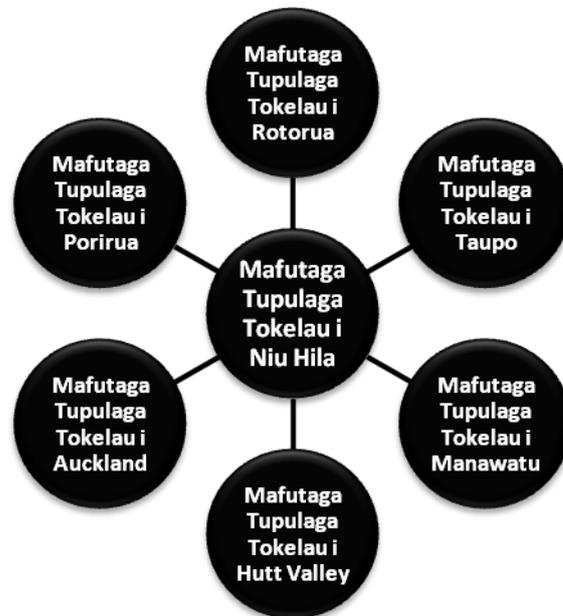
*Ko te tupulaga ko na vae ma na lima*

The *tupulaga* (youth) are the arms and legs of any organization.

In addition to its strong local role, the MTTP affiliates to the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Niu Hila* (MTTNH), the national youth body which was set up in the late 1970s (Figure 4). The MTTNH provides a strong network of support for Tokelauan youth. It is led by an elected president and a committee. Reports are that

development of this national network was a sensitive issue for the elders especially. Elders were forced to rethink their traditional roles – handed down from their ancestors – as leaders and guides for all community activities.

**Figure 4: Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau I Niu Hila Structure**



The MTTNH aims are to promote and maintain the Tokelauan culture through sports, cultural dance and the arts, and more specifically through the organisation of the biannual sports and cultural festivals. These tournaments are mainly funded by the community although contributions from some government agencies (sponsorships) and the Tokelau Government have also been received. Youth from Tokelau, Australia and Hawaii now join these New Zealand based Festivals, as do other Pacific, Maori and *pālagi* individuals. For example, the MTTNH from Auckland has strong links with the Tuvalu community, Rotorua links with the Maori community (given their resettlement relationship in Rotorua), Manawatu has links with the Cook Islands community, and Porirua and Hutt Valley link with their respective Samoan communities. The Tokelau Government has also shown more interest in the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau* movement in recent years. For examples, sport teams selected from New Zealand have represented Tokelau in the South Pacific Games (2007 and 2009).

***Ofaga ote Gagana Tokelau I Niu Hila (Tokelau Language Nests in Aotearoa)***

As noted, the *Ofaga ote Gagana Tokelau I Aotearoa* (OGTA) play an instrumental role in teaching the Tokelauan language and culture in New Zealand and, in educational development generally. OGTA was established in the 1980s in response to the fears expressed by the community that the Tokelauan language and culture were being lost. In the early 1990s, there were 10 unlicensed OGTA throughout the country and fewer than five trained early childhood teachers. Presently, there are five OGTA (four licensed and one informal play group). This preschool initiative has also encouraged Tokelauan women to take up Early Childhood Education as a career. OGTA has been a member of the Pacific Island Early Childhood Council of Aotearoa (PIECCA) since the 1990s and was a ‘shaker’ and heavily involved in the preparation of the ‘Gagana Tokelau – The Tokelau Language Guidelines’ in 2009. The OGTA also plays a major role in the ‘Mind Your Language’ programme and the Tokelauan community radio.

***Tiale Puapua – Mātua Mātutua Tokelau (Tokelau elderly women’s group)***<sup>29</sup>

The *Tiale Puapua* aims are to encourage and share the Tokelauan culture, beliefs and values, which are embedded in Tokelauan arts and crafts. In its aims there is a specific focus on engaging the youth and young people, to revive the traditional language which evolves around arts and crafts. The *Tiale Puapua* is a member of the pan- Pacific organisation – Pacifica Inc. Young Tokelauan women and girls access the weekly activities and planned workshops. The *Tiale Puapua* activities are not restricted to Tokelauans.

***Radio***

Great progress has been made in recent years to ensure the Tokelauan community have access to up to date news and information about New Zealand, the homeland, the Pacific region and international events through radio, especially radio talk back. Tokelauan community radio programmes include the *Tokelau Tugaki* and the *Tifa Ola* (based in Wellington) and the Auckland based station – NiuFM. Again, each of these programmes now links into the regional and global communication networks so increasing opportunities for discussion. It also reinforces the values and

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<sup>29</sup> *Tiale puapua* is a name of a Tokelau native flower. This name is used by the Tokelau elderly women’s group to differentiate their group from other women’s groups.

importance of the Tokelauan language. Programmes are in both the English and the Tokelauan language.

The *Tokelau Tugaki* is managed by the KTW and is funded by the Tokelauan *māoopopoga*. This programme is mainly in the Tokelauan language except for the youth sessions which are bilingual. The *Tokelau Tugaki* airs twice a week (Thursday and Friday evenings) for a total of four hours. One and a half hours of this time is allocated to the youth to discuss youth business. Discussions in the past year included, New Zealand policies, political issues, Tokelau affairs, Youth matters, Education, Law and Justice, Social, cultural and global affairs.

The *Tifa Ola* programme is funded by the Public Health Department and the focus is on everyday health issues for Pacific families, and the NiuFM 531PI programme is broadcast from Auckland. Each of these programmes provide opportunities for Tokelauan communities in New Zealand, the homeland, Hawaii, USA and Australia to ‘just link up and be together’ through online streaming and discuss issues of concern, as well as listen to Tokelauan music and promote the language and culture. Talk back radio and music have become key ways for connecting and re-connecting the Tokelauan community, especially the *tupulaga*, who are recording old Tokelauan songs and composing new ones.

### **Part Three: The Future**

As noted, in 2006 and again in 2007, referendums were carried out by the New Zealand and the Tokelau Government and under the supervision of the United Nations, on the question of whether Tokelau should change from being an unincorporated New Zealand territory to a self governing state in free association with New Zealand, along the lines of the Cook Islands and Niue model. The referendum proposal was:

That Tokelau become a self government state in Free Association with New Zealand on the basis of the Constitution and as in the draft Treaty notified to Tokelau.<sup>30</sup>

The passing of the referendum would have removed Tokelau from the United Nations’ list of non-Self-Government Territories. Significant consultation processes

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<sup>30</sup> Self Determination Package (Council for the Ongoing Government for Tokelau). Retrieved July 16, 2008, from <http://www.tokelau.org.nz/Tokelau+Government/Government/self+determination+package.html>

were held in Tokelau to ensure people understood the implications of the options. Both referendums failed to reach the required two-thirds majority required for the referendum to succeed.

The fact that only Tokelauans aged 18 and older living on the homeland were eligible to vote continues to be the subject of considerable debate and some divisiveness. Despite explanations that this is the standard practice in United Nation's mandated votes on self-determination, significant numbers of Tokelauans living outside the homeland strongly believe they have a right to vote, given their historical and genealogical ties to the land as well as their continued support to their families as for example, via remittances (Huntsman & Kalolo, 2007).

What the referendum did do was open up public discussion on issues directly relating to Tokelauan identity and psyche. These included a questioning of the nature and extent of kinship relations between Tokelauans in New Zealand and those living in Tokelau today, the viability of small nation states such as Tokelau and, perhaps most puzzling for youth especially, why would a nation turn down the opportunity for self-determination? The relationship between elders and youth and, male/ female were also examined carefully for their applicability in these rapidly changing times, as were the impacts of climate change and sea level rising on the homelands. In a website discussion ("Tokelau Referendum result out today"),<sup>31</sup> those living outside of Tokelau (including Tokelauan youth) claimed that the referendum result had been influenced by local politics<sup>32</sup> (especially the church and pastors) which had 'tortured' the entire Tokelauan community – in the homeland and afar.

In a government press release, the Honourable Helen Clark reaffirmed New Zealand's support to assist Tokelau to develop as a vibrant community:

Tokelau can be assured of the New Zealand Government's ongoing friendship and support. We will continue our joint efforts with Tokelau to strengthen and improve the public services in Tokelau. Major work on upgrading essential infrastructure is well underway, and Tokelau continues to make progress in ensuring that each atoll is able to operate as a vibrant, forward looking community (New Zealand Government, 2007).

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<sup>31</sup> See Roboblogger (2007).

<sup>32</sup> See Field (2007).

She added that Tokelau should revisit their constitutional status in the future:

For now, those in Tokelau, and in the wider family of Tokelau outside the atolls, will want to reflect on this latest decision...In doing so it is important that all concerned with the future of Tokelau and its people know that Tokelau will retain the full support of New Zealand (ibid).

## **Summary**

Tokelauan cultural and social history affirms the strength of the separate atoll groups, with quite recent connections together as a nation state. The enduring strength of the customary institutions in working together to ensure a good quality of life are evident in both Tokelau and in the stories of the migration journeys in New Zealand. Notions of equality are also seen in the new governance structures of Tokelau, including the rotation of the top government post. Economically, while the homeland still relies heavily on New Zealand aid, Tokelau's own resilience is seen in the fishing licenses and the Trust arrangements, remittances received and handicraft sales. Probably the most outstanding factor which will influence the nature of the *fakaTokelau* is that the New Zealand population of over 7,000 Tokelauans is almost five times larger than the homeland population. This, along with the high number of the youthful population suggest that the *fakaTokelau* is being constructed in New Zealand. That four percent of under five year olds are Tokelauan language users augurs well however, given the relationship between language and culture.

In New Zealand, the pan-Tokelauan identity of the earlier years is beginning to be broken down as the traditional loyalties to the three atoll groups re-emerge. At the same time, these atoll specific groups are connecting nationally and national organizations are in turn connecting outside the NZ based Tokelau 'circle'. Over time also, there has been a movement away from the ideal of the elders as the decision makers, as seen in the emergence of national youth-led agencies. There has also been a questioning of gender roles and earlier scholarship students have become important mediators for youth, between the old and the new ways.

The available data suggests that the Tokelauan community in New Zealand is not doing so well in terms of language and education. However, the Tokelauan community in New Zealand is resilient and is helping themselves with community

driven initiatives such as Radio. Tokelauan cultural activities within the *māopoopoga* are at the heart of the Tokelauan identity and culture. These community initiatives reinforce the strength of the customary ways as symbolised in the dance, songs, culture, language and the ‘wanting to be together’. However there are questions of whether these community initiatives are sufficient today, or whether more government support would be beneficial.

Exclusion from the referendum brought public discussion of issues not raised before. Views are that the Tokelau communities’ participation in New Zealand has not been equal to their place as a non self-governing territory with New Zealand. Furthermore, that while significant support continues to be directed to the homeland, there has been less focus on the Tokelauan community living in New Zealand. Finally, that New Zealand has tended to deal with the two communities separately rather than seeing the binding relationships between New Zealand’s Tokelau community and the homeland.

## CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

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A number of inter-related perspectives are presented in this literature review. First, is the literature on acculturation and identity and how people who have grown up in one cultural context adapt to the new context based on migration experiences. A brief review on the place of *fakaTokelau* cultural performances is followed by a discussion on the concept of connectedness as defined in New Zealand today. Finally, research about youth migrant experiences is presented. The focus of this literature review is on the youth voice and the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) perspective when developing youth policy that:

Good policy needs to be informed by the viewpoints of those the policy intends to benefit (Ministry of Youth Development, 2009).<sup>33</sup>

Whilst the Tokelauan community is part of the wider New Zealand's Pacific migration population, their small numbers have resulted in them being treated as a minority group within the 'Pacific migrant basket' (Wendt-Samu, 2006). Teaiwa and Mallon (2005) describe the Pacific migrant experience in New Zealand in terms of 'ambivalent kinships' as:

...those traced between Pacific people and Maori through commonalities of history and culture; between Pacific people and palagi, through shared histories of colonial and post-colonial exchange; between the nation of New Zealand and the nations of Pacific Islands region, through shared geography and the vicissitudes of global economic arrangements. There is also the kinship relationship of Pacific people in New Zealand to their homelands. Across all these sets of kinship relations, gender and generation have their own particular expressions (p.207).

### **Acculturation and cultural identity**

The overwhelming theme of the Pacific migrant journeys is the search for a better life. This is usually framed in terms of educational opportunities which leads to better paid jobs and, ensures a better quality of life than in the homelands.<sup>34</sup> In his pioneering research on acculturation, Berry (1997) proposes the two main issues

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<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Youth Development, *Youth participation benefits information sheet, 2009*, Retrieved March 23, 2010, from <http://www.myd.govt.nz/working-with-young-people/youth-participation-in-decision-making/index.html>

<sup>34</sup> See Fairbairn-Dunlop and Makisi (2003).

facing persons from non-dominant ethno-cultural groups, are cultural maintenance (to what extent is maintaining our cultural identity and characteristics important and to be striven for) and contact and participation (to what extent will we become involved in other groups, or remain primarily amongst ourselves). Berry (ibid) outlines a framework of four acculturation strategies to capture the interaction of cultural maintenance and contact, including the degree to which migrants maintain their cultural identity in the new setting. These are assimilation, separation, integration and marginalisation (see Figure 5). Berry proposes that the level and degree of acculturation is related to three factors: (i) the social and personal variables that reside in the society of origin (where a person is coming from), (ii) conditions in the society of settlement and, (iii) the phenomena that both exist prior to and arise during the course of acculturation (Berry, 1997, p.5). Furthermore, the integration and separation categories depend on whether or not other members of the migrants' cultural group share in the wish to maintain the groups' culture.

**Figure 5: Acculturation Strategies (orientations)**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Assimilation</b>	Individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures.
<b>Separation</b>	Individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others.
<b>Integration</b>	Individuals are interested in both maintaining ones original culture while in daily interaction with others. Some degree of cultural integrity is maintained whilst at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network.
<b>Marginalisation</b>	Where there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural lost) and little interest in having relationship with others (often for reason of exclusion or discrimination.)

Source: Berry (1997).

This is further supported by Ward (2008, p.4) that applying these four profiles, an acculturating individual can orient themselves to their traditional culture, the wider society, to both or neither. If both cultural maintenance and contact are important, an integrated orientation results; if neither is important, marginalisation will result. Assimilation arises when only contact is valued whilst separation results when only cultural maintenance is of concern. Integration is seen to be the most preferred strategy and the strategy associated with the most adaptive outcomes, including psychological and socio-cultural adaptation (see Berry, Kim, Power, Young & Bujaki, 1989, as cited in Ward, 2008; Berry et al., 2006). In the International

Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY), the integration acculturation profile was also preferred by youth all around the world (Gezentsvey, 2008).

Factors influencing acculturation include age, gender, education and economic security, reasons for migration, (including push/pull motivation and expectations and forced migration) cultural distance between the two cultures (in this case Tokelau and New Zealand) and personal factors. Migrant responses may be reactive, creative (new forms not found in either society) and delayed (initiating changes that appear more fully years later) (Berry, 1997). The experiences of older migrant youth are seen to be more problematic given that the teenage years are the transition years between childhood and adulthood. Phinney (1990, as cited by Berry, 1997, p.21) notes that identity comes to the fore and interacts with questions of ethnic identity during the teenage years.

Berry (1997) sums up the place of personal cultural identity and security in the acculturation relationship between minority culture and dominant society in this way:

People without a sense of themselves (i.e. a cultural identity of their own, rooted in some degree of cultural maintenance) and who feel rejected by others (facing daily experiences of prejudice and discrimination) are exposed to significant psychological costs in their own communities. Such a situation also imposes costs on the dominant society. Similarly members of ethno cultural groups who do not attempt to understand and accept the core values and basic norms of the society of settlement risk irritating members of the larger society, again stimulating social conflict. The management of pluralism depends both on the acceptance as a contemporary fact of life, and on the mutual willingness to change (p.29).

### **Ethno-cultural continuity**

Building on Berry's (1997) model, Gezentsvey (2008) argues that much of the acculturation research has focused on the ways ethnic minority groups define and locate themselves within the dominant majority group. Furthermore, that research has focused more on the 'present' with limited focus on hopes for the future can influence present behaviours. She cites Verkuyten (2005, p.120) that the concern with status and power has led to the belief that the migrant relationship with the majority group is all that matters, and that this view ignores or underestimates the

importance of continuity or the imagined history, culture and homeland of many of these groups. Gezentsvey (2008) asks why it is that ethno-cultural communities, who have been living outside their native countries for decades, centuries or even thousands of years, manage to both interact with the larger society and preserve their cultural heritage (p.32). She proposes the construct of ethno-cultural continuity as another element in the acculturation profile, noting that:

...the continuity with the past gives an anchor in time, provides a social location in the present and serves as a starting point for the future (p.35).

Verkuyten (2005) describes the endurance of the customary ways with these words:

...the sense of commitment and obligation towards former and future generations, for example as a wanting to maintain and protect the symbolic and cultural heritage. (Verkuyten, 2005, p. 83).

Gezentsvey (2008) proposes that long-term acculturation is a collective journey which takes place within specific socio-historical contexts. Following on, continuity is seen as a group oriented acculturation goal for diasporic and indigenous peoples (p.36). She proposes that the construct of ethno-cultural continuity exists when ethnicity is recognized as: membership through direct ancestry to a cohesive cultural collective that shares common origins; consists of a core set of spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features while simultaneously acknowledging the heterogeneous nature of ethno-cultural groups and there is individual variation in identification and adherence to customs. Gezentsvey further describes these groups as living entities that undergo change while retaining their uniqueness as they travel through time (socio-historical contexts) and space (larger societies).

Gezentsvey tested for individual motivation to maintain ethno-cultural heritage (self oriented), transmit this to their children (family oriented), and ensure collective endurance (group oriented). She found that motivation for cultural continuity was significantly stronger in Jews and Maori than Chinese in New Zealand. These findings showed that motivation for ethno-cultural continuity predicted behaviour and behavioural intentions for both the Maori and Jewish samples (Gezentsvey, 2008).

The power of passing on, ‘imagined’ history, and the desire to maintain and protect one’s cultural heritage is seen in Gershon’s studies with Samoan youth in the United States of America (2007). Gershon found that in her sample, the community regarded Samoa as ‘a nostalgic utopia space’ and the site of authentic and properly enacted cultural knowledge. She comments that while the ‘Samoa’ described in her sample groups might not exist, it served as a place marker, especially when migrants negotiated what would count as Samoan cultural knowledge. Samoa was ‘the imagined counterpoint to life in the United States’, a site where people never have to create Samoanness out of hybridity, since with Samoanness there is the natural and pure state. Gershon cites Drozdow St Christian (1997, p.33) that ‘Samoanness’ is a totalizing code...sought after or pursued rather than adhered to or obeyed. Samoanness is a Samoan/s dream of what should be...a process of desire, rather than a fixed standard of regulation.

### **The fakaTokelau<sup>35</sup>**

As discussed, the nature of the values and beliefs migrants bring with them influences the acculturation process (Berry 1997). The *fakaTokelau* has been discussed earlier in Chapter Two so a few points are raised here. First, the Tokelau (and Pacific) world view is a holistic one encompassing the social, economic, spiritual and the physical. Second, in the *fakaTokelau*, the individual is firmly set within the family and communal systems. This idea, seen in Tamasese’s poem of being Samoan, is also relevant to ways of knowing and being in the *fakaTokelau*:

I am not an individual,  
I am an integral part of the cosmos.  
I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies.  
I am not an individual because  
I share a tofi with my family, my village, and my nation.  
I belong to my family and my family belongs to me.  
I belong to a village and my village belongs to me.  
I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me.  
This is the essence of my sense of belonging.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See also Chapter Two.

<sup>36</sup> Cited in The Health Research Council of New Zealand Guidelines on Pacific Health Research, May 2005

Individual responsibility is to the family and community and, acknowledging the relationship of the community (including those who have gone before) with the land, the seas and the cosmos. These community relationships for the *fakaTokelau* is demonstrated in the *inati* system of sharing, the *māopoopo* village and family discussions and the *matai*'s duty to preserve the family's land and sea resources for the use of future generations. Community values are also reinforced in the oratory, the narratives and the songs (*fatele*). Noted anthropologist Huntsman (1996) references that ancestral messages are embedded in the songs and oratory in making these important accounts of Tokelau (and Pacific) history and identity.

An understanding of the fullest meanings symbolized in the Tokelauan songs and dance is important in this research, given that Tokelauan clubs and cultural festivals have become almost synonymous with Tokelau identity today. Noted ethnomusicologist Thomas (2007) states that the images used in Tokelauan chants reflected the things that were of value. For example, in the earlier chants the prominent images were from nature, the gods and the sacred nexus of man and God. Thomas also highlights that dance was a critical element in the performance of songs: dance was the feature that held people's attention and helped explain the words of the song. Not only that, the dance presented a beautiful picture of the community working together (Thomas, 2007).

Thomas explains how the sense of community was reinforced again in the way songs and dances composed and developed. He also notes that the ownership of these communally produced texts has become an issue:

As far as knowing the composer it was always hard to get an answer, until I realized that many songs are made by altering older songs perhaps changing a word (the name of a place, legend or individual), or changing the style of performance (old *hiva hahaka* to modern *fatele*). These are new songs but they cannot be claimed by the person who has adapted them. Copyright within the community did not exist (2007, p.10).

Thomas describes some of the ways the Tokelau's performing arts have incorporated changes over time, including religious views and gender norms:

Whether a song was sung and danced by women (men in rows behind) or men (women in the back rows) didn't occur to me at first. I didn't know that in the very

old days most dances were either for men or women. Later generations brought men and women together in the dance, but still there was a distinction...An interesting difference could be observed between communities which were predominantly Catholic and those which were Protestant. The churches had different attitudes to traditional culture and some allowed the old songs to go on (and even adapted them for religious purposes) and others prohibited them (2007, p.11).

### **New Zealand (the host country) and connectedness**

The migration process and the responsiveness of the host country to the new comers influence the acculturation experience. The ‘forced migration’ of the Tokelauans from Olohega is an example. Otsuka & Wong (2007) note that little government support was given to those evicted from Olohega as they moved to American Samoa and then to Hawaii for employment in a pineapple plantations.<sup>37</sup> Over time, this community lost many of its Tokelauan cultural practices nor did they teach their children the mother tongue. The Olohega experienced a reawakening of their heritage when a Tokelau national cultural group performed at Hawaii on its way to the Pacific Art festival. This community is now teaching their children and grandchildren the culture that they are now reclaiming. This cultural revitalization initiative is being driven by *Te Lumanaki o Tokelau I Amelika* (The future of Tokelau in America) and *Te Taki* (the guide/lead) Tokelau Community Incorporated, with the elders as advisers. Reports show that youth are gaining self esteem as they participate in these Tokelau activities. The Administration for Native Americans (ANA) recently awarded a grant for a Tokelauan language assessment.<sup>38</sup>

By way of contrast, the New Zealand government gives priority to the *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (Treaty of Waitangi) (MSD, 2009b) and takes great pride in its reputation as a nation which encourage all citizens to live harmoniously, form healthy relationships, embrace cultural uniqueness and, share a strong national identity.<sup>39</sup> views are that migrant cultures and languages enrich the New Zealand national identity (DOL, 2005).

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<sup>37</sup> See TVNZ One (2009).

<sup>38</sup> Under the jurisdiction of American Samoa, Tokelauans are considered to be Native Americans (Otsuka & Wong, 2007, pp.3-5).

<sup>39</sup> See for example, Ministry of Social Development, Social Report 2007.

Some argue that integration can only be pursued in societies that are multicultural, where there is a widespread acceptance of the value of cultural diversity; relatively low levels of prejudice, positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups and a sense of attachment to, or identification with the larger society by all groups. Gezentsvey (2008) on the other hand, questions whether ethno-cultural continuity can transpire under conditions such as multiculturalism or, is an element of conflict necessary to people striving to maintain the customary ways?

In her description of the experience of Jewish migrants in New Zealand, Gluckman (1999) states that their successful acculturation experience was based on their ability to overcome their differences as a group, to build on their commonalities, and, to use their past as 'pointers to the future' (p.13). Rosenthal (as cited in Gluckman, 1999, p.73), on the other hand, sees Jewish secure place as a double edged sword: that the freedom to live fully as a Jew, which New Zealand affords, might lead to assimilation.

### ***Connecting***

The focus in much of the New Zealand government literature today has been on the need for citizens to connect and the benefits of connecting – both to the individual and to the society.<sup>40</sup> Social structures which form the core cultural context for connectedness include the family, church, peers for example and the media. Connectedness has been described in many ways, such as:

Young people who have positive connections with others will feel more confidence within themselves and have courage to develop new relationships, take ownership of their lives and want to participate and contribute to the development of their families, community and nation (Ministry of Social Development, 2007).

The Ministry of Youth Development (n.d.)<sup>41</sup> sees youth development as when the youth have 'a sense of contributing something of value to society, feelings of connectedness to others and to society, a belief that they have choices about their future and feelings of being positive and comfortable with their own identity.' In the Youth

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<sup>40</sup> See for example Ministry of Social Development (2002).

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Youth Development, (n.d.), *What is youth development?* Retrieved March 20, 2010, from <http://www.myd.govt.nz/working-with-young-people/youth-development-best-practice/youth-development-approach.html>

Connectedness Project<sup>42</sup> connectedness is described as ‘*whanaungatanga* or, as relationships’. Words used are, ‘getting involved’ and ‘being connected to,’ ‘being part of something’ (like a family or team), ‘doing things together with others’, ‘feeling like you belong and feeling supported.’ I would argue that there is a difference between connecting and, the Tokelauan understanding of relationships. For example, the Tokelauan word *kāiga* (family) refers to any *māopoopoga* (gathering of people)<sup>43</sup> whether in the home, village, church, school and or other community groups. Embedded in the term, are multiple relationships and bonds between people and groups - whether these are related by blood or not. These relationships are bounded by ethical values and beliefs including the responsibility to protect, maintain and strengthen. *Kāiga* is inclusive, nurturing and reflects a sense of belonging and closeness which has its history and beginnings that can be accounted to Tokelau’s creation stories.

Fox (2009) comes a little closer to the Tokelauan concept of relationships. In testing the YCP data for a relationship between the traditional arts and well being, Fox (2009) defines connectedness as including a sense of belonging, inclusion, caring, interdependence or emotional closeness. Fox’s study found a relationship between arts participation, ethnic identity, connectedness and, well being. He proposed that youth from ethnic cultures (such as the Pacific) who participated in traditional arts had a higher sense of well being as well as better positive connections to their families and communities.

Tavite and Tavite (2009) in their study use the term connecting to describe the safety nets which family, friends and colleagues provide. In their view, these safety nets provide opportunities for emotional release and for enhancing feelings of connection with others. They argue that creating a sense of connectedness prevents feelings of isolation and low self-esteem which are major contributors to suicidal attempts and fatal suicides. They cite Howard (1986):

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<sup>42</sup> The YCP is a three year study carried out by the Roy McKenzie Research Centre (VUW) in partnership with New Zealand Council Educational Research. The project targets 10 to 15 year olds. The research approach is a mixed-method, longitudinal design.

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter Two.

...societal transition from traditional to modern with attendant intergenerational conflict and pressures on the younger generation is an underlying commonality casual theme of Pacific suicide' (as cited in Tavite & Tavite, 2009, p.78).

Tavite and Tavite (2009) suggest that Tokelau's high rates of suicide could be due to Tokelauan youths' lack of connection with the Heritage or the host culture.

### ***Connectedness and Pacific youth***

The former Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) stressed the urgency of creating pathways for Pacific youth to become the future leaders. He described Pacific youth as 'the Pacific wealth' and noted:

The excitement and vigour of our Pacific youth needs to be harnessed and directed to face the challenges of this country's future economic development (MPIA, 2003, p.2).

This was the spirit which drove the preparation of the '*Ala Fou*' (New Pathways) *MPIA's Strategic Directions for Pacific Youth in New Zealand*.<sup>44</sup> This framework for policy and planning for Pacific youth is based on youth views on leadership and identity, expressed at a national Pacific youth workshop. At this workshop, participants emphasized very compellingly their desire (and need) to connect with their Pacific heritage and identity. Priorities listed were to:

- Build cultural confidence and a positive sense of identity amongst Pacific youth in New Zealand.
- Develop strong leadership amongst Pacific youth in all areas of New Zealand society.
- Equip Pacific youth with up to date information on the knowledge wave economy and future focused industries and,
- Assist Pacific families and communities to support Pacific youth in achieving their aspirations for social and economic prosperity (MPIA, 2003).

Youth Connectedness was also the theme of the 'Health and Wellbeing of Secondary School Students in New Zealand' Study (2008) which comprised a sample of 9107 participants from 96 secondary schools. Study questions related to injuries, sexual and mental health concerns, nutrition, exercise and substance use. Findings reinforced the importance of home, school and community engagement in supporting

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<sup>44</sup> See MPIA *Ala Fou* – New Pathways: Strategic Directions for Pacific Youth in New Zealand

the health and wellbeing of young people and their sense of connectedness. The responses of the 1114 Pacific participants in that study were disaggregated by the four largest participating groups (Samoa Cook Islands, Tonga and Niue) and compiled in the 'Health Profile of Pacific Youth' (Mila-Schaaf, Robinson, Schaaf, Denny & Watson, 2008). The Pacific youth perceived themselves as being influenced by socio-economic disadvantage. Their health data was poor with females showing poorer health and wellbeing profiles than the males.

On the other hand, there are many positive examples of Pacific youth connecting, especially in the arts and sports, success. Stars in the performing arts include the Yandall sisters, Che Fu and King Kapisi, comedians David Fane and Oscar Kightley, and opera stars Benjamin Makisi and Jonathan Lemalu. The Tokelauan group Te Vaka has won international acclaim. Sporting successes include David Tua, netballers Bernice Mene and Rita Fatialofa and All Blacks, such as Michael Jones, Tana Umaga and Jonah Lomu.<sup>45</sup> However, these levels of success are not reflected in educational outcomes (MOE, 2009; MPIA & Statistics New Zealand, 2010).

### **Migrant journeys**

While there are common experiences, each migrant has "a different life trajectory in relationship to and with the homeland" (Gershon, 2007, p.792). The migration experience is shaped by migrants' values, beliefs and epistemological assumptions which underlie their understandings of cultural identity and shape their response to the migration experience. Mitaera (1997) sees the identity of Pacific people in New Zealand as more a genealogical positioning while others, like Fairbairn-Dunlop and Makisi (2003) see identity to be a sociocultural political construction and changing, a process in which Pacific people play a strong role in determining their position. Manying (2008) describes ones' sense of identity as a "sociological construction not genealogical imagination" (p.4). She notes "identity is not self seeking but influenced by larger social forces" (p.5).

The migration process is often described in terms of conflict, including culture shift, culture shedding, cultural conflict and, marginalisation. Gershon (2007) sees a tension for youth between exploring new relationships to social order and resolving a

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<sup>45</sup> See Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi (2003, p. 41).

supposedly new tension between viewing Samoan cultural identity as a choice and as a given. Tupuola (2004) describes New Zealand-born Pacific youth as a “contradictory and ambiguous group with multiple sociocultural and political commitments” (p.90). Anae (1998) and Macpherson (2001) argue that there are differences in the identities constructed by Samoan youth born outside of their homelands. In their view, the majority of those born in New Zealand no longer regard themselves as ‘Samoan’ because they see the Samoan identity as referring to the migrant identities their parents brought with them from Samoa – the Samoan identity which “linked them to nuclear families, extended families, villages, districts and religious faith which defined and organised the social, economic and political realities of daily existence” (Macpherson, 2001, p.70).

Tupuola (2004) proposes that identity can no longer be considered as a static entity but as a multi-faceted construct (Garcia, 1982, as cited in Tupuola, 2004, p.90). Tupuola refers to a United States study by Garcia and De Greiff (2000) which noted the benefits of group labels, such as Latino and Hispanic, but that these categories were problematic. Schutte (2000, p.5, as cited in Tupuola, 2004, p.90) suggested that Latino were in a great situation to negotiate and integrate the plurality of identity, to give them some control in constructing their identity. Tupuola also notes Krebs’ (1999) concept of edgewalkers – as the transient and shifting roles of minority youth in the United States of America. Tupuola sees edgewalkers as being resilient to cultural shift and maintaining secure cultural identities wherever they go, and sees this as a healthy process in the post modern world (Krebs, 1999, p.9, as cited in Tupuola, 2004, p.90).

Gershon (2007) challenges the notion that diaspora disrupts families and/or that diasporic families are pressured to reconstitute in new environments. In her view, second generation migrants remain part of their homeland and also link with other diasporic communities (to become) part of a much bigger network (Gershon, 2007, p.75). Gershon expands on Hau’ofa’s ‘sea of islands’ (1994) referring to this as ‘interconnected webs of exchanges and kinship’ which Pacific ethnographers have always interpreted as a ‘sea of families’ (Gershon, 2007, p.474). She sees the circulation of knowledge between the diaspora and the homeland *kāiga* as the way people’s sense of identity is reinforced and proposes this exchange of ideas as a two way process between the diaspora and the homeland. Gershon’s statement that

participation in this circle of sharing ideas is influenced by one's linguistic ability or inability (2007, p.487) raises questions about what kind of knowledge is circulated through these networks, who has access to this knowledge and how is this knowledge used by the diasporic communities or *kāiga*. This notion regarding circles of information exchange has particular relevance to this study, for example, the issues surrounding Tokelau's recent Referendum. It relates also to Anae's (2003) experience that acquiring the necessary (Samoan) knowledge provides the freedom for one to stand with confidence in one's own community.

Hoëm (2004, p.6) describes the Tokelauan community in New Zealand as trans-local networks and, contemporary Argonauts. Her extensive research has focused on the contemporary movement of the Tokelauan community between the homeland and New Zealand (which Hoëm refers to as village communities and urban centres) with the aim of identifying the connections and discontinuities of this migrant journeying. In Hoëm's view, there is a deep continuity between present-day Pacific movements and the journeys of earlier periods. She proposes that this does not fit the labour migration pattern – which is commonly used to explain Pacific migration to New Zealand. Instead, that Pacific migration can be regarded as an expansive form of sociality (Hoëm, 2004, p.6).

### ***New Zealand-Borns***

Language competency in the mother tongue has been a central consideration in the growing body of knowledge about the experiences of 'New Zealand-borns.' Tiatia (1998) refers to a state of intergenerational conflict as young Samoans find themselves caught between cultures. She sees a struggle between the Samoan culture, which prescribes an understanding and speaking of the mother tongue, and the New Zealand dominant culture which requires that English be spoken. Fuatagaumu (2003) writes of his experience as the only Samoan student in a middle-class neighbourhood school and being subject to labels such as 'coconut', 'stupid coconut' and violent Samoan. However, his experience with his Samoan community was a little better, although he felt like an outsider amongst the people he believed to be his spiritual and historical roots. Furthermore, he was labelled a 'New Zealand Samoan' because of his inability to speak Samoan. Fuatagaumu (2003) states that rather than seeing themselves as having been deprived of an identity, Samoan youth should embrace an identity that is truly and uniquely their own (p.220).

Both Anae (2003) and Fuatagaumu (2003) see the family and community as having the responsibility to teach New Zealand-born youth the Samoan language so as to lessen the marginalisation and dysfunction many Pacific youth may feel. Fuatagaumu (2003) says his parents' decision to focus on English placed him in a vulnerable position later in life, when he tried to form connections with institutions that were important to him. Anae (2003) describes her feelings of alienation and estrangement which later turned to anger and rage because she did not fit in. For Anae, schooling was the means for triggering new relationships and networks. Furthermore, her growing empathy with Maoris was influential in her forming relationships with the Black Power Movement. Anae (2003, p.89) writes:

I am – a Samoan, but not a Samoan  
To my aiga in Samoa, I am a Palagi  
I am – a New Zealander, but not a New Zealander...  
To New Zealanders I am a 'bloody coconut' at worst, a 'Pacific Islander' at best  
I am – to my Samoan parents, their child.

She argues that a sub-culture of Samoans is developing in New Zealand which she terms '*tautala NZ-born*'. In her view, even without the language, New Zealand-borns still feel Samoan (Anae, 1998).

In describing her childhood years in Petone, which was home to a very large Tokelauan community, Lemihio (2003) acknowledges that there were times when she was not proud to be a Tokelauan. The shaping of her identity as a Tokelauan woman came when she took a twelve month teaching contract in Tokelau. Lemihio (2003) writes:

When my feet first touched the ground of Fakaofu, I was overcome by this feeling of utter bewilderment. I felt as if I was dreaming. I couldn't believe I had reached Tokelau... (then) Setting foot on Nukunonu was an emotional and overwhelming moment as the images my parents had spoken about became real. The moment I stepped onto Nukunonu I placed my hands in the sand. I felt I was home, in the land of my heritage. I recognized the church and the falepa (village meeting place) that I had seen in photos and videos (p.163).

Lemihio (2003) faced many challenges in adjusting to life in the homeland,<sup>46</sup> including communal living, the role of women, Tokelauan humour, ‘the way Tokelauans on Tokelau are clever in the use of metaphors’ and, her increased understanding of the uniqueness of each of the three atolls:

...each Tokelau atoll has a distinct intonation. When Tokelauans speak, we can make an instant connection of which atoll they belong to by the intonation they use. When I speak, people know I am from Nukunonu (p.167)

Lemihio (2003) urged New Zealand-born Tokelauans to ‘check out’ Tokelau so as to understand themselves as New Zealand-born Tokelauans:

New Zealanders still think of Pacific people as migrants ... I don’t let myself become a victim of any systems because I am comfortable with who I am. I know that many New Zealand-borns face many dilemmas. What keeps me believing that it’s okay to be a New Zealand-born is my understanding that the shaping of my identity as a Tokelauan born and raised in a different country is all to do with circumstances and the history of events (p.167)

The influence of intermarriage also impacts on identity formation as seen in Manying Ip’s (2008) study of Maori and Chinese, who she describes as two marginalised groups which were ‘further marginalised by intermarriage’. Manying found that Maori women who had relationships with Chinese men were disowned by their families, as were the children of these marriages. Intermarriage brought social distance as well as a concern that Maori culture might be diminished (pp.7-8). However, the withdrawal of the *whānau* (family) support groups saw the church providing vital spiritual and social support for many of these families. Manying (2008) sees this church involvement as opening another door for these families to connect with other cultures. Another finding was that in some cases these families preferred to be identified with the church rather than as Maori or Chinese (p.11).

### **Tokelauan youth journeys, expressed through theatre**

Tokelau youth attending the biannual *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau i Niu Hila* (MTTNH) cultural festival in the early 1990s expressed their strong desire to learn

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<sup>46</sup> See also ‘Sons for the Return home’ Albert Wendt.

more about their culture. They valued this opportunity to connect with the wider community (participation in the festivals allowed them to bring their ‘feelings of Tokelau’ to the fore) but said that sports and dancing was no longer enough – they wanted to learn other parts of the Tokelauan culture using new medium of cultural expression and not be restricted to the traditional ways (Hoëm, 2004, p.28). Some of these youth living in the Hutt Valley, went on to form a theatre group comprising New Zealand-born and Tokelau-born youth and named this group the *Tokelau Te Ata*. The name, *Tokelau Te Ata* was a challenge in itself - having various meanings such as the mirror/image of Tokelau, the dawn of Tokelau and, reflections on Tokelau. This naming was a deliberate attempt by the youth to alert Tokelauans on the need to rethink their situation in New Zealand. Hoëm’s publication ‘Theatre and Political Processes: Staging Identities in Tokelau and New Zealand’ (2004) discusses the ways youth identity and acculturation were portrayed in the series of plays developed by the *Tokelau Te Ata*.<sup>47</sup> In Hoëm’s view, the vast experiences of the members provided the courage for them to raise really challenging Tokelau issues they had witnessed such as abuse, incest and suicide. Further, the multiple realities of youth captured in these plays pointed to the fact that significant changes were already taking place for the New Zealand Tokelauan community. In each play, the focus was on how the Tokelauan community had adapted to the new social spaces (Hoëm, 2004, p.147). Hoëm proposed that the homeland-born youth were more grounded in their identity as Tokelauan compared with the New Zealand-born youth.

*Tagi* (weeping) the first play, depicted the history of Tokelau - from inter-atoll warfare in the pre-contact years, through the slave traders, to the Missionary contact and Tokelau’s immigration to Samoa and New Zealand. This play drew on the published accounts of Tokelau history from the *Matagi Tokelau* and from Tokelauan songs which were the traditional methods used by the Tokelauan people to store their knowledge (see Thomas, 1986; Thomas et al., 1990). The elders in the play shared the experiences of the earlier Tokelauan settlers in New Zealand (often referring to them as the good old days), where they congregated by living together in overcrowding situations (see also Pene, Peita & Howden-Chapman, 2009). At the same time, devastating issues of sexual abuse, neglect and alcohol abuse were presented, which contributed to resentment, loss of trust and youth disconnecting

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<sup>47</sup> Note the researcher joined this theatre group for the second play ‘Mafine’ (1995)

from families and joining gangs and becoming street kids. This play concluded with youth asking their parents - why have we come to this land? (Hoëm, 2004, p.167). The second play *Māfine* challenged the role and position of women within the Tokelauan social organisations and settings (pp.168-178).

The combination of *fatele* (action songs), old and new songs interwoven in these plays proved an extremely effective way for youth to communicate their concerns. Hoëm (2004) described this medium as ‘theatre for community development’ and ‘new genre to express’ (p.27). However, the use of theatre for community development was not new to Tokelau. For example, this is the way children, youth and children convey their messages in the White Sunday presentations.<sup>48</sup> Drama and oratory and song, have been the traditional ways of reciting and reaffirming kinship ties (genealogies) as well as connections with other Pacific Island groups.

Tokelauan was the language used in these plays. Some of the New Zealand-born Tokelauans were able to speak the language, whilst most only understood the language. However, Hoëm (2004, p.31) sees their focus on the task enabled them to overcome these barriers in order for message to be received by the target audience.

As well as critiquing the presentations of the *Tokelau Te Ata* group, Hoëm took the opportunity to follow some of the group members to build on her research project. As one of the members of the *Tokelau Te Ata* group, I pay tribute to Hoëm’s ongoing contribution to the documentation of the Tokelauan culture and knowledge. At the same time, while I valued her friendship, I was not fully aware of her research role as she traveled with us. It was not until I undertook this research that I found her publication. As one whose voice features prominently in this study, this incident reinforced to me the ethical importance of reporting back research to participants so as to minimize surprises and avoid misinterpretations.

## **Summary**

Berry’s (1997) acculturation model and Gezentsvey’s (2005) concept of ethno-cultural continuity provide a framework against which the field work of youth perceptions can be set. As noted, the acculturation experience is influenced by

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<sup>48</sup> White Sunday is a children’s day celebrated by the London Missionary Society (LMS) congregational churches in Tokelau every October. It is also practiced in other Pacific island cultures.

factors such as a) the strength of the cultural values and world view of the migrating groups; b) the responsiveness of the host community to the differences migrants may bring as well as the host- migrant relationship (in this case the pan-Pacific ties, and Tokelau's place as a non-self governing territory of New Zealand), and c) the acculturation process itself, including factors such as the time and place of migration, the size of the migrant community, age, and sex. In many cases, the migrant experience has been described as a time of challenge and confusion, particularly for the New Zealand-born youth, including the loss of the mother tongue and the culture and a questioning of their identity. Intergenerational conflict, including the weakening of ties with their families and other community groups are other factors influencing the acculturation process. Recent emphasis in New Zealand has been given to youth connecting, with their families, communities and other groups. This is seen as a way of increasing youth self esteem and sense of belonging and their social and economic participation. Connecting to community through culture – especially the values and knowledge embedded in the traditional chants and dances – has also been noted. The vulnerable place of the New Zealand-borns has been touched on and the valuing of the return to the homelands as ways of increasing identity and security. Weaving through all is the need for youth to have a place to express their hopes and concerns. In this case, the example of the use of theatre provided such a space.

## **CHAPTER 4: THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS**

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### **Introduction**

A qualitative research methodology was the most appropriate way to capture the voices of Tokelauan youth about their experiences in New Zealand, their feelings of identity and hopes for the future. These youth narratives would add meaning to the limited data available on the experiences of Tokelau youth and surface ideas for further study. Part one of this chapter outlines the research methodology adopted for this study including a brief discussion about the status of Pacific research models and frameworks. Parts two and three discuss the research process.

### **Part One: Methodology**

Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe qualitative research as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p.17). While a quantitative approach is limited for capturing authentic voices of minority groups (Burns & Groves, 1993) qualitative research strategies, seek to understand, illuminate and extrapolate, are non-controlling but open and, inclusive of smaller groups (Hoepfl, 1997, as cited in Golafshani, 2003). Qualitative research is the kind of research that produces findings based on real-world settings and where the “phenomenon of interest unfold naturally” and in context-specific settings (Patton, 2001, p.39 cited in Golafshani, 2003, p.600).

A qualitative strategy was also relevant given that the study aims does not set out to test or compare the experiences of Tokelauan youth but to capture the multiple realities of their lives (Burns & Grove, 1993) and relations with the Tokelau homeland.

### **Phenomenology**

Phenomenology was selected as the strategy for this pilot study of Tokelauan youth perceptions. Willis (2007) defines the phenomenological approach as both a philosophy and research method. It is a way of investigating how people comprehend and understand their world and is sensitive to and values peoples’ perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, feelings and emotions (Denscombe, 1998, p.97).

Denscombe (2003) describes phenomenology as an alternative approach to positivism and encompasses other styles of research that are not connected with measurement, statistics and scientific methods. He proposes that phenomenology differs from positivism in that it is subjective rather than objective, descriptive rather than analytical and features interpretation rather than measurement with a focus on agency rather than structure:

Good phenomenological research involves a detailed description of the experience that is being investigated and is not concerned so much with what is happening so much as how the events get interpreted by those involved (Denscombe, 2003, p 101).

The phenomenological approach can also be used alongside other research techniques – such as participant observation and group meetings – (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982)<sup>49</sup> which again match the activities undertaken in this research. It is well documented, that the Pacific’s predominantly oral communities, knowledge and information is shared through stories, songs, and dance and, in the ‘silences’. Peoples’ stories, or narratives, are a critical component in research with the Tokelauan community.

The wide and open perspective of the phenomenological approach also increases the likelihood of capturing the nature and extent of relationships (Patton, 2002). It takes into account the holistic nature of Pacific knowledge systems and ways these encapsulate social, economic, cultural and spiritual values. For instance, in the Pacific systems, the role of the individual is firmly set within the family and communal systems and daily activity is influenced by a consideration for the past, the present and the future. More specific to this study will be the focus on the connectedness and the relationships of Tokelauan youth (in New Zealand and the homeland) with other New Zealand and Pacific youth.

### **Pacific research models**

There is growing debate in the Pacific community about whether Pacific researchers should (or must) use Pacific research frameworks, as well as how these might influence the relevance of their research and findings. Leading Maori researcher Smith (1999) drew attention to the fact that Pacific knowledge has for too long been

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<sup>49</sup> See Hoepfl (1977).

documented by 'others' who have employed methods that were not always appropriate to the Pacific world view or to how things should be done. She emphasised the need for Pacific people to reclaim their ways of making and validating knowledge. Further, that this process would assist and connect Pacific people and researchers with their own oral traditions and lived reality (Smith, 1999). In Smith's view, reclaiming Pacific knowledge was both a political statement and an empowering experience for Pacific peoples as well as a way of achieving political recognition.

Tongan Writer Hau'ofa (1994) drew attention to the wealth of knowledge held in the Pacific's 'sea of islands' and Fairbairn-Dunlop (2008) urged Pacific scholars to reconnect to these knowledge bases by drawing elders back into formal and informal knowledge building processes once more. She emphasized that Pacific epistemologies, pedagogies and methodologies be researched and documented so as to provide a platform for further scholarship by Pacific scholars. Furthermore, that much of this new research would be ethnic specific and that the use of the vernacular languages would be important in these processes. Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave (1997) advise that the theoretical frameworks researchers use must be faithful to the surrounding conditions of the participants and reflect the cultural values and meanings of the target community. Cook Island academic Mitaera (1997) reminds that researchers are the first paradigm. And so researchers must place themselves in the research process, as it is their values which influence and guide the study process. She states that researchers must know their own visions, principles and values. Konai Helu-Thaman (2008) frames the task for Pacific researchers with these words:

Pacific research is defined as research that is informed by and embedded within Pacific Knowledge Systems (worldviews, knowledges, practices and beliefs, involves the active participation of Pacific people, and is relevant and responsive to their needs (p.47).

A number of Pacific research frameworks are being widely used today, such as the Kakala (Thaman, 2007); Fa'afaletui (Tamasese, et al., 1998); Tivaevae (Maua-Hodges, 2000) and the Vaka Atafaga (Kupa, 2009). In addition, generic sets of Pacific research guidelines have also been developed in New Zealand, usually in

consultation with Pacific communities. Examples here are the Pacific Research Guidelines (2005) developed by the Ministry of Education (2001) and the Health Research Council (HRC). Each of these guidelines emphasise that Pacific People prioritise relationships as the starting point. For example, the HRC (2005) describes any consultation with Pacific people as involving establishing a relationship which includes, asking, listening, feeding back and acting. Relationships are further described as comprising distinctive but inter-related components of respect, cultural competency, meaningful engagement, reciprocity, utility, rights, balance, protection, capacity building and participation.

These and other Pacific research frameworks guidelines reinforce and remind that Pacific people have their own standards and expectations of what is appropriate and acceptable research practice. In addition, that the observance of these behaviours will increase the likelihood that the research outcomes are relevant, robust and capture the values, beliefs and ideals which are integral to Pacific world views. For example, the HRC guidelines raise questions such as: what are the aims of this research? Issues regarding the ownership of knowledge including songs and dance forms (which are usually held to be community based and derived) are becoming more prominent.

While there has been a general acceptance of some of the current Pacific Research Guidelines and models, discussions are now focussing on the need for these to be critically examined so as to ensure they take account of the realities of Pacific peoples' lives today. For example, Anae (2010) advocates the need for new ways of thinking about Pacific research due to the diverse and mixed heritage of the Pacific population today. Pacific scholar Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese (2005) has long cautioned the need to be wary regarding the development of Pacific indigenous research guidelines and models:

What I want to point out is how easily the object of an exercise – in this case, to develop understandings of cultural competencies – can become befuddled and unnecessarily cluttered by competing or unclear designs and by gaps in the transfer of customary knowledges across space and time (2005, p.67).

Whilst arguing strongly for Pacific models to be used, Thaman (2008) also notes what could be called the middle line. She says it is a usual practice for researchers to

borrow ideas from ‘other’ epistemologies and, that this is also a way of accommodating Pacific peoples’ multiple identities:

It is not always easy to practice what one preaches. However, I do not apologise for the apparent contradictions and the ‘borrowing’ of ideas from different epistemologies to inform researchers work because to do so would be like apologizing for having two parents... More importantly Pasifika researchers have multiple identities that may be rooted in different Pacific and non-Pacific culture. It is to be expected that they use multiple sources to inform their work in order to achieve their goals. The multiplicity of genres in which many Pacific writers, researchers and scholars currently work is, in my view, a way of dealing with the conflicts and contradictions that characterize Pacific worlds, including Pacific Research (Thaman, 2008, p.51)

Two main themes coming through in these discussions are i) the urgency of documenting Pacific knowledge as a valid knowledge in themselves and, ii) the need to critique the methods now being classified as ‘Pacific’ for their robustness and, their differences from the mainstream models, so as to account of some of the ‘intra-ethnic nuances of diverse grouping and identities’ of Pacific peoples today (Anae, 2010, p.1). Documenting Pacific knowledge may require traditional Pacific knowledge, triggered from past experiences, being researched within western frames. In a sense, this relates back also to the ‘*vā*’ (between) Pacific and New Zealand. Samoan poet, Tate Simi (1989, as cited in Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2008) highlights the essence of why Pacific knowledge is important and also some of the challenges facing youth today with these words:

*To be Samoan*

Educate yourself enough so you may understand

The ways of other people

But not too much that you may lose

Your understanding of your own

Try things palagi

Not so you may become palagi

But so you may feel the essence

Of being Samoan

Above all be aware of what you are

So you may spare yourself the agony

Of those who are asking  
Who am I?

While I support the ideal that Tokelauan research should be carried out by Tokelauans, I also see the work of ‘others’ as a significant contribution to researching and documenting the Tokelauan knowledge base. For example, as a student I have found research by ‘others’ such as Huntsman, Hooper, Macgregor and Hoëm extremely valuable. While I have not always agreed with all the views expressed, I see these texts as a platform for further dialogue.

### ***Talanoa***

The Pacific custom of *talanoa* is a well known concept in Tokelau and other Pacific communities. This can be classified within the phenomenological school of thought (Vaioleti, 2006). *Talanoa* refers to a talk or a conversation between two or more people, which can take place anywhere - in the home, village, under a tree, or on the street. The focus of *talanoa* which take place in the family home and village settings is usually to reach a collective agreement to a decision aimed at ensuring the wellbeing of the whole family or village. It is during the family and village *talanoa* that governance issues are thrashed out, questions asked, information shared, issues resolved, relationships strengthened, new knowledge learnt and future plans made.

The *talanoa* has been chosen as a culturally appropriate method for this research and, the use of both the Tokelauan and English languages in the *talanoa* will assist ensure that stories are well reported and understood. As noted by Gilligan (1982) the importance of the way people talk and the language they use are indicators of what is important in their lives:

...the way people talk about their lives is of significance, that the language they use and the connections they make, reveal the world they see and in which they act (Gilligan, 1982, as cited in Vaioleti, 2006, p.25).

Priority is given at every step to nurturing the relationship throughout the *talanoa* process. Whilst *talanoa* may appear to be a casual conversation, in practice *talanoa* involves careful observation of many customary protocols and conventions which are necessary to ensure a good relationship is maintained between those participating as well the groups they represent. The protocols for *talanoa* are context-specific and ethnic-specific and include factors such as ‘appropriate dress; observance of

personal space and touching, traditional or customary practices, for example, *lotu* (prayer), appropriate speaking spaces; understanding of ethnic-specific social and cultural hierarchy and ones place and responsibility within these hierarchies and, fundamental protocols and etiquette that extend respect and reciprocation' (HRC, 2005). The priority to relationships is in line with the *fakaTokelau* or, the Tokelauan ways. For example, education specialist Lemihio (2003, p.152) describes the *fakaTokelau* as guided by cultural values of *alofa* (love and caring), '*vā fealoaki*,' (relationships) and *fakaaloalo* (respect) and that all these relationships underpin all actions. Huntsman (1971) also points to the multiple relationships in the *fakaTokelau*. She says that all relationships are shaped by the principles underlying the relationship between brother/sister and the elders/young.

There are a number of stages in the *talanoa*. Usually, a *talanoa* begins with the acknowledgment and respecting of kinship relationships including giving thanks to God the creator, the people who are present and those not present. Vaioleti (2006) sees the conversations or interactions which take place in the *talanoa*, as being a way of establishing relationships (physical, social, emotional and spiritual) which then "lead to an energising and uplifting of the spirits, and positive state of connectedness and enlightenment" (p.24). He describes the *talanoa* as involving both personal accounts and collaboration:

Talanoa is subjective, mostly oral and collaborative, and resistant to rigid, institutional, hegemonic control ... [and]...belongs to the phenomenological family (Vaioleti, 2006, pp.23&25).

A second characteristic in the *talanoa* is flexibility in organisation and time. For example while there may be a purpose for the *talanoa*, there is no rigid framework for the way discussions proceed. Instead, the natural flow of the *talanoa* enables discussions to follow the concerns and interests of participants without their feeling they are being rushed or that they are being dictated to by the time. In fact, the observance of cultural protocols gives the participants time to move through at their own pace. Vaioleti (2006, p.26) described the *talanoa* process as one talking and others listening and building on what previous speakers have shared, thereby creating 'a rich mosaic of information about the ways they view their world'.

Thirdly, a *talanoa* continues until it loses its *mālie* (warmth, enthusiasm) when it is felt that there is no more new information to be added (Vaioleti, 2006, p.26). When this happens, or at the conclusion of the *talanoa*, it is culturally appropriate to acknowledge people's kindness in sharing their gift of knowledge with a *pahehe* (fare) as a token of appreciation. Finally, the drawing out of the themes from the knowledge shared and the reporting back of these findings to participants. This knowledge building and formation then naturally feeds into the next *talanoa*.

In sum, this research will employ a phenomenological approach which is appropriate for this small scale study (Denscombe, 2005). This research paradigm embraces the Pacific/Tokelauan ways as a framework to *talanoa* and explores the views of the research participants in a safe environment. Through *talanoa*, this research will provide a space for Tokelauan youth to reflect on their understandings of the *fakaTokelau*.

While many dispute the use of a tape recorder in interviews, seeing this as intrusive and unreliable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.241) others such as Patton (1990), see the use of tape recorders as indispensable (p.348). Following discussions with various groups it was decided that it would be appropriate to tape the *talanoa*, so that the researcher could pay full attention to the participants. The use of this technology also enacts the value of *fakaaloalo*, as it would be viewed disrespectful for the researcher to be doing something else when one is supposed to be engaged in a *talanoa* whether the setting is one-to-one, or group.

### **My place in the research**

Born in Tokelau, I left my family and homeland at a young age to come to New Zealand on the Tokelau scholarship scheme. My family and community saw this to be a blessing. However, challenges were attached as I was part of a young group of people trying to make their place in this foreign land. Looking back, I can see that this experience still surfaces issues I have carried for many years. In the 1990s, I was a member of the *Tokelau Te Ata*, the Hutt Valley based Tokelau drama group. Our group decided to dramatise our experiences as young Tokelauan youth living in New Zealand at that time. Inevitably, these issues were identity, being part of two worlds – New Zealand and Tokelau - and feelings of dislocation as we tried to meet

the challenges we faced at that time. Suicide and incest issues were also raised in these plays.

Now as a Tokelauan woman, I bring my knowledge and understanding of the *fakaTokelau* (Tokelau ways) and my language to this research. Each provides a valuable connecting point with the Tokelauan youth and their families. My own understanding and knowledge of the Tokelauan migration journeys will guide my research and set a background for exploring youth experiences and aspirations. The principles guiding this research are *māopoopo* (inclusive and whole), *fakaaloalo* (respect), *vā lelei* (good relationships), and *fakamāoni* (honesty). In following these principles I will ensure that the voices in this study are inclusive of the three atoll groups and, Tokelau *māopoopoga* in Porirua as well as those who identify as Tokelauans. The participants' cultural values and meanings will be respected and the importance of good relationships with the community will be observe and valued. Finally, the information that informs this research questions will be reported honestly.

My appreciation for the *vā fealoaki* (relationships, sharing) as a crucial guiding principle, meant I must also take into consideration that, while I may see myself as an 'insider,' I am also an 'outsider' in this research and to the research community. Therefore, I will be careful to respect the participants and not be judgmental as I strive to capture youth voices and perceptions of their experiences.

## **Part Two: Research Process**

A literature review was conducted focusing on Tokelauan and Pacific youth, diasporic communities and New Zealand interests in the Pacific region. These materials helped establish the research context and the preparation of the research question schedule (see Appendix Six). The question schedule was a guide and starting point for the *talanoa* and would follow the interests and concerns of the participants.

### **Sample**

Porirua was selected as the sample community. As noted 51 percent of New Zealand's Tokelauan population live in the Wellington region, and almost 60 percent

of that number live in Porirua. The researcher lives in the Hutt Valley, another Wellington suburb which also has a large Tokelauan population.

### ***Youth***

It was decided to capture youth views in two ways through: a) a group meeting and b) individual interviews with a smaller number of youth drawn from the group meeting. The sample group would number up to ten youth aged 15-19 years who were enrolled in college at the time of study. These would comprise males and females drawn from Tokelau's three atolls of Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu. Individual interviews would be held with up to seven participants drawn from the group participants. This process would enable time for reflection on the study issues.

### ***Elders***

While youth were the target group in this research, in the *fakaTokelau* a young person belongs to a family and a community (*kāiga*) each of which is headed by the *ulu* (family head or group leaders). It is respectful to discuss a proposed project with the *ulu* before contacting any individual or group. In this case, the President of the *Kāiga Tokelau Porirua* (KTP) was the elder to be approached in the first instance.

Not only was it culturally appropriate to approach the KTP, it was also anticipated that discussions with these elders would help establish the research context against which youth voices could be set to be understood, add further points to the research for consideration and also ensure community support for this pilot research. This proved accurate. For these reasons, the elders became the second sample group in this research. The researcher acknowledges the rich experiences buried within the Tokelauan community which further enriched this pilot study.

### **Field work**

The proposed steps for the field work steps are listed below. The project information sheet and research aims were used in all discussions. These were prepared in both English and the Tokelauan languages (see Appendix Six).

1. *Discussions with the Kāiga Tokelau Porirua (KTP)* which represents the Tokelauan community in Porirua and comprises smaller groups such as the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua (MTTP)*, *Ofaga ote Gagana Tokelau*

(OGT – preschool), church groups, women’s’ group and atoll groups. The KTP has a committee which manages the youth programmes. The first point of contact would be the President of the KTP who would be asked to organise a meeting where the researcher could discuss the research with other members of KTP and seek agreement for the researcher to meet with the Youth President and group (the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua MTTP*) from which the sample group of youth would be drawn.

2. *Discussions with the Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua.* To meet with the MTTP committee to discuss the project and ways of doing this and request MTTP’s support in carrying out the project.
3. *Youth sample recruitment.* This would be done in partnership with the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua (MTTP)*. In addition, that a suitable time would be set to meet students and discuss the proposed research and, invite them to participate. It was important that youth understand their rights as participants before they were invited to participate. Youth who were interested in participating would take the information sheet and consent forms home to discuss with their parents and gain parental consent to participate. The sample for the individual interviews would be recruited from the group meeting.
4. *Group meetings and interviews.* These would be carried out at a time and a venue appropriate to the youth.

Communication would be maintained throughout the interview period with the Tokelauan elders and members of the youth committee, to keep them informed and, to seek further information as needed. In addition, follow up contacts would be maintained with the youth participants by email and telephone.

### **Data interpretation and report backs**

The *talanoa* data would be analysed according to the themes which emerge from the *talanoa*, It was further decided that songs and oratory should be woven throughout the thesis to clarify and reinforce points made and serve as reference points. Finally a full report of the findings would be presented to the *Kāiga Tokelau Porirua (KTP)* and the MTTP including the youth at the completion of this thesis write up.

## **Ethics**

Ethics approval was obtained from the Human Ethics Committee (HEC) at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) before the field work and *talanoa* commenced. This was in accordance with the HEC policy of VUW (See Appendix Four). Information sheets and consent forms for the participants were provided in both English and Tokelauan (See Appendix Six). These documents detailed the research aims, purpose of the study, consent forms for recordings, participants' rights and the researchers and supervisor's contact details for queries. All participants were required to sign an informed consent form before the *talanoa* took place. The participant information sheet and consent form were both approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee. All participants consented to participate in the study and each provided contact details for a summary copy of the report.

## **Part Three: Field Work**

The field work was carried out almost as planned and according to the processes and protocols appropriate to the *fakaTokelau*. However, much more time than expected was spent setting up the study, for example in talking with elders and other community members and awaiting agreement for the study to proceed to the next step. Once relationships had been established and agreement for the study had been reached, then the group meetings and individual interviews proceeded very smoothly.

### ***Step one: Meeting with the President, Kāiga Tokelau Porirua***

Contact was made with the President of the *Kāiga Tokelau Porirua* (KTP). He was extremely enthusiastic about the research aims and the need for youth focused research. While I had anticipated that the next step would be for me to discuss the project with the whole KTP, this did not happen. Instead, three weeks after our meeting, the President informed me that the KTP had agreed to the study taking place and permission had been granted for me to meet with the executive of the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua* (MTTP) which had direct responsibility for youth and youth activities. The President also said that while I would not be meeting with the KTP, a group comprising elders and other leaders would be formed as a 'community elders group' for this research.

### ***Step two: Elders Group for the study***

A group of eight elders and community leaders were brought together to form the community discussion group for the project. Four of the males and one female were self selected and the researcher approached three other females who were members of KTP and considered to be leaders to join. This was important to achieve a gender balance for this group. The group meeting was held in the evening at a venue and time agreed to by the participants. Each of the eight participants was contacted by email, (SMS) text message and/or telephone to remind them of the venue and time of the meeting. Refreshments were served before the formal protocols of the meeting began, which gave me the time to get to know the group members better. The *talanoa* began and ended with a *tatalo* (prayer). While Tokelauan was the main language used in the group meeting, English was also used. The findings from this meeting are reported in Chapter Five.

### ***Step three: MTTP Youth Committee***

At my first meeting, I discussed the project with the Youth President. In his view, the major challenge was to keep the youth engaged in youth and community activities. The Youth President requested the researcher to attend a meeting of the Executive Committee to discuss the research and seek their ideas and support for the research. The members of the elected MTTP executive comprised four males and four females including the President of the National Tokelau Youth Committee – the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Niu Hila* (MTTNH). An email about the purpose of this meeting was generated by the MTTP president and sent to the executive members. He copied the researcher into this communication so as to prevent any misunderstandings but also to permit the researcher to respond directly to any queries. As it turned out, the researcher held several meetings with the MTTP Youth committee. This group were very interested and supportive of the study and offered constructive suggestions for the research process. Meetings were conducted in both English and Tokelauan. Topics covered in these discussions included:

1. The YVVC research purposes and aims; the value of this study, and reasons for choosing Porirua as the sample community;
2. The research ethics, criteria, information sheet, consent forms and timeframe; and

3. How they could support the research including their role in keeping families informed about the project and assisting to gain parental consent for the youth to be interviewed, as a legal obligation as per the Child and Young Persons Act 2001.

The MTTP Youth Committee decided to nominate two members as liaison support for the research. This suggestion was welcomed and appreciated. These two liaison members (both female) provided invaluable support to the researcher and the research. For example, they prepared the sample list of youth, discussed the project with the parents of the young people and gained parental consent for the young people to be involved. They also ensured the young people attended the group *talanoa* and interviews. They also provided other information about the role and activities of the MTTP as questions arose.

***Step four: The youth Māopoopoga***

As noted, the selection of this sample group was managed by the MTTP. Unfortunately, while aims had been for the sample youth to be representative of the three atolls, it was found that none of the sample were from Nukunonu – they were all from Fakaofu and Atafu.

The youth meeting was held after school at a venue close by and not far from their homes. Our time of getting to know each other and talk before the *talanoaga* was important for both the participants and me to develop a trust in each other. As with the elders meeting, the youth meetings commenced and closed with a prayer. Refreshments followed the words of welcome by the researcher. While English was the main language used in this group meeting, some students preferred to use the Tokelauan language.

***Step five: Youth individual talanoa***

The selection of the seven members to participate in the individual interviews was done by the youth themselves, drawing on the *fakaTokelau*. Briefly, the eldest of the youth, who facilitated this process, showed a careful observance of the *vā fealoaki* - the respectful relationship between individuals. This group as a whole discussed the need for good leadership in this process, and concluded with words of encouragement to the selected seven. A total of thirteen formal individual interviews were conducted with the seven youth over a two week period. However, interest in

the discussions was so high, that many other discussions were held with the researcher by email and phone over the almost four month period of the field work. The total sample group for this research is set out in Table 4:

**Table 4: Total sample, group and individual interviews**

	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Elders community meeting</b>	8	4	4
<b>Youth group meeting</b>	10	6	4
<b>Individual interviews (n=13)</b>	7	4	3

### **Data interpretation**

The General Inductive Approach (GIA) was used to identify the themes, clusters and categories emerging in the data. The researcher used the categories developed based on the lived experiences of participants to organise presentation of the particular themes. This required several readings of the narratives identifying themes and categories, joining themes and merging common themes by condensing data without losing the voice of the researched. The data was theoretically ordered and quotes were used to relate the themes and newly emerging categories.

### **Fieldwork Challenges**

Participation was a main challenge for this study. As noted, this was the first research of this kind carried out in the Porirua Tokelauan community and the focus on youth voice raised additional questions. It is not usual for Tokelauan youth to be asked to participate in discussions of this nature. Aims were to develop community understanding of the purpose of the research, the value of the information gained and, how the research information could be used. Participation allowed for the building of trust between the community elders, the youth committee and, the youth.

Being Tokelauan and a mother of grown up children facilitated my entry and acceptance into the research community. My understanding of the Tokelauan protocols and language also assisted this relationship building as did the fact that my own life journey had been very similar. Another major factor in the ready acceptance of this research, was the deep concern with the high suicide rates within the Tokelauan youth population in the past few years.

## **Limitations of the Research**

A potential risk is that the views expressed by the leaders are their own and may not represent the attitudes of the whole Porirua community. Another limitation is that the males tended to be more vocal in the group discussions (both the elders group and the students group) and so some findings may limit the representation of female participants' voices. While it was useful to have mixed group discussions, it is highly probable that gender separate sessions may have generated a different dynamic and yielded a different picture of male/female experiences. That aside, the passion within the elders and the students' *māopoopoga* was apparent.

While hopes had been for a balanced representation by atoll for the youth *talanoaga* this did not happen. As noted, the sample was biased towards youth descended from Fakaofu and Atafu atolls.

## **Summary**

This pilot study generated considerable discussion throughout Porirua's Tokelauan community, especially the importance that the study gave to hearing the youth voices. In addition, emails and personal messages were received from other Tokelauan individuals expressing support and interest in the study. Each discussion was a rich source of information and raised many additional questions for study. Further studies and/or discussions of this nature is recommended for the Tokelauan community to continue the *talanoa*.

The chosen Pacific methodology and method fitted the phenomenological framework and resulted in a valuable sharing of knowledge in the group and the individual interviews. This study aims are to provide a descriptive and an interpretive collection of narratives based on how the researched group understand and develop knowledge about their place as Tokelauan youth in New Zealand. As the receiver of these precious stories it is my wish that the knowledge gathered will be of benefit to Tokelau and its future. With this token my prayer is that God will continue to look upon and bless Tokelau.

## CHAPTER 5: THE ELDERS MĀOPOOPOGA

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*Te au o mātua ko fānau*

The hearts of the parents are the children

### **Introduction**

As noted, the culturally appropriate *auala* (avenue) to any activity which involves the Tokelauan community is to discuss this first with elders and community leaders. This was done and these views of the elders set a thoughtful context for the youth discussions which followed. This chapter presents the elders' views of their own migration experience, their hopes for the youth and the ways they as elders and members of the *Kāiga Tokelau Porirua* (KTP) were supporting youth development. Discussions showed these elders understood very clearly that the *fakaTokelau* was changing. In addition, while they demonstrated a strong desire to ensure youth learnt and practised the *fakaTokelau*, they were well aware that youth must also learn the skills necessary for life in New Zealand. This chapter begins with a profile of the eight members of the KTP which were nominated to form the elders group for this study

### **The elders**

This group comprised four males and four females aged between 31 and 63 years. As seen in Table 6 these elders belonged to a large number of Tokelau community and church-related organisations in Porirua and Wellington and maintained firm networks with national and regional agencies. The continuing importance of their atoll identity is also seen in their membership of atoll specific groups – the *Kāiga Matauala* (Atafu); *Kāiga Fakafo* and, *Kāiga Nukunonu*. It is notable that only one of this group said they were a member of a non Tokelauan specific group. This was *Aukuho*, who belonged to the local Parent Teacher Association (PTA). These elders described their membership of many groups as 'natural,' the way Tokelauans organise and, as evidence of Tokelauan commitment to family and community development.

**Table 5: The Profile of the Elders**

Participants <sup>50</sup>	Gender	Affiliations to other groups	Place of birth	Age of migration	Employment
<i>Ianuali</i>	Female	<i>Kāiga Matauuala</i> , PIC Tokelau	Tokelau	Adult with own family Returned once	Teacher (English Second Language) TSOL
<i>Fepuali</i>	Male	KTP <sup>51</sup> , KTW <sup>52</sup> , <i>Kāiga Fakaafo</i>	Tokelau	Teenager Returned 7 times in last 5 years	Translator
<i>Mati</i>	Male	MTNH <sup>53</sup> , MTTP <sup>54</sup> , <i>Kāiga Nukunonu</i> , Holy Family church	Tokelau	Teenager Returned once	Govt Contractor
<i>Apelila</i>	Male	MTTP	Tokelau	Under 5 years Returned once	Business Development Management
<i>Me</i>	Female	<i>Kāiga Matauuala</i> , Matauuala youth	Tokelau	3 year old Never returned	Administrator
<i>Iuni</i>	Female	<i>Kāiga Fakaafo</i> , Fakaafo Women PIC Tokelau	Tokelau	Teenager Returned once	Family carer
<i>Iulai</i>	Male	<i>Kāiga Fakaafo</i>	Tokelau	Teenager Returned once	Social worker
<i>Aukuho</i>	Female	MTTP Parent-Teacher Assoc Tokelau women's group PIC youth	NZ	Lived in Tokelau three months as 18 year old	Liaison Officer, Tokelau language tutor

What they did not say, was that the very small size of New Zealand's Tokelauan community meant that responsibility for participating often fell on those who had an educational qualification. That aside, the richness of the *talanoa* stories they shared reflected these many 'hats'. The words *Fepuali* and *Aukuho* used to describe their many roles showed their commitment to keeping the members of the Tokelauan community connected with each other and with the traditional ways:

*...the Tokelau Wellington Association (KTW) currently functions like a coordinating body. If the government wants to consult the Tokelau people in Wellington, this is normally organised through the association. As the current president, I have always maintained my role is one of coordination,*

<sup>50</sup> Participants are named by the month to reduce the risk of identification. However the small size of the Tokelauan population in New Zealand today makes it extremely difficult to protect their anonymity.

<sup>51</sup> *Kāiga Tokelau Porirua*

<sup>52</sup> *Kāiga Tokelau Wellington*

<sup>53</sup> *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Niu Hila* (national)

<sup>54</sup> *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua* (local)

*liaison and consultation...Also (I am involved in) the Tugaki Tokelau the community radio programme which runs twice a week. It used to be three nights a week but we have limited resources (now)...the radio programme has been good in promoting our culture and language, especially to our young people. It has been invaluable in informing the community on issues pertaining to them and growing knowledge about other things...People ring to share their stories and traditional knowledge...and that is good for the young people to listen to. They are not only exposed to the language but learn their culture (and) history... (Fepuali)*

*The aims of the Tiale Puapua are to promote values and beliefs through maintaining, encouraging and sharing of the Tokelau culture through arts and crafts...PIC is to share the gospel of Christ...and to maintain the Tokelau language...PTA is to support Tokelau students and Parents of the Tokelau community with their activities... (Aukuho)*

Seven of this group were Tokelau-born and *Aukuho* – who had been born in New Zealand - had spent three months in Tokelau when she was 18 years old. Four had migrated to New Zealand with their families as part of the Tokelau resettlement scheme in the early 70s (see Chapter Two). *Me* had come to New Zealand as a three year old after her parents went back and worked in Tokelau. *Fepuali* had left Tokelau as a teenager to attend school in Samoa before coming to New Zealand to complete his education. *Ianuali* attended school in Tokelau, later took up tertiary education in another Pacific Island, and came to New Zealand with her family after serving as a public servant in Tokelau and Samoa. Six of the eight had attended school in both New Zealand and in Tokelau.

All together, this was a well qualified and experienced group. At the time of the study, seven were in professional level employment and the eighth was looking after her sick mother because ‘I am the oldest in my family’. Throughout the group meeting, each of the eight returned time and again to describe their feelings of closeness to the homeland. Excluding *Me*, all had been back to Tokelau at least

once,<sup>55</sup> and *Fepuali* said he had visited seven times in the last five years. Each said they had noticed a cultural shift in the way things were done in Tokelau today from what they remembered. However, each indicated that they wished they could visit more often. *Apelila*'s words demonstrate the very real connections with the ancestors, and those who have gone before, which the trip home engendered as well as the feelings of knowing 'who I am':

*...this was my first trip back after 37 years...was there for 6 weeks. Our ancestors were there standing on the shore to welcome home another long lost son. Now I have this longing – a calling – to return and I will hopefully will go back next year. (Apelila)*

### **Part One: Being Tokelauan – The *fakaTokelau***

In trying to describe their feelings of being Tokelauan, this group looked first to the past. The two most common phrases used to describe why their parents had migrated to New Zealand were 'for education and economic opportunities' and 'to build a secure future for Tokelau.' They reminded how in the early years, there had been an expectation that the young would return to the homeland at the completion of their studies to 'help build Tokelau.' This message of 'education for the return home' had been well learnt:

*...the whole idea for the parents bringing the children...was for education and hope the children will return home in the hope for the betterment of Tokelau rather than to stay here... (Apelila)*

*I came as a student and had no idea what I was coming here for...My father was the last person I saw on the boat...before he got off, he said to me, you are now going to Samoa, never forget you're not going for yourself, you're going for Tokelau. You're going to learn and come back...that's the reason I keep going back...I carried and cherished my father's words.<sup>56</sup>(Fepuali)*

Looking back, the elders noted that, in the earlier days, their parents had probably given little thought to what migration might mean to the Tokelauan culture. That had

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<sup>55</sup> *Aukuho* and *Iulai* visited Tokelau in 1975 as teenagers (8-12 weeks). *Mati* spent three months in Tokelau in 1990 and four weeks in 2005. *Apelila* and his family stayed for four weeks in 2004 *Ianuali* had two visits and, *Fepuali* returns regularly.

<sup>56</sup> *Fepuali* had travelled first to Samoa for secondary schooling and then on to New Zealand.

probably not been a huge consideration at that time. However, they were equally sure that the *fakaTokelau* values and beliefs had been the major means of social, cultural and economic support for ‘our people here and our families back in the islands’:

*Culture was not part of their (our parents) thinking when they came here...their choices were based on economics. Economic survival you need here, to be able to support families. (Fepuali)*

*...there seems to be a commonality...there is something that binds Tokelau together...the Tokelau identity is real – no one can take your Tokelau away... (Mati)*

On reflection, *Mati* said she now saw that her parents must have held very real fears when they had migrated:

*Their future aspirations were their children’s education and their (children’s) future. They brought their familial ways with them...but they also had their fears. (Mati)*

While these elders said their families had found it hard not being able to fully practise their culture here in New Zealand, each emphasised that their world view continued to be shaped by the *fakaTokelau*. In their view, being Tokelauan meant giving priority to the family, respect for elders, supporting each other as in the *inati* system of communal sharing and the custom of *māopoopo* - communal discussion and decision-making. Knowing the Tokelauan language was also important, as was knowing the music, songs and dances:

*...culture is the customs and traditions which also include language, the way they do things and conduct themselves, their beliefs, Tokelauan knowledge, dances, and arts and crafts. (Fepuali).*

*We do things together and are united in all that we do... (Iuni)*

To them, the values of the *agānuku* (Tokelauan values and beliefs) were continually demonstrated in their collective approach to activities, which was ‘very much like back in Tokelau’ where all members of the community shared the responsibility for

looking after each other and made sure youth were ‘taught’ the right ways, right down to the disciplining:

*I heard from my parents, especially dad that families work together in everything like fishing and land harvesting...everyone and families participate with the village things... (Apelila)*

*...if I misbehaved, say away from home, I could be disciplined by anyone of the village, and also upon arriving home I could also be disciplined for the same thing...like the palagi saying, ‘it takes a village to raise the child’ that is the concept in Tokelau. (Mati)*

The elders recalled how their families had shared housing, food and clothing in New Zealand. They referred to these activities as being very similar to ‘building the old villages’ here in New Zealand and, trying to ‘bring the warmth from there to here’. In their view, the *fakaTokelau* had been the ‘saviour’ and life raft as their parents and elders had tried to become valued citizens of New Zealand. They also described how as the Tokelauan population had grown, more and more *māopoopoga* had sprung up at different places. They were quick to point out, however, that each of the new groups still embodied the *agānuku*. They shared some of the struggles the early families had faced – many of which were humorous and others not so humorous:

*...(our parents and early community members) were very very strong. They even tried to re-establish a village life...quite often they would build a common galafu (open earth oven) in the evenings, and everyone (would be) there in the evenings and cook fish... all sit around the fire. (Fepuali)*

*...they wanted to be good citizens...their dreams to come here were important, and (they tried to make their) dreams come true... that was their reason for living close to each other like the village...so that they can familiarise themselves to the New Zealand life...everything was new to them at the time...they brought the warmth from there to here. (Iuni)*

*...our parents came to New Zealand in the early years, 1960s, it was a struggle for them. They had to deal with things like catching a bus, understanding the currency, sticking to a timetable to get to work a certain*

*time otherwise the papālagi will not have you, had to deal with the weather, electricity – turning a switch on for a heater – making sure it's off, it's simple things like that a papālagi think it's simple where it was difficult for us... (Apelila)*

Respect for elders was the value which ran through everything these elders believed in: elders were highly respected in the Tokelauan culture and all Tokelauan *māoopopoga* were led by the elders. In *Fepuali*'s view, youth in New Zealand had learnt the importance of respect for the elders and the role of the elders very well:

*(we learnt)...respect and obey the parents, look up to the elders (males and females), grey hair!... (Mati)*

*...the elders - it's a very important part of our culture ...New Zealand born are very good in maintaining contact with elders, they always consult elders, even at planning stage they bring in elders in to advise them. I was really pleased with what they did. (Fepuali)*

### **Language**

There was considerable discussion about the Tokelauan language which was described as 'what keeps a culture alive' and what will 'live on' even if traditional practices are lost. One comment was that 'language will die only if there are no Tokelauans left.' *Mati* saw culture as also including dialect:

*...to me, when I think about our dialect...our culture...it's something that's unique about Tokelau, it sits differently, apart, separate from other people...like my dialect, my clothes – anything that is important to be a Tokelauan... (Mati)*

Tokelauan was the first language for each these elders. However, each noted (with sadness) that their ability to converse in Tokelauan was now varied:

*I was fluent in Tokelau, that was my first language but now I hardly ever speak – I can understand but hardly ever speak it. (Me)*

*I can understand although there are words I would love to learn...I have a passion for wanting to learn the old words...to me the imagery of these words – they're very powerful. (Apelila)*

Intermarriage was seen to be a factor influencing language and cultural maintenance although there were differences on this point:

*Intermarriage can also kill the language... (Ianuali)*

*...my mum is Cook Island and she speaks fluent Tokelauan...people think she's Tokelau... really surprised when they find out that she's a Cook Islander – the way she acts, the way she speaks and the things that she does and the people she knows...she still understands Cook Island language. She sometimes uses Tokelau words to my Nan, it comes natural for her now... (Me)*

### ***Sharing knowledge through dance, song and stories***

The elders discussed the ways knowledge had been made, shared and stored in the old days, through storytelling, dance and song. This was a moving and at times a quite sad discussion:

*...back in their time they did not document or keep written information...they were no difference to other indigenous culture. Their proverbs and sayings, the dances, the songs...those were their ways to pass (knowledge) down... through generations... it's passed through songs, fables and some of them are poetic...genealogy too were passed down by word of mouth. (Mati)*

*...knowledge was transferred orally during their time...story telling... (Fepuali)*

*...according to the elders, we have no written records but have oral stories that gets passed on...like the songs. The songs were used by our ancestors as a means of communication...if I love someone that's the way to communicate my love to that person. Some people prefer not to write but to sing to express their feelings... (Ianuali)*

*...the people with the ability and skills to write these are lucky. But the people without these skills, use the songs composed by others, or the commonly sung songs about our culture...these dances and songs (are) used to depict our emotions and how you feel and how you think... (Mati)*

In their view, youth, especially the New Zealand-born youth, were very interested in learning the Tokelauan culture. They said it was their role, as elders, to pass this knowledge on – just as their parents had taught them:

*...we were taught by the elders back then how to dance properly like bend our knees. We are now teaching the young ones to dance and bend their knees...when we teach the young ones, we think of how we were taught... (Ianuali)*

### **Change**

While they stressed the importance of the *agānuku*, the elders also acknowledged the changes were taking place as Tokelauan families ‘mixed and mingled’ with people from other ethnic groups. They discussed the shifts in the Tokelauan culture - from the time when they were born, to when they were young and to the practices they witnessed today. They gave some practical example of these changes. For example, *Ianuali* talked about how the Tokelauan recipe of cooking breadfruit was now being used to cook pumpkins. *Mati* said the rules for the Tokelauan *kilikiti* (cricket) had changed, as had the styles of dancing. New words were also being added and were now part of the Tokelauan language and culture:

*... the traditions and customs before I was born – were different to the practices when I was a child and are different again to the practices today – they are all part of culture...the things that we have adopted have also become part of the culture. Culture evolves...it does not stay the same – it grows – each generation have their own ways. (Fepuali)*

Views were that even in the homelands people were supplementing the traditional ways with easier ways of doing things learnt not only in New Zealand, but also from other Pacific countries such as Samoa:

*...Like the Samoan umu, we now make umu instead of the earth ovens by digging the earth to make the fire. We are bringing the rocks from Samoa...that part of our culture is disappearing... (Ianuali)*

*...some of us lived in Samoa too, we remember how the Samoan culture has influenced our culture...it’s the same here (in New Zealand)... (Fepuali)*

To some of this group these were an expected response to the challenges Tokelauans had experienced in New Zealand:

*...these changes were unavoidable...the culture evolves to align with circumstance faced by each generation ... (Fepuali)*

However, there were mixed views about whether these, and other changes, were a natural process or signaled the beginning of what could be a weakening and/or loss of culture:

*We have mixed and mingled with papālagi (European) and Maori and as a result our culture is dying, we've taken on other cultures. (Ianuali)*

Strongly divergent views emerged as these elders discussed whether or not changes in the *agānuku* were universally welcome. *Mati* described the Tokelauan culture today as consisting of 'a little bit of everything'. Others said Tokelauans still held very firmly to their beliefs, their language, their family and their spiritual values. This was very important:

*The traditionalists (people who hold more staunchly traditional viewpoints) are not supportive of contemporary culture. For example, dance today is different from 150 years ago (and) will be different in the future. (Mati)*

*...there's a bit of everything like a smorgasbord...there are people that hold fast to their culture...it depends on the situation...deep down the values that I grew up with were the ones that were taught by my parents...I hold those pretty strong and I don't really compromise on those things... (Mati)*

*Culture is really just how you have grown up and how you view the world and then how you interact with the world. (Apelila)*

*Me* said that it was only when you were challenged – such as the researcher was challenging the elders in these *talanoa* – that you really began to question what was happening to the *fakaTokelau* today:

*It's when you become challenged about who you are – that's when you either know who you are or that's when you have to start looking or ask questions. (Me)*

There was a vigorous discussion about whether, given these changes, youth were actually gaining what was termed ‘a proper understanding’ of the *agānuku* today. *Ianuali*’s words captured this concern. She asked:

*...which part of our culture have we lived in New Zealand? (Ianuali)*

There was also a questioning of whether the return home was becoming a dream.

## **Part Two: Youth, our future**

According to these elders, the Tokelauan community centres had been set up in New Zealand to ensure that ‘while we are weaving ourselves into the New Zealand society, we also retain our strong connections with the homeland’. Youth were a main group targeted in their community programmes. Each of these elders referred to youth as the future leaders of Tokelau in much the same way as they had described the expectations their own parents had held for them. They saw their role as elders to be one of keeping the Tokelauan culture meaningful for youth today, and ensuring the *tupulaga* were given opportunities to be nurtured as Tokelauan in a Tokelauan environment:

*...our lumanaki (future) is in our young people...our Tokelau is what binds us together – and the value that makes you proud of being Tokelau – it doesn’t matter where you live – Tokelau activities expand outside (Tokelau). (Mati)*

*...culture is an important part of who they (tupulaga) are and us...we need to maintain the culture and language for them and future generation... (Fepuali)*

*...we look (at the Mafutaga Tupulaga) as a movement for Tokelau. We have many aims ...in our constitution like to promote foster and promote the Tokelau culture and language in New Zealand through our activities...Our young people have lots of skills and talents and we want to ...create pathways to develop their skills in whatever (their) interests. (Mati)*

The building of the Matauala<sup>57</sup> community hall in Porirua, where the KTP met, was described in quite emotional terms. This had been a significant achievement for Porirua's quite small Tokelauan community. Initially, the Matauala had been planned as a meeting place for Atafu families. However, in the Tokelauan way, all families had helped with the fundraising and building, and so today the Matauala was regarded to be the home for all Tokelauan families living in Porirua. This hall and grounds symbolised 'our place' here in New Zealand and the place where 'we support our peoples' multiple needs:' (Fepuali)

*To bring the Atafu people and children together...the first aim was to build a hall so that they can have a place to go to, to support each other like we do in Tokelau... ...they are looking at the young people and their future...They want to feel free when they have their activities... to socialise and maintain kinship, to support each other and feel the warmth of the parents and children's (or elders and young people) relationship...to teach Tokelau customs and traditions so our children that grows up in New Zealand will know. (Ianuali)*

These elders said the primary purpose of the *Mafutaga Tupulaga* (youth) activities was to bring Tokelauan youth and families together. They also said that activities for youth were planned with a view to connecting Porirua youth with youth in other neighbouring areas. Preparing youth for the keenly contested biannual national tournaments<sup>58</sup> was a third priority. Simply put, the *Mafutaga Tupulaga* aims were to create pathways for the development of the Tokelauan youth both within and outside New Zealand. Fostering feelings of Tokelau nationhood and belonging were part of this:

*... (we sometimes go to) the Nukunonu (community who) are mainly in the Hutt, that's where they base their activities but yeah, they are the same they rely and have faith in their young people for the things they need – their dreams. (Mati)*

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<sup>57</sup>*Matauala* is the name used in New Zealand by Tokelauans for the group of people from Atafu.

*Matauala* is also the name of the Atafu people's hall in Porirua.

<sup>58</sup> See Chapter 2 for a fuller explanation of the national Tokelau youth Festivals held every two years.

*We are part of the national body...we promote the culture....the (national) tournament keeps growing with the young people wanting to learn their culture... we value the voice of our young people...and the Mafutaga encourage the young people to participate...we don't look at who and where they come from... (Apelila)*

*The national mafutaga... has been running the cultural tournaments...for the last 20 years...in terms of sports and pathways, the mafutaga creates opportunities for our young people to further their sport careers to international levels...like we (New Zealand community) represented Tokelau in the 2008 SPG and the mini games. (Mati)*

*...we attend national meetings to discuss issues about our youth here and outside New Zealand, like the SPG. The (national) tournament is turning into an international event...we've had Tokelau, Sydney group and recently the group from Hawaii. (Apelila)*

These elders said it was really hard keeping youth together in the times between the biannual festivals. However, there was a reluctance to discuss why this was so. Issues such as inappropriate behaviour, alcohol, drugs, self harm and suicide were lightly touched on. Impressions were that the elders believed that they could lessen the chances of these things happening if they kept the youth busy and engaged:

*We are also looking for other opportunities between festivals to build, maintain and encourage the engagement of the young ones, especially with the cultural aspects of things...the kids are naturally (interested) ...It's a matter of nurturing and taking them to the opportunities that are available...and creating more pathways...We have a Tokelau netball girls team that plays in the local competition. We have a rugby league team in the local Wellington Pacific club tournament and we also run the 7's tournament. The Mafutaga used to run a homework centre...and had some parents helping out. (Apelila)*

In line with this, but also reflecting the new options available in New Zealand and new interests, they said that *mafutaga* activities had broadened considerably in recent years. For example:

*The kāiga also hold a cultural day every year – it's an anniversary celebrated back home to mark a special event in their history...kilikiti (cricket)...and the kāiga sometimes have social events with other māopoopoga. (Apelila)*

### ***Education, Language and Culture and spiritual learning***

Despite these and other changes, these elders saw education, language and culture and spiritual learning to be of major importance for Tokelauan youth today. In some, but not all of these discussions, they made a distinction between the needs of New Zealand-born and Island-born youth. In the first place, education was still the reason for coming to New Zealand:

*Education... upskilling and reskilling and building capacity in the regions, simple things like workshops to do with financial help and project management...so we can achieve something and because people are busy...we belong to other groups with similar vision. (Mati)*

*The kāiga Matauala (used to) financially support the young people with their education; they gave them money at the end of the year, just the students at university – tertiary level – (this) is on hold at the moment. They also run other youth activities like student camps. The university students, ex-students and other tertiary youth run the programme and the parents and older youth do the fund-raising to fund the camps. At the moment (some of) the youth the older ones go to the hall and sing songs...they are making a CD...There used to be a lot of them but you know how things are...They asked permission from the elders and they report their activities back to the kāiga's weekly meetings. (Ianuali)*

*(we need) sponsorships for our elite sports people who are moving up, recognising the achievements of our youth...we never thought of (these kinds of things) when the movement first started so the landscape is changing all the time. (Apelila)*

Knowing the culture was regarded to be extremely important. *Fepuali* said the place and love of dance in the Tokelauan way of life had been one of the reasons the *Mafutaga Tupulaga* had been established. He described this as empowering:

*I think the dances... that's how the Mafutaga Tupulaga was born out of a concern to keep promoting the culture. (Fepuali)*

*The Porirua College PTA holds meetings to support young people and the school. (we parents) support the students (we help teach) the Tokelau fatele (action song) for Polyfest and fundraisings...we support the young people by encouraging them to participate in Tokelau and community activities. (Aukuho)*

The elders also thought that learning the culture was more important to youth in New Zealand than the youth in Tokelau:

*I think culture is very strong in the youth – they all have the same respect, the same attitude about the culture, it's very important to them. In fact to me, the Tokelauan culture is more important to the tupulaga in New Zealand than the youth in Tokelau – I feel. It's stronger here.” And “That's really empowering, you know to do things. (Fepuali)*

*They do have an interest at a very young age, like my son. When I first took him to the mafutaga's dancing practice... he insisted that I take him... I noticed the more practice he attended the more words that he became accustomed to... he was singing the songs in the car. (Apelila)*

*The kāiga has an annual cultural day and the main theme of that day is genealogy, so that everyone, especially the tupulaga will know their genealogies. The kāiga Matauala also support families and individuals that get into trouble with the law. Elder XXX used to go to courts to support them... (Iannuali)*

*The Tiale Puapua holds weekly weaving groups. It's mostly our older mātua (mothers) but it's open to interested women. They run weaving workshops for young people and people that are interested to learn... (Aukuho)*

The Tokelauan language was a central part of culture. Some elders said that taking their children to Tokelau had been a life changing experience for their children and for themselves. The trip home had reinforced their children's feelings of connecting with the homeland and motivated them to polish their language skills as well:

*...my children were exposed to the language (Tokelau) at home and at the mafutaga's dancing practices and they learned some words and songs and how to dance. Any chances they get to dance Tokelau... like our family gatherings my son just loved it...Our household is like the United Nations... when I spoke to my children in Tokelau, I had to repeat in English. But one thing I noticed with my oldest son after spending seven months in Tokelau, when we came back he was talking ...in the Tokelau language. He was (also) talking about these places in Tokelau that the family had taught him that I didn't even know...For me, that was a really great feeling, he was being immersed into our culture. Now he's talking about wanting to go back. (Apelila)*

*...even though they don't speak it every day but you know when they go to another surrounding where (they) are made to speak that language...they actually pick it up real fast. My son went to Tokelau for three months with my mum and dad... At home before that, we spoke to him in Tokelau. After spending three months in Tokelau, it was amazing, he really picked up the language because the children in Tokelau did not speak English. (Mati)*

This group argued that the government should give more support to promoting the Tokelauan language:

*There is a Maori week every year. Where I work, they have pamphlets – they encourage you in emails to say certain things, to make sure you get up and greet in Maori, and I'm thinking, I wish my language can be like that. We need to be promoted that way...if every parent can teach their children the Tokelau language (but) realistically it can't be because some parents can't speak it so it's a real worry. (Mati)*

*...need to look at the Tokelau language curriculum launched a couple of months ago. We need to look at addressing the gaps (Also teachers) early childhood teachers, secondary and primary school teachers ... there is no use having a curriculum if there are no teachers. Early childhood (is) the best time to teach the language because they absorb things very quickly...I look forward to the day that Tokelau (Fakaofu, Nukunonu, Atafu and Te Umiumiga) can have a joint or separate early childhood centres...it's an*

*important role of the school to teach the language and culture of Tokelau.  
(Ianuali)*

*I just wish we (can) make it important by actually having some ongoing programmes...I don't think we are doing enough ....we have to maintain the interest of the youth in cultural activities, whether it's dancing, speaking, having competition-speech competitions... (Ianuali)*

They referred to the government initiative Mind Your Language (MYL), which was being carried out in the Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands communities. Views were that given the small population, the Tokelauan component of this programme could have a wide and more consolidated range of activities:

*...the MYL is a good initiative but we need more...we are the smallest group and less people speak Tokelauan...that is a huge challenge for us but we just keep going – it's our culture and it's important... (Mati)*

Documenting and sharing Tokelauan songs and music were described as a powerful way of promoting and sharing the language and culture. However, there were concerns that some people were making money by cutting CDs using the traditional songs, without acknowledging the original sources:

*...we have a bit of a problem...its intellectual property...the original composers are forgotten. That is the danger with the generation today, they don't know the people...but that is also because there is no law to protect these over there... (Fepuali)*

The elders reminded that in the old days, songs had been composed and taught and the words and tunes were stored in the hearts of the composers and, the hearts of the listeners. The commercialising of the Tokelauan songs today had triggered some families to claim their songs – tracing these back as possible to the original sources - and, to do their own recordings.

*...at our reunion in December, I suggested to my sisters to note our family songs; grandparents, parents, and our sister in Australia, she composed a lot of songs... (Ianuali)*

*Aukuho* had a different view. He believed that the recordings were a way of ensuring that the old songs were not forgotten. He said it was highly likely that these might be the only recordings of those songs that the present generations would ever hear:

*...interesting thing for me is that I have been singing these songs ever since I have been little, but little did I realise they were composed by my grandmother...another interesting thing ...we were trying to dissect the songs as to what it meant – what the words meant...we learnt some things about our grandmother that we didn't know! (Apelila)*

Views were that by claiming and recording their songs, families were also acknowledging their ancestors and, the contribution their ancestors had made to the Tokelauan people.

### ***Religion***

These elders discussed the very close relationship between the church and the Tokelauan community – at home and in New Zealand. In some cases they joined with the activities of other Pacific groups and in others they worshipped as a Tokelauan community:

*The Tokelau PIC run youth programmes every Friday...they promote the Tokelau language... (Aukuho)*

*The kāiga Katoliko (Catholic) Sunday schools promote the Tokelau language but is mainly bilingual. They promote the culture in their teachings. While the youth run their own activities they are part of the Tokelau congregation with the parents supporting them and fundraising (for them.) (Mati)*

*...the young people and their families are encouraged to attend church (PIC)...Friday activities are organised and run by the youth group. (Ianuali)*

*They (PIC youth) also visit the olds and sick in the hospital monthly... (Me)*

*The Tokelau PIC has a kindergarten – they are the first Pacific kindergarten. They are linked with the Samoan and the Cook Islanders. (Iuni)*

### **Part Three: The future**

Two main points were raised in the discussion about the future of Tokelau. First, was the importance of teaching youth the skills and knowledge they needed to be wise and worthy leaders of Tokelau, whether this be in the family, community or nation. While these elders said that elders held a respected place in the *fakaTokelau*, they also acknowledged that youth must be given the chance to learn leadership roles, to present their views with confidence and make decisions. In their view, youth must have a sound knowledge and understanding of the *fakaTokelau* if they were to lead Tokelau's further development:

*...(we) want the young people to take over so we can move aside and just support their activities. We are building them to become confident young leaders to take Tokelau further...through the coaching the younger members will eventually take over from us oldies that have been in the Mafutaga longer... (Mati)*

*...special attention is given to the youth in building their confidence to speak in front of the elders. The kāiga Fakaofu have sub-groups like na toeaina (the elders), mātua (mothers), āumāga (men or fathers) and the youth. When the kāiga (Fakaofu) have their monthly meetings, each group submit a report. (Ianuali)*

They thought it was easier for Tokelauan youth in New Zealand to learn leadership skills than the youth back in the homeland:

*Like other mafutaga tupulaga in New Zealand, we value the voice of the young ones...it's easier for the MTTP because the majority were born here...the active island born in the mafutaga is decreasing... (Mati)*

*...na toeaina is a very important part of our culture...the elders collectively lead...while all groups are valued...we value our tupulaga and they are a priority...special attention is given to the tupulaga to build their confidence to speak in front of the elders... (Fepuali)*

*The youth group have been very active, they were given the elders' blessings...they organised and planned their own workshops and have held*

*conferences. They invited Tokelauan role models like XXX and XXX as speakers...They always consult and seek advice from the elders (Ianuali)*

*...(the youth organise) the Special days for children...The kāiga gives the blessings and resource the day while the youth will organise and run the day's programme. (Iulai)*

At this stage of the discussion, *Mati* noted that fewer of the Island-born youth were participating in the youth *mafutaga* today. Reasons for this were not explored.

Second, these elders were very concerned about relationships between the homeland community and the Tokelauan community in New Zealand. There was quite a heated discussion about the way Tokelauans living in New Zealand had been excluded from participating in the recent referendum. This group felt they had the right to participate in these processes 'which affect us all.' Some also saw this exclusion as amounting to a challenge to their identity as Tokelauans:

*The relationship between Tokelau and the Tokelau community needs to be closer. There is no relationship that we can have an input...we forget a lot of our people especially the New Zealand born, they are so proud of going out and putting out there that they're Tokelauans without really knowing about Tokelau...it's good to know what is happening there and for the tupulaga to have a voice. That doesn't mean we are going to stop it, (the referendum) but it's good to be part of and know that we are counted. (Iulai)*

## **Summary**

These elders' views about the place and role of Tokelauan youth in New Zealand today were very much framed by their reflections on their own migration stories, their present experiences, and their hopes for the future. They felt a strong responsibility to nurture youth and prepare them to be the future leaders at the family, community and national levels - in much the same ways as they had been tutored by their parents and elders in the past. While leadership required academic skills, knowledge of the *fakaTokelau* was equally important. It was interesting that there was little talk about the dream of the return home. Instead, attention was focused on building a safe, secure and strong Tokelauan community here in New Zealand. This was envisaged in two ways. First, in terms of social, cultural and

emotional security as evidenced in the priority to relationships, to being together as often as possible, to joining other Tokelauan families at national tournaments, and to having a physical space in Porirua (the Matauala community hall) which they knew was theirs and where they could be ‘free’ to be Tokelauan. The Tokelauan language, culture and dance, were central to these feelings of well being and reinforced in the activities of the youth clubs, the schools and the church. The sharing of cultural knowledge through songs and stories and CDs was noted and this was generating questions of ownership of cultural knowledge. Relationships, respect, caring, especially for the vulnerable were noted as these elders shared the ways their families had systematically ‘built the village’ here in Porirua and brought the ‘warmth from there to here’. The trip home, continued to be a moving experience as well as a highly motivating experience for their children. A second aspect of security was making sure family’s basic needs were met – food and housing for example.

These elders identified strongly as Tokelauans. Despite the changing times and places, the *fakaTokelau* was the lens through which they viewed the world. There was a serious discussion about whether the *fakaTokelau* was as it should be and, what actually was the Tokelauan way being shared in New Zealand today? Unspoken, were the fears that if not learnt properly, the Tokelau identity might be weakening. The differences they saw between New Zealand youth and those living in Tokelau brought an added urgency. They also proposed that Tokelau’s smallness and place as a minority group in New Zealand should be taken account of in government policies. These elders wore many hats as they worked to maintain strong local communities, link into the national Tokelau community, maintain links with the homeland, and ensure the Tokelau voice was heard in the mainstream New Zealand society as well. It is notable that most of the agencies they belonged to were Tokelau-related. All told, this group of elders seldom moved outside the zone of Tokelauan activities.

## CHAPTER 6: THE YOUTH MĀOPOOPOGA

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*Te au o fānau ko mātua*

The hearts of the children are the parents

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the views from the group *talanoa*. It is in four parts: youth perceptions of being Tokelauan; their understandings of the *fakaTokelau*, who they connect with and, their hopes for the future of Tokelau. Tokelau's smallness and how this influences their responses to life's challenges and their loyalty to New Zealand – as well as to Tokelau – are recurring themes in these discussions as is their awareness of their responsibility to pass on the *fakaTokelau*. This chapter begins with a profile of the six males who comprised the youth *māopoopoga*.

### **The youth**

The youth *māopoopoga* comprised four females and six males aged between 15 and 19 years (see Table 6). All but one was born in New Zealand: five were first generation New Zealand-born, two were second generation and one was a third generation New Zealand-born. Only four of this group had been to Tokelau and experienced the *fakaTokelau* first hand: M4 had been born in Tokelau and M2, F2 and F4 had visited the homelands. All of these youth said they belonged to at least one Tokelauan youth and/or church youth group, and eight were members of the Polynesian Club at their school. Four were members of their atoll community group (the Atafu community group) and M4 belonged also to the Fakaofu group. Both the Matauala and the Fakaofu community groups had a youth group.

Four of the ten youth (40 percent) had attended a preschool, which is quite a low number. Two had attended the *Tu Tolu Tokelau* Preschool group, one the PIC preschool, and one a preschool in Tokelau. Factors influencing this low level of access to preschool education warrant further research. Tokelauan was the first language for one student – the student who had been born in Tokelau – and the second language for six others. Samoan was the second language for one and two defined themselves as English speakers.

**Table 6: Group Profile**

Name	Male/ female	Age	Birth Place	Generation (NZ born)	Been to Tokelau	Preschool OGTA <sup>59</sup>	Tokelau Cultural Group	Language Use
M1	Male	19	NZ	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-	No	MTT <sup>60</sup>	English, Samoan
M2	Male	16	NZ	1 <sup>st</sup>	Yes	No	MTTP <sup>61</sup>	English, Tokelauan
M3	Male	16	NZ	1 <sup>st</sup>	-	PIC	PIC Youth <sup>62</sup> , Polyclub	English, Tokelauan
M4	Male	15	NZ	2nd	-	Tu Tolu Tokelau	MTTP, PIC youth, Polyclub *Matauala <sup>63</sup> & Fakafo atoll group	English, Tokelauan
M5	Male	15	NZ	2nd	-	Tu Tolu Tokelau	MTTP, PIC youth, *Matauala	English, Tokelauan
M6	Male	17	Tokelau	-	Yes	Tokelau	PIC youth, Polyclub <sup>64</sup> , *Matauala	Tokelauan, English
F1	Female	18	NZ	1 <sup>st</sup>	-	No	MTTP, Polyclub	English, Tokelauan
F2	Female	18	NZ	1 <sup>st</sup>	-	PIC	Polyclub, PIC youth *Matauala	English, Tokelauan
F3	Female	18	NZ	2nd	-	No	MTTP, Polyclub	English
F4	Female	18	NZ	1 <sup>st</sup>	Yes	No	Polyclub	English

The fact that only four of these ten students had been to Tokelau must be taken into account in reading their stories. For the remaining six especially, their stories are a combination of their own experiences and those retold to them by their family and other community members. From this point of view, this group of youth are a case study of ethno-cultural continuity (see Chapter 3).

### Part One: Being Tokelauan

These youth felt a strong physical, emotional and spiritual connection to Tokelau, as their homeland. Each knew the stories of the Tokelauan migration journeys to New Zealand very well. They were well aware that ‘education’ and ‘our children’ were

<sup>59</sup> OGTA is *Ofaga ote Gagana Tokelau Aotearoa* (Tokelau language nest Aotearoa – the Tokelauan preschool).

<sup>60</sup> *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau*.

<sup>61</sup> *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua (local)*

<sup>62</sup> Pacific Islands Congregational church youth group

<sup>63</sup> Atafu Community Group

<sup>64</sup> Polynesian Club (school pan-Polynesian cultural group)

the main reasons for coming and they shared many anecdotes about the way their elders had lived close together and looked after each other. These accounts were shared with a sense of pride, belonging, and strength: these stories were clearly an extremely important part of the lives of these youth and, the basis of their identity as Tokelauans:

*You hear, see and feel the passion that drives them. The family, the people and relationships are important...that is what I have learned... (M3)*

*Yeah, when you like hear our parents' stories, you feel proud of your culture and like you love them more. It's like you start to understand why you think and do things kind of different – you know like you put others first even like sometimes you give what you have and you go without... (F1)*

*You remember your parents came from Tokelau so you can have a better future, so you just keep that in mind...strive for the best so that you can have a better life and your parents. (M4)*

*Our grandma told us that she used to work at nights and grandpa worked two jobs during the day. (M5)*

These youth knew that the elders looked to them as the future of Tokelau. Also, that they were seen to be the lucky generation, who had had the educational opportunities the elders never had. These youth also knew that they were responsible for passing on the *fakaTokelau*:

*...feel like you don't want to let anyone down because you are so proud of your culture and you want to do your work...you (are) just being Tokelau I guess, it motivates you more to do your stuff at school...making your parents proud by achieving your goal. (M6)*

*When our parents came, they did not want us to forget our culture...they want us to pass it on to the next generation. (M3)*

*...keep the culture alive so people can learn from us... (F2)*

The three who had been to Tokelau talked glowingly of how this had made them feel 'really Tokelauan' – even the one who had been called a '*palagi*'. They said:

*...going back to Tokelau was like the best thing that ever happened to me...they still live traditional life there...real cool how they do everything, go and get food, feeding the pigs, go fishing, it was fun...it was like real good experience... (M6)*

*When I came back I knew how to climb coconut tree and husk the coconuts...it felt cool... (M6)*

*I went to Tokelau with my parents, and I learned the language hard out...when I came back I spoke more, and I'm like more interested to learn about Tokelau. (F2)*

*...they call you a palagi when you are there because they think that you are not a Tokelau because you were not born and lived there...that motivates you to learn more... (M2)*

They said that just thinking about their parents' journeys continued to be a powerful motivator to keep the culture alive and one added, 'to do better at school':

*It must have been sad for them because it was like letting go one part of their culture just to fit in to another culture, but then they must have been happy like when we came out so that they could teach us the ways of Tokelau. (M3)*

*You don't want to disgrace your culture and give us a bad name. (M6)*

*You remember your parents came from Tokelau so you can have a better future, so you just keep that in mind...strive for the best so that you can have a better life and your parents. (M6)*

Nine of this group declared a firm loyalty to New Zealand, the land of their birth. However, Tokelau was a strong first in the minds of all ten:

*We might be born in New Zealand, but we know we are Tokelauan, so we don't distinguish ourselves as being New Zealanders but we are Tokelauans. (M3)*

*Although we live here, and we are New Zealand citizens...Tokelau comes first – you connect physically, emotionally and spiritually to where you come from, your homeland. (M3)*

These youth said their Tokelauan identity linked them to their ancestors, *tupuna*, parents, their blood lines, their villages and land and the people. The religious denominations they belonged to were also part of their identity:

*Culture is the islands we are from, religions, traditions, identity, pride, heritage and (past) generations... (M3)*

*People are part of the culture, culture belongs to the people and people belong to the land. (M5)*

‘Being small’ in numbers, they said, made them even more determined to hold together as Tokelauans:

*I come (used to live) in X and we don’t have that many Tokelauans, but the ones that are there, hard out represent (Tokelau ways) because there aren’t that many of us, so we just stay together. (M6)*

*(In school) you say where you are from because some people might not know where Tokelau is... (F1)*

## **Part Two: FakaTokelau**

These youth described themselves as ‘Tokelauan youth who are growing up in New Zealand’. They described culture as a unifying force, a strategy for learning and demonstrating ‘who we are as Tokelauans;’ the way of keeping the culture alive and teaching others about us and ‘to make our parents proud of us’ (Table 7).

**Table 7: Youth descriptions of culture**

<b>Cultural Activities</b>
Bring Tokelauan people and families together to socialise and be united and be ‘one’
Are opportunities to learn and show who you are
Grow the passion and celebrate who we are
Are where we learn about where we come from (the homeland) and our identity
Maintain and retain our culture and, keep the culture alive for the next generation
Where we learn Tokelau protocols, like respecting the elders
Provide opportunities for others to learn from us
Make our parents proud of us

The *fakaTokelau* was described as the beliefs, customs and traditions of Tokelau, the language, the ‘things that make us different from others’ and, ‘how we view the world’. The *fakaTokelau* meant sharing and putting others first as in the *fakalavelave*.<sup>65</sup>

*Tokelauans share the love. It’s all about families and maintaining our culture. It’s all about others not you. It’s about giving. It comes back to the families. (M3)*

*We value our ways...weddings we run them differently. Birthdays, we might celebrate them. Funerals, we give money (envelopes)... (M4)*

These youth described sharing in terms of the practice of the *inati*. While they set the *inati* in its cultural context – of fishermen taking their catch to a communal place for distribution – they saw the *inati* as applying to the ways knowledge was shared, such as knowledge about plants, weaving and fishing, and the performing arts of music and dance:

*The inati – there are people that go out to fish and the catch is brought back to a communal place and distributed to benefit all... (M6)*

*It’s like sharing your knowledge about what you know, wherever you are, with other people so that they get a piece of your Tokelau culture. That’s you taking your catch (your catch is your Tokelau knowledge) and share it by talking with whoever is interested and respect who you are. (M3)*

The *māopoopoga* were the places where family ties were nurtured and support provided, and where, these youth said, they picked up knowledge ‘just by sitting there and watching and listening’. They defined the *māopoopo* as; to gather, to put together, one heart, stand together, togetherness, unity and collective. They said the stories told at the *māopoopoga* stirred their emotions and helped make them resilient as a minority group in New Zealand and as Tokelauans living away from the homeland:

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<sup>65</sup> *Fakalavelave* is a time when support is provided by other family members, as for example, weddings.

*When you participate in cultural activities, you are engaging with Tokelau people, especially the elders, and they are the people with the wisdom. Boys and men engage more with the toaina (elderly males) and the girls and ladies go with the lomatua (elderly females) – their ways of teaching is different to the classrooms. It's an intimate engagement that gives a sense of safeness and warmth...when engaged with Toke people in whatever activity, it's a constant reminder of why we came here and I would want to do my part because education was one of the reasons they came. (M3)*

They described the connections they had with different *māoopoga* Tokelau groups in Porirua and the Hutt Valley in accordance with their understanding of the *māoopoga*. This included the *Matauala* (atoll group), *Fakaofu* (atoll group), *Pahina o Tokelau* (church group), *Papa o Lau Lelei* (church group), *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua* (youth group), *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Hutt Valley* (youth group), and *Te Umiumiga Tokelau Hutt Valley* (Tokelau community group). They said that geographical location never prevented Tokelauans from attending a Tokelau *māoopoga* in another area:

*...sometimes Te Umiumiga and Matauala get together and play dominos, lawn bowls, cards and tiuga<sup>66</sup> ...but we can attend things in the Hutt Valley even if we live in Porirua...Te Umiumiga can also attend any Tokelau functions in Porirua. (F2)*

Respect was mentioned many times: respect for elders and caring for the *tamā manu*<sup>67</sup> (the less fortunate) and respect between brothers and sisters whereby the brother looks after and provides for his sister. While there was less understanding of the ideals behind the brother/sister relationship, each of these youth said this 'felt right' to them:

*We value girls – they get better things than boys – like they get the best of everything. (M3)*

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<sup>66</sup> *Tiuga* is a Tokelauan game using rolled up mats and shells where four people (in pairs) play at one time.

<sup>67</sup> *Tama manu* - literally means small bird but it is the Tokelauan term to refer to the less fortunate people such as orphans, widows, widowers, visitors, and people with limited resources.

*You haven't been told what it really means but you just know it and it just feels right to look out for the girls and give them the best of everything and anything they need you give it to them. (M6)*

These youth had firm ideas about male/female roles. In their view, boys did the physical work and girls did most of the 'intellectual' work or, keeping things in order. This, they said, was the reason 'girls perform better than boys at school'. They said:

*The men provide and the women cook...the fatupaepae<sup>68</sup> do the brainy work like the intellectual stuff and the men do the physical work. (M4)*

To these youth, language and their names were the vital link between them and their 'Tokelau self':

*...you say your name and your parents, and your atoll – in case you are related...say your grandparents when talking to old people because they might not know your parents but know your grandparents. It is about making connections and because they are from the same generation. (M6)*

Nine of the ten said they understood Tokelauan and eight said they could converse in Tokelauan although their fluency was at different levels. All bar one, referred to themselves as 'learners' of the language. They said they used Tokelauan mainly to communicate with elders and family members 'who had difficulties understanding English.' They said that while they tried to use the language, their fear of not saying the right thing (and being laughed) made them shy:

*I like to speak it with my cousins too because they are fobs...there are things that they don't understand, so I use the language with them...mainly I use it to the old people so they can understand... (M4)*

*(I really only speak) around these guys and just play around at school because we can understand each other...we just try and we test each other... (M5)*

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<sup>68</sup> A prominent female figure within the family she looks out for the wellbeing of the family and distributes the family resources.

*There are things that you don't understand...always scared you might not say it right and that someone will laugh at you. (M2)*

These youth discussed changes they had noted in the language, especially in the meaning of some of the words in the old songs sung today. They said these changes made it very hard when they were trying to learn the real meaning of Tokelauan words. They also spoke about the similarities of Tokelauan with other Polynesian languages as a plus – this meant ‘we can understand each other and communicate with other Pacific Islanders in their own Pacific language’. Clearly, language reinforced their relationships with other Tokelauan youth and, with other Pacific Island youth as well:

*...they say Tokelau language was very different ages ago. There was an old Tokelau language – says in the Matagi Tokelau the language is like different...if you listen to some fatele the language is different, like ‘O pati kia ola’ – doesn't even sounds like Tokelau...back then it probably made sense. (M6)*

*You know how the Samoan sometimes speaks with a ‘t’ and other times with a ‘k’, ours is like the same. The way we speak is similar but original. It's our own way of speaking...like Polynesian languages are the same... we can still communicate in our languages and get each other. It's important to understand each other so there are no division... (F2)*

Tokelauan music, song and dance were also important as a way of showing their identity, sharing their knowledge with other ethnic groups in the Polynesian club activities and ‘just feeling the joy:’

*It's important to be involved like I said before. People work together and support each other and that is what I have learned about our dance. We dance in a group and each has a role to bring the best out of the group. When I dance or be doing another Tokelau thing, I feel good and happy, like whole... (M3)*

*Different cultural groups from different schools put on a cultural performance. We all see how other ethnic groups perform their dances.*

*Poly fests are good because we all get to learn about each other's culture and language. (M4)*

These youth spoke very animatedly about the accessories and costumes used in dances today which, they said, distinguished them as Tokelauans and 'when we wear them we dance better':

*...pā are for girls, the titi (different for boys and girls), girls don't wear pants, but a lavalava and a dress, boys don't wear tops...bands around the arms and legs for boys, boys costumes are short and girls wear are longer... (M4)*

*...when I dress in full traditional costume for fatele, I perform better – it brings the best out of you. You see the same in other groups. (M3)*

Another change noted was the wearing of the *pā*<sup>69</sup> which they knew was highly symbolic in the Tokelauan culture and a way of identifying Tokelauans. Whereas in the past the *pā* had only been worn on special occasions and, by women, today it was 'like a piece of jewellery' and had 'lost its meaning':

*...the pā is for girls and ladies but now some boys wear it too... (M5)*

*It's (pā) worn in special occasions. It's a Tokelau thing, and no other culture has it and when you wear it people will notice it and say, you are Tokelauan. It's a symbol of our identity. (F1)*

### **Part Three: Connecting**

Outside their families, the main groups this group of youth connected with were the *mafutaga*, their schools, sports and their friends.

#### ***Mafutaga***

Participating in the *Mafutaga* activities had opened their eyes to and, linked them even more firmly to their culture and language:

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<sup>69</sup> A *pā* is a fishing lure made from the pearl shell and is used by master fishermen to fish for bonito. It is highly valued in the Tokelauan *agānuku*. The *pā* is also called a *kahoa* (pendant) when used as an accessory. Traditionally, the *kahoa* is exchanged in weddings between the bride and groom's family. The bride is the carrier of this prized possession.

*I became involved with Tokelau through the mafutaga things. I didn't know any Tokelau words before or people, apart from my close families. (F3)*

They talked about their Porirua youth as the pathway for them to link into the national Tokelauan community especially through the biannual cultural events organised by the national body. Eight of the ten had participated in a national *Mafutaga Tupulaga* either in the cultural performance, the sports tournaments or both. These eight spoke glowingly of the way these national gatherings brought New Zealand's Tokelauan community together and 'built national spirit'. These gatherings enabled them to connect with family members they may not have met or seen for some time and build new relationships with Tokelauans and, non Tokelauans. Quite recently, teams from the homeland had started travelling to New Zealand to join these national tournaments and 'show what the homeland can do.' These teams from the homeland had become part of the getting to know each other and reaffirmed the links between the New Zealand and the homeland communities.

An additional plus, was that these national tournaments were starting to be used as selection trials for national sports teams as well. In fact, one of the participants had been selected to play in the Tokelau Netball Team for the 2009 Mini Games in the Cook Islands.

*For me, it's the first time presenting Tokelau in netball and like I'm really happy and nervous too, cos like I'm young. (F1)*

*...there should be more Tokelau tournaments...I enjoyed it – I learned and met heaps of new people... (F2)*

*I made friends with the group from the Hutt and a couple from Auckland, and we keep in touch...apparently I'm related to some of them... (F3)*

There was a discussion about how these tournaments were becoming far more competitive especially between groups representing the three different atoll groups. This led on to a discussion about who should be eligible to participate in the biannual tournaments and, the question of 'ring ins'. These youth thought non-Tokelauans that were married to or were in de facto relationships with Tokelauans could be members and participate in these national events. Further, that room could

be made for a small number of non-Tokelauans to participate – that this could be a way of sharing the Tokelau culture with others:

*...it should be open to anyone i.e. pālagi so, they can experience how we live our culture, learn from us and, share our culture – it's a one way of sharing our culture with others. (M3)*

At the same time, they could see some negatives if membership was increased to include 'any' non-Tokelauans. Also, opening the tournament up in this way could negatively impact on the Tokelauan community and family networking which, they said, was a core purpose of the tournament:

*Unlike previous tournaments, you are not going to know your family... (F1)*

*If we open it, it wouldn't be like the Tokelau tournament. It'll be just a tournament... (M4)*

Generally, these youth wanted to keep these biannual gatherings 'as Tokelauan as possible'. Too many non-Tokelauans would also bring the dilemma of language use:

*...try and keep it as Tokelauan as we can. Like for pālagi, we probably have to speak English more often, so they can understand... (M6)*

*Maybe they can just come and watch so that they will know what we do. (F2)*

### **Schooling**

M1 and M2 attended schools outside Porirua. These did not have any specifically Tokelauan activities but M1 said he was a member of the mixed cultural group at his school and M2 'sometimes attended' the Samoan cultural group with his Samoan friends:

*We only have the poly group – that's about it. There's only about 4-5 of us there, and the rest are Maori and Pālagi, and so we just hang out together. We hang out with people that we have things in common with. (M1)*

The other eight, attended the school closest to their home. They described their school as having a strong Tokelauan presence. They listed: two Tokelauan teachers, Tokelauan Studies at Year 9 and 10, a Polynesian Club and a Tokelauan cultural group, both of which participated in the Wellington Polynesian festivals and the

local Secondary school cultural competition. They also said that their parents and the whole Tokelauan community supported Tokelauan activities at the school:

*...when we have our practices for Poly fest, the parents and community help out with our preparation. It's good because they have that knowledge. We can ask them when we don't understand something. (M4)*

The two of this group were currently taking the Tokelauan Studies classes. They said the classes 'build on the language we are taught at home' They saw Tokelauan Studies as contributing to the development of Tokelau and also New Zealand:

*We have Tokelau classes at school, for junior years to learn and its not an option for seniors. It should be optional to learn your own culture and language. Not just at home but at school and should be accredited. (F1)*

*... what is learned at school will benefit the family and community, and on the other hand is a contribution to the development of the economy. Tokelau will get a share through New Zealand's financial assistance. (M3)*

Each of these students belonged to the Polynesian Club and the Tokelauan Cultural group. They said:

*I am passionate of Tokelauan dance - the fatele. (M4)*

*Poly club opportunity to keep my culture alive and a chance to show my culture to the world. (M3)*

For one, the sheer joy of being part of the Tokelauan dance group carried through into all his school activities:

*It's important to be involved...We dance in a group and each has a role to bring the best out of the group. When I'm dancing or be doing another Tokelau thing – I feel good and happy like whole and that feeling will come through with my attitude towards my school work and relationship with others. (M3)*

There was amazement and some annoyance at what they saw to be the limited knowledge other students had about Tokelau – such as Tokelau's relationship with New Zealand and climate change. This, they believed, had led to differences and

problems amongst students. Having a Tokelauan group was a way of educating others about the realities of small nations, such as Tokelau.

*I like to have Tokelau stuff, because everyone gets smart with me at school, saying that Tokelau is going to sink soon. It's a joke but I take it seriously. I don't think they know enough about Tokelau. That's why I think they say that. It's small...in the Pacific, I know but I think the school should teach it so that everyone will learn about Tokelau and that it's part of New Zealand. My dad told me that...like the Kiribatis as well, because people get smart with them because their island too is sinking, so we share that similarity.*  
(M2)

*Our Tokelau cultural group is open to everyone...we have two Samoan boys in the Tokelau group. We just show other cultures how we dance and the language.* (M1)

*When you share your knowledge, they can share theirs as well – it's a two way. You might have similarities and it is a good thing but the aim is to take part and for everyone to benefit.* (M3)

They also suggested that Tokelauan Studies should become an NCEA<sup>70</sup> option, just like Samoan Studies. It should not be confined to Years 9 and 10:

*...there's not enough time for us to learn because we are New Zealand born, and it's harder for us to learn. Tokelau language should be made available to all year levels at school not just the first two years and available at NCEA.*  
(F1)

### ***Friends***

For most of this group, the friends they had at school were the same friends they mixed with out of school: mainly other Tokelauans and, some Samoans, Cook Islanders and Maori. Estimates of time spent with friends ranged from 5-17 hours a week. The female students included males in their friendship groups while the males said they mainly mixed with males. In addition, the females said they mixed with friends who were fun, they could talk to, play sports together, sing, shop and go to MTTP activities. Males said that they took account of factors such as ethnic

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<sup>70</sup> NCEA is the National Certificate of Educational Achievement.

background, how they felt around them and whether they were ‘family’. They liked to play touch and rugby with their friends, to chill out at each others’ places, talk about their culture, dance *fatele*, go to courses and go out together:

*I find it easier to hang out with my family. We don’t really know if we are related, but we call ourselves family. (M5)*

Friendship was described as:

*Being there when they need me the most. (F4)*

*...asking them to come to youth (group) ... to change their life around. (M6)*

*(looking after) each others’ backs like a family. (M5)*

*...try to ask all my mates to join Tokelau groups at school, and try get my friends to stop smoking and drinking. (M6)*

M1 preferred his Tokelauan friends because they all had similar backgrounds and, a similar sense of humour:

*We are all Tokelauan, we go to the same school and the same year level, we are in the poly club, and we take part in the MTTP events. (F1)*

*...same ethnic group, same youth group, Tokelau tournament and netball club. (F1)*

English and Tokelauan were the main languages spoken with their friends. However, the males indicated that they tried really hard to speak Tokelauan with their friends:

*When I’m with my brothers, we like talking Tokelauan to each other. (M5)*

*We speak little Tokelauan even though they are not Tokelauan. We also use English. (M5)*

*We speak English and try to speak Tokelauan. (F3)*

### **Sports**

Sports were an important recreation for this group and, they proudly stated that Tokelauans (like all PIs) were good at sports. The girls in this group had entered a Tokelau team in the local netball competition. The boys played for outside clubs

such as Saint George rugby league and the Tawa football club. These youth also played indoor netball in the mixed teams with their friends and families. They giggled as they talked about using the Tokelauan language on the sports field:

*We share our natural abilities that were passed down to us from our ancestors...the Tokelauan strengths, we speak the language outside...when calling for the ball so no one understands, and our sharing nature. (M4)*

#### **Part Four: The future of Tokelau**

Although only three had been to Tokelau, this group viewed the future of Tokelau to be their future too. They knew about global warming, but they had little information or understanding about the Tokelau referendum process (2006 & 2007) or the three options which had been given:

*Yeah – they didn't really decide what they wanted to do, whether was independent; stay the same or free association with New Zealand. (M3)*

*We are not against but we feel sorry for them, and we want what is best for our future and our kids – so that they can learn about our culture. (F4)*

While they voiced their respect for those living in the homeland they were also very conscious about factors such as the small size of the atoll islands, their distance from each other, the small population, the influence of global warming and, the general economic security of the homelands. They were quite hungry for information about these and other issues affecting Tokelau today and, for discussion about the future options for the homelands. Views were that Tokelau might be able to generate sufficient income from its vast sea resources by allowing other countries to fish inside their waters:

*...we could like do fish with Japan because they always come into our waters...they take more than 10 billion and trillion of \$\$ worth of tuna out of our water. I'm saying, maybe they (Tokelau) could probably make money out of that by letting people fish in our waters. (M6)*

However, the majority view was that Tokelau should stay with New Zealand for the present:

*With global warming kicking in – how are we going to support it... they got nowhere to go to after that if it does sink... (F4)*

*New Zealand is doing a great job – a pretty good job in looking after us. If they decide to go independent? .... we don't have much to offer in terms of making money for the country – import and export, we don't have a solid economy. (M3)*

*...stay with New Zealand because they are small. They need more support – they need as much support as they can get. (F1)*

The group stated that wise leadership would be crucial for Tokelau in the next few years especially. They contrasted modern and traditional leadership styles and voiced fears of leaders who focused only on economic matters. A good leader was described as one who was confident, a risk taker, willing to take the blame for things that happen, reliable and able to speak on behalf of his/her followers, and one who has the true Tokelau *moni* (real Tokelauan/Tokelauan at heart) spirit and humility (see Table 8).

**Table 8: The traditional and modern leader**

<b>Traditional</b>	<b>Modern</b>
Leads their country with pride	Leads for the money
Not driven by money	Leads for different reasons
Wise	They relate more to people with money
Values everyone, especially the <i>tama manu</i>	More concerned with people with money
May be a leader but considers themselves the same as everybody else	Think of themselves as higher above everyone else
<b>How do leaders get selected?</b>	
Tokelau – nomination comes from the council of <i>matai</i> (council of family heads) selected by members of council, than people vote.	Academic – selection of leaders are based on qualification
Selection is based on wisdom	Good decisions – need to be confident

In their view, while each *matai* was the family representative in decision-making processes, the selection of nominees should be based on their wisdom. They also likened the present Tokelau *Ulu* (head of Tokelau) to God, the *toeaina* as the elders and Foua Toloa, as the current Titular Head of Tokelau. In their view, responsibility should be shared and distributed so that all participate:

*Tokelau doesn't have a leader, everyone participates distributing and sharing the responsibilities. (M4)*

This mixture of traditional and new knowledge, shared responsibility and participation they saw as valuable as to the qualities they would aspire to.

### **Summary**

The feelings of being Tokelauan were strongly felt despite the fact that only one of this group had been born in Tokelau and two others had visited. While nine of this group expressed a firm loyalty to their birth place of New Zealand, all ten stated emphatically that Tokelau was 'first in their minds'. Their knowledge about Tokelau and the *fakaTokelau* had been learnt in the stories told and retold by their elders and reinforced in their participation in Tokelauan youth activities, their schooling, sports and friendship groups. For the boys especially, friendships were with other Tokelauan and Pacific students where 'we try to speak the language when we are together'. As with the elders, these youth regarded the national bi-annual *mafutaga* as the pinnacle event for the Tokelauan community: these added meaning to the local youth activities and reinforced even more deeply their feelings of who they were and what was important in life. They especially welcomed the participation of the teams from the homeland in recent years and the way this made the New Zealand tournament 'truly national'. These feelings of Tokelauan nationhood were further reinforced by the practice of using these tournaments to select national sports squads and for identifying promising youth sportsmen and women and, future leaders. Doubts were shared about what would happen if these tournaments became overly competitive or if more non-Tokelauans participated. Should this happen, they said, these meetings would 'become just like any other tournament.'

These youth referred quite often to the smallness of Tokelau and the development challenges Tokelau faced. The effects of climate change were also noted. They knew Tokelau was rich in marine resources but still felt Tokelau was highly vulnerable to survive independently as a nation and perhaps realistically would need to stay closely linked with New Zealand for some time. All of these participants stated that their participation in the Tokelauan community and activities, the *māopoopoga* they were involved in and their friendships, connected them as Tokelauans and, to the

homeland. They were firmly focused on keeping the Tokelauan culture alive for future generations because ‘without our culture we will be lost’ and, Tokelau will be lost. This group of youth demonstrated the concept of ethno-cultural continuity.

## CHAPTER 7: YOUTH IN DEPTH

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*Ko te Lumanaki o Tokelau  
Ko te matou lumanaki foki*

Tokelau's future is also our future. (F4)

### **Introduction**

Seven of the youth who had taken part in the group interviews were interviewed individually.<sup>71</sup> These individual *talanoa* saw a more in-depth discussion of issues raised in the group meeting and showed that these youth had reflected quite deeply on their experiences in the intervening period. The individual *talanoa* were startlingly honest and revealed these youth had an acute awareness of Tokelau's place as a small, vulnerable and minority population today. This chapter is in three parts following the main themes of: being Tokelauan, youth connecting, and the future of Tokelau and the Tokelauan community. One of the newer issues raised was what multiculturalism meant for the Tokelauan and other Pacific communities in New Zealand today.

### **Part One: Being Tokelauan**

A first theme emerging was the place of the *fakaTokelau* in their lives as Tokelauan youth living in New Zealand today. As discussed in Chapter Six, being Tokelauan was important to these youth as was the responsibility they felt to pass on the *agānuku*. The *fakaTokelau* brought a sense of security and pride while participating in Tokelauan activities reinforced 'who we are' and gave them the freedom to be 'who we are':

*...if I don't know my culture then I will be like a lost person...I will not be able to relate or connect with my family and the Tok people. I feel free when I am around Tok people doing Tok things and if I don't get involved I won't know the Tok ways. (M4)*

*You find the connection to who you are. At first our parents made us do (this) and I kind of didn't want to and then later I really enjoyed that...I'm*

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<sup>71</sup> The sample youth in the in-depth interviews were drawn from the youth *Māopoopoga* (chapter six) and those identification numbers have been retained. Thirteen interviews were carried out over a three month period, in addition to phone calls, emails and text messages with these students.

*proud to be Tokelau and I want to make the effort. I guess if we don't continue the Tokelau connection, the future generation will have nothing to connect with... (F3)*

*...keep Tokelau alive all your life...it doesn't matter where you are in the world, Tokelau is home and is always the same. (M5)*

They defined the *fakaTokelau* as the things 'they used to do in Tokelau and brought here when they came' and, the things that 'keep us in touch with our Tokelau side.' Everything else was not Tokelauan culture:

*...cultural activities to me are like things they used to do back home that are brought here to New Zealand – things that help us get in touch with our Tokelau side. Everything else is not Tokelau which doesn't involve Tokelau people. (M3)*

Learning the culture was just as important for 'New Zealand-borns,' like themselves. The *fakaTokelau* was the base they used to connect with others. These youth were continually surrounded by a network of family support in every undertaking:

*...get in touch with my culture cos nowadays it doesn't really happen especially in New Zealand...just being surrounded by other Tokelauan people helps me get back to my roots and get in touch with my culture. (M3)*

*...everyone needs to know where they come from, especially people like me who didn't grow up in Tokelau and haven't been there. So they will know what is the life there. It provides us with a platform to make the connection. (F3)*

*....if people don't take them up (fakaTokelau) they will not know who they are ...and nothing will be passed on to the next generation. There are not many Toks and it's important to learn Tok so Tok culture will live on. (M4)*

The question of what they preferred to be called – Tokelauan or PI (Pacific Islander) for example - drew serious responses. Most of this group did not mind being called

a PI – they were proud of the Tokelauan relationship with other Pacific communities, especially the Samoans. But, most preferred to be known as Tokelauan:

*I would prefer not to be called a PI but by my name...Because if they say you're PI they're just saying you are from the islands. But it doesn't really explain where you are from in the islands...there are some people here see PIs, they (as) stereotypes. But when you are called by your culture (this can change their perspective and change the ways they look at you...Pacific holds a lot of different cultures (diverse groups) when you are called Tokelau, people will know who you are, they will know where you are from not just PI. So having somewhere to connect to makes a difference because PI is not an island and Tokelau is a place where you can go to. You can't go to PI! (M4)*

*I would rather be called a Tokelau then a PI. (F3)*

*I'm proud to be Pacific Islander – PI, I don't think of it as just being a label it's like sort of my identity in a way cos I'm proud of being a Pacific Islander (M3)*

M4 was comfortable being called a New Zealand-Tokelauan. M3 warned against 'trying to be *pālagi*':

*I feel like a NZ Tokelauan – I feel more comfortable as a New Zealander or sometimes because I got brought up here but as a Tok. (M4)*

*...when I'm at school, a lot of the Tokelauan that come straight (from Tokelau) tend to try to fall into the *pālagi* way of life. But we should just stick to the way we were brought up that way we can succeed more instead of trying to change because we will end up changing our own mind set. (M3)*

These youth associated the smallness of Tokelau – both the population and the physical size of the three atolls- with vulnerability and with being a minority group. It was said that the small size of the Tokelauan community made it even more important to know the culture and be seen to be Tokelauan. Demonstrating the *fakaTokelau* to others kept this alive and reinforced its place:

*...it's a small culture and this makes it very important for people to know who we are. But before we can tell people who we are, we need to know ourselves first...if I don't know who I am, what can I say...what can I contribute that is different to the others? (M3)*

*If people start losing interest – our culture will probably slowly die out...everyone will forget our songs and how dances are supposed to be done, like how the takitaki hiva (dancing group leader) do the dance. I like the fatele and always go to the practice...people have different priority...for me, Tokelau my culture is real up there. (M6)*

*(if we don't) Tokelau will not be well known and our younger generation will not know anything about Tokelau... they will just be like other New Zealanders. (M5)*

These youth said the *fakaTokelau* connected them to their past, their present (we apply the *fakaTokelau* to our 'palagi world') and to the future. Leaders and family were their role models and guides:

*My parents and grandparents are the most influential people in my life. Another influential person is my aunty X because whenever we get in to trouble she always give us an hour talk like what we have done that was wrong and if we keep on doing that like how will affect our lives as a older person and affect our community (of) Tokelau. (M5)*

*I've learned to respect and value my elders –our grandparents came here for a reason – for us to get better education and they sacrificed a lot. So I'll respect and value them. Their stories motivate me, like I have a purpose (M4)*

*It helps when you know Toks stuff and then just apply it to the pālagi world. (F1)*

Tokelauan 'wellbeing' was described as embracing physical, emotional, spiritual and mental wellness:

*Wellbeing is about being healthy, being fit and like just don't smoke and drink...and being safe. Sports provide physical health. Going to church provides spiritual health and mental and having a good relationship with God and the family (those) relationships make you feel good...knowing that you don't have to worry about anything because everything is alright because you are good with your family and you are good with God. (M6)*

*Wellbeing is about being good physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally...like the Tok tournament the sports are good for the physical wellbeing and the language class is good for the mind, soul and spirit. (M5)*

Knowing their culture, reinforced feelings of personal security and wellbeing as did having their culture respected by others:

*...it makes you feel you belong, like all these people have something in common with you. So you don't feel like an outsider, you feel good about that. (F3)*

*All the Tokelau things I do is about who I am and I do them with pride. When I learn something didn't know before I want to share it with other people like my friends and family...like the Polyfest, the Tok group...it makes me feel happy when people are interested in me and my culture. I show the same respect to them and their culture. The culture, the activities that I do like give me something special and to me that is wellbeing. (M3)*

*...every Tokelau thing I do, does help me and feeds me. The feedings make me feel good and will spread to the school work because I am feeling good and happy. (M5)*

### **What makes a Tokelauan?**

Behaviour was a first factor these youth associated with being Tokelauan – respect, relationships, sharing and knowing how to act:

*...you will know a young Tokelauan youth by their actions' – it's how they speak, you sort of can tell. When I see people I can tell whether they are*

*Tokelau or Samoan...The way they dress... how they present themselves ... there is just something that is different. When people dress formally, you can really tell they are Tokelauan because the ladies wear the pa but I know boys are starting to like wear them (the pa). (F1)*

Tokelauans' ability to survive on their rugged small atolls demonstrated that Tokelauans were physically and mentally strong. They were also good at sports, dance and music. The fame and flare of the Te Vaka group was noted many times:

*We are strong people – not just physically but mentally too. I think that we are intelligent people like if we were able to survive in the middle of the ocean for all these years and finally come over to New Zealand and do good and that in New Zealand as well. (M3)*

Knowing the language was also important. However, language was viewed as both a resource and a barrier given the importance of English in New Zealand. They said that many of their friends tried hard to speak Tokelauan, especially to elders who did not speak English. Most of this group felt reasonably secure in their Tokelauan language speaking:

*(you need) English and Tokelau... because speaking English with non English speakers, they don't always understand, and if they speak Tok we don't understand much. (M4)*

*The pālagi - their English like it was too perfect...(now) I have learned more vocabulary...but maybe the pālagi speaks different level English. But I speak two languages. (M5)*

*I always complain to my dad why he didn't speak to us in Tokelau when I was growing up. He always said 'go and stay at nana's'. Now I surround myself with them – there's heaps of the Toks at school and I pick up things and... I say a couple of Tok words at the end of my sentences. (F3)*

According to these youth, you didn't have to speak the language to be a Tokelauan:

*You're still a Tok even if you can't speak it, just as long as you can understand. You can't judge them (the non speakers) because they can't speak Tok. Just because you are born in Tok doesn't mean you are Tok. People that don't usually speak it are hungry to know who they are. They try their best to learn the language. Tok culture doesn't just belong to the people that can speak it or understand it. (M4)*

*I don't think people that can speak Tokelau are more Tokelauan than others. I can understand it but can't speak it but (I'm) very interested. Sometimes when there's a conversation going and I can't respond. It makes me feel xxx but, it doesn't make them (or me) less Tokelauan. (F3)*

F8 and M6 talked about how the trip to Tokelau had increased their confidence in speaking Tokelauan outside their homes:

*...my parents used to speak to me in Tok when I was little and like I answer in English...I think it was when I went to Tokelau...When I go to school I hang out with my cousins and hard out speak Tok. When I returned from Tokelau I felt more encouraged to speak...like I needed to go to Tok to help me understand and feel okay to be me here...I speak Tokelau with others at school. It's like I feel okay to be Tokelau. (F2)*

*...when I went to Tokelau... we went to the fenuatanu (cemetery) with my dad and his brothers and my uncle said something like, 'your grand parents are here...that's where all of us come from' (that) makes you proud. (M6)*

### **Challenges and supports**

Each of these youth believed that minority ethnic groups were treated differently in New Zealand and, faced bias. Further, that their own experiences had made them appreciate their Tokelauan strengths even more, to stick together and be determined to do better:

*Heaps of Tok that I know in Porirua (about my age) strongly represent Tok. We won't like let anyone get away with bad mouthing anything about Tokelau and we kind of stick together. (F3)*

*People sort of look down on Tokelau people...because we are not a big community. They don't know what we are capable of...and no one knows that this Tokelau person is real good...they look down on us I reckon... (F1)*

*People put them down...when they are doing something wrong and they'd be calling them 'Tokelau' or something like that...sometimes it's like a joke but it still gets to you. (F2)*

They were aware of the dangers of Tokelauans (or PIs) sticking together. But, there were also dangers in mixing with others:

*... (sticking together) that's an advantage. But I think there's a downfall also because maybe other people may see it as a bad thing like a gang thing (we) stay together because we enjoy each other's company and we provide support for each other... (F3)*

*...(some Tok youth are into) Gang stuff, alcohol, drinking and drugs...I reckon it's the crowd they hang out with...(when they do that ) they are giving themselves a bad name, and their parents and (also) gives Tokelau a bad name. (M6)*

M7 raised some differences he had observed between youth in the homeland and those in New Zealand:

*...kids in Tokelau are more disciplined than here and they stay home. Maybe because Tokelau is isolated...they are not easily influenced by western things and over here is too big and open. We have the TV and the internet...Tokelau is isolated they keep it traditional. (M6)*

## **Part Two: Youth Connecting**

In addition to their participation in family and Tokelauan activities, the individual *talanoa* focussed on youth views of their schooling and access to information. M3's words capture the feelings expressed by each of the seven youth about how the *fakaTokelau* influenced everything they did:

*...dancing connects me to my history and just motivates me to even put Tokelau on the map...just to bring Tokelau up. When I listen to the old people talk about the culture...all these stories and our dancing... how they place people in rows and the drummers in the centre of the group, all these knowledge and experiences motivates you even more. I think the knowledge that you get from the Tokelau things, builds your confidence and that will be the attitude you have at school...when you look at it, many Tokelauan are really up there. (M3)*

### **Family**

To these students 'family' meant the extended family, the whole Tokelauan community and friends were often referred to as family as well. Family was the anchor in their lives – family was always there:

*(we) are family people, (we) know our priorities... families always come first, (we) are strong in the community and really wise. (F3)*

*...you can trust them. They are always there and you know that. (F3)*

*...when you need help you just go to them. They are always there, no matter what happens. If you get into trouble, whether you started it or not, they will always support you. (F1)*

*The (whole) community fundraised to support me. They just say if I need anything to ask them. When I go to their houses, I'm not shy, I don't wait for them to tell me to eat – they just say it's your house too. It's like what's theirs is ours. (M5)*

*It makes me happy just knowing that they are here and that I am not by myself. (F1)*

Family came together for *fakalavelave*, birthdays, Christmas and New Years (F1), family indoor netball teams (M4); eating dinner together...every night (M6) and, 'sometimes we watch my brother play rugby... and everyone sits together' (M6).  
Also:

*We go fishing, we have barbeques, we have family meetings and we have lotu and every Sunday we go to church...and when we do our evening lotu, we have to go in the sitting room. (F2)*

*We watch each other's sports, we go to church together, we have family day out and we watch each others' performances. We support each other like when one has a problem. You feel safe when you are part of a group like a family. (M5)*

#### ***Kāiga Mafutaga Porirua and National Mafutaga***

Family also meant being a member of the *Kāiga Tokelau Porirua* (KTP). These youth were proud of their Porirua group and the way the KTP united the individual atoll groups:

*Porirua won the tukus two years. It's cool to see everyone hard out doing the traditional performances especially for the New Zealand born...the Tokelau tournament was where I first learnt to dance and built my confidence to perform in front of an audience. (M4)*

*We need to keep having our gatherings and to do Tokelau activities, so that we do not lose our culture and language. (F2)*

*...It's good when Matauala and Te Umiumiga get together – we have dancing practice, we get to take part in the preparation before the day... (F2)*

*...(when I was young) my parents didn't really speak Tok to me... the Mafutaga ... that's what made me interested in my culture...the Mafutaga have probably attracted a lot of young people like me... I have*

*always known that I was Tok because of my family, but I really didn't know what it was about... (F3)*

They described how youth learnt leadership skills as they helped prepare for the national festivals, and other cultural events:

*Like the polyfest ...the older Tokelau students step up and take the leadership role. We look up at them so we can be future leaders in our school – (they're) our role models just looking up to the older Tokelau students. (M3)*

*Leaders lead a group like hiva (dance) and show their followers the right way – they lead by example. Leaders should be agreeing to what their members want like not just favouring anyone and just like making it fair. (F1)*

*A leader makes good choices for a group, whereas a role model is kind of more an individual person but they are both people that others want to follow. (F3)*

National tournaments especially were eagerly awaited times. These were 'youth times'- where national ties and feelings of being Tokelauan were reaffirmed, fostered and learnt:

*(Tokelau youth in NZ) don't really get to know who they are... (at) mafutaga they see more Toks and get to know more about their culture. (M4)*

*I (know) how Porirua dances but there I can see how everyone else (dances)...The Tok tournament is an opportunity for Tokelau people to come together and be themselves, like a big celebration of who we are as Tokelauans in New Zealand. It's about appreciating what our ancestors gifted us with. (M4)*

*...I always enjoy the Mafutaga things because it's about us, the leaders like the coach know how we talk and they talk to us too...it's good for the young people because people see the potential and they talk to you...the Mafutaga support youth to do better so they can represent Tokelau in the future... I'm*

*happy to represent Tokelau at the South Pacific Games. It's good for Tokelau to participate in the SPG...other islands will know that Tokelau is small but they can compete. (F1)*

When the news came out during the interview period that the 2010 national tournament had been cancelled 'due to recession and financial pressures' these youth were bitterly disappointed. They argued that this decision was not in the interests of youth and that youth should have been consulted:

*But why? Isn't this the biggest Tokelauan group...why stop something that we enjoy and is good for the young generation, they learn their culture...if it's about money (can we) ask the government to give some money to support us...help us out – the youth of Tokelau...we don't always ask them for things. (M5)*

*It's going to be a big loss for us – youth and the younger ones, the ones that will never get that experience and, for people like me who kind of relied on that to connect to Tokelau culture. It's like taking something away. (F3)*

Finally, each of these youth stressed very emphatically that would like support to help them do well, especially in schooling and education:

*(we need) people who can help out like someone who can speak Tokelau and English, or people that just speak Tok... so they can help us on areas that we need to be worked on...mind you families are always there to help. (M4)*

*...some of the Tokelauan elders come in and give us the history of why they came here, just to remind the young people that they came here to give us a better future instead of wasting opportunities – opportunities should be used fully. (M3)*

They said they would appreciate KTP support here as well:

*...education... like just making sure we are doing good at school...and opening up doors for young people so that they can see opportunities, job wise... make the youth think about what they want in life and what they want*

*after school... just making sure they understand life after school...(These) will be additional to the hiva and sports... (F1)*

*...more Tokelau homework centres and Tokelau truancy classes... more socials. so they can help us New Zealand born learn more about Tokelau and (how) things are done there...we only know the New Zealand ways. (M5)*

Chances for youth participation, and to be listened to, were a second need:

*... (for elder to) believe what we say like if we want something to be done. Not just saying 'no' to things that sounds bad (to them) but could be good, a good opportunity for us. (M4)*

*(we need someone to) speak for the young...they (the young ones) will understand how we feel and because we are their kids. (F3)*

## **Church**

Only a small number of comments were made about connecting to the church. But these were strong statements:

*Religion/church is important because I just love God – God created us. If there was no God, there will be no Tokelau or anyone else. (M5)*

*Church – your beliefs and stuff – church helps you with your spiritual wellbeing. (F1)*

## **Schooling**

These students knew education was 'the reason for coming' and the pathway to the Tokelauan future. Sometimes, this responsibility was a challenge:

*Education is important because I need a good qualification so I can get a job to support my family. Pālagi have good qualification at school. I think that if we focus more in school and just give our all then we will be able to support our families when we grow up. (M5)*

*I want a good future career. I want a family of my own and I want to provide for them. So a good qualification is a pathway for a good career which will enable me to provide for my family in the future. (F3)*

M3 and F3 said their confidence in their culture fed into confidence in their school work:

*It's like the cultural activities and wellbeing, your pride comes from having good understanding of yourself like your identity and that will reflect in your attitude with everything like school. (M3)*

*Yeah (cultural) activities help me feel better as a person...if you feel good in your mind, you think that everything is going well and you are more comfortable, you can concentrate properly on your work at school. If things are going wrong your mind is stuck on that problem, you can't really learn anything...when you are happy and excited about your culture, you will want to share with others. You will relate to other people better and approach things in a positive way. (F3)*

### ***Our school***

These youth had very positive feelings about their school: they described their school as one where youth of all ethnic groups respected and accepted each others' differences. As noted, the majority of students at this school were of Pacific ethnicity and there was a sizeable group of Tokelauan students also:<sup>72</sup>

*I like my school, it's not a Maori school, It's not a Samoan school, it's not just any one culture...all different cultures but, we are like one big family. I guess even if there were heaps of pālagi at our school, we still include them in stuff ...There's Asian and Indian people at our school, and I see Islanders wanting to play with them. (maybe) they feel sorry for them because there's not much people of their culture. But everyone wants to know about everyone's culture. Like Polyfest (here) English, Tokelau and Samoans go to the Cook Island Maori language class. It's good seeing people wanting to*

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<sup>72</sup> As discussed in Chapter 6, there were two Tokelauan teachers at the school; Tokelauan Studies was offered as an option at Years 9 and 10. In addition to a Polynesian Club, there was also a Tokelauan Cultural Group.

*know about other cultures. But, not putting their own culture down but just to learn more. (F1)*

*There are heaps of Tokelau youth there and we can just relate to when it comes to cultural stuff. For the Tokelau born that moves here, it's good...the New Zealand born ... can translate what they are supposed to do at school. (M5)*

*(our school) cater to every single culture...not only for New Zealand Maori just because it's their native land but also everyone else. (M3)*

There were mixed views about being at a school with few *palagi*:

*It's alright. It's less competition...cos like some palagi look down at the Pacific Islanders. (M5)*

*I'm not sure; all the schools I've been to are mainly Pacific Islanders...I don't know what it would be like. I haven't really thought about it. (F2)*

*This is the first time I go to school with girls. I went to a Catholic boys' school all my life and everything is real strict. Coming here, everything was laid back...everyone calling everyone cousins and stuff and real cool about that...back there. everyday it's a couple of brown faces and the whole school is white. (M6)*

*It's good cause our school is for PIs – and it has got classes for our language. The majority are PIs. Some people look at PIs as probably as dumb...they are saying they are better than us but we are all the same. It's just the way we were brought up, some of us have more respect...I think it makes us more energized to learn and more determined. It makes us want to learn more and try harder. (M4)*

At school, these students said they tended to hang out with other Pacific students but mainly with Tokelauan:

*I hang out with the Tok girls and my Samoan and Raro friends...sometimes when I hang out with a crew and most of us are Tokelau and, when we speak Tokelauan and the others are like, 'hey speak English, we don't understand' otherwise the relationship is good. (F2)*

*I have Samoan, Maori and Cook Island friends but I mostly hang out with the Tok boys. My friendship with the others are not like with the brothers that are Toks...when we talk with each other like Tok boys, in every sentence there is always one Tokelau word that we like to say. But when we talk with other ethnic groups, there is no like feeling, like the same feeling when we talk with the Toks in our language or hear it. (M5)*

### **Education**

These youth had a realistic picture of how they were doing at school. Factors influencing their schooling included too much time spent on sports, their own lack of discipline and a lack of role models. The fact that there were so many Tokelauan activities (on almost every evening) was also mentioned. So too was class size and inflexible teachers:

*I think its distractions. I give my friends more time than my work (especially) after school (Also) on Monday we have this fitness exercise (at the Matauala) and Thursday I go with my mum and dad to the Matauala meeting and, Friday I have youth. Tuesdays we have indoor netball. I'm trying to make some time after school and weekends (for school work). (F2)*

*I'm doing better than what I used to do (before) my mind wasn't set on a goal. I didn't have anyone to look up to – so I had to depend on myself. There's a role model (at school) now. (M4)*

*I could do better if there's no interruptions. I think more about sports and I that's (the only reason) I go to school. I try to learn more – I try to do everything. (F1)*

*I got a boy friend and everything was about him. I didn't really care about school. Everyone, parents, school and both of us – we saw our school drop. So we decided we will push each other to do the right thing and just stay focused because there's not much of the year left. (F3)*

Parent's lack of real understanding about their children's schooling was also alluded to:

*What hits me the most is that my parents have high hopes for me and they think that I'm going to be a doctor and a lawyer or something. But they don't even know what I get up at school – nothing bad, just that I'm not going to be a doctor and I'm not going to be lawyer...they don't know that I just go to school to play sports and stuff. (F1)*

When reminded that Pacific females were doing better than males<sup>73</sup>, M5 thought this would change if there were more boys' schools so that boys were not so easily distracted by girls. On the other hand, M4 believed there was a need 'change the way we look at boys and girls and to make sure that everyone has the same opportunities instead of saying, 'they can't do that because they are girls or boys.'

### ***Student-teacher relationships***

These youth appreciated teachers who listened and explained their subjects:

*Most are helpful – x is impatient. She stresses... you can tell her something and she won't listen. I ask for help...other times I don't because I don't want to look dumb, I want to try and do it myself. Most of the time, I just slack off my mind (and) go on to something else. When I need help, I mostly ask one person. That teacher is helpful, patient and uses teaching styles to help us. I can tell when a teacher puts the students first. I find it easy to talk to male teachers. Most teachers have a way to teach that we wouldn't be bored or distracted easily. They try doing it to our comfort zone. But x is fixed and wants everything her way. (M4)*

*Some are helpful but, not x. At the beginning of the year, I was smart to her, and she talked to my mum... I told her I was going to change and I started*

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<sup>73</sup> See Chapter Six

*changing and she still sees me like I was before... x is the subject that I got less credits so I need her support...I feel left out... this teacher is not letting go. (M5)*

*Sometimes it takes time for them to get to you because there's other people that need their help...I get frustrated waiting and then I can't be bothered when they come. We have a class of 28. I just sit there...I just like answer back. But when I leave class I end up realizing, why I did I do that? and, look how old I am? I'm being immature! (F1)*

*(Some teachers) are easier to follow...if you don't understand, they break them down and they start again slowly explaining what it is that we have to do. (F3)*

*...having like a lot of our people in the class helped... we connect with each other and, having the Tokelau teachers...we can relate with them...Sometimes it's hard to connect with the pālagi teachers because sometimes we don't understand them. But the Tokelau teacher explains it to us in English or Tokelau so we can understand more - especially for the kids that came straight from the island. If they have more Tokelau resources around, they will be able to do better. (M3)*

### ***Tokelauan Studies Programme***

The students spoke highly of the Tokelauan Studies programme and thought there should be more:<sup>74</sup>

*(That's) a positive move, it shows that Tokelau in New Zealand has moved. I think it should be available to everyone... not only for Tok kids...it's a good way to share our language and culture with other people...so they can understand us more, but like we are part of New Zealand... Teaching as a career should be promoted with the youth and, also the elders should be allowed to teach it. They have the traditional knowledge and wisdom. (M3)*

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<sup>74</sup> The Tokelau language curriculum for pre-school, primary and secondary school levels was launched in May 2008 in New Zealand.

*We need more Toks to think about the younger generation...even if they are not a teacher... like just as long as you know enough to be able to teach it. But we also need more trained Tok teachers... (M4)*

They were a little worried however, that if the programmes were increased, non-Tokelauan teachers would have to be recruited to teach these programmes:

*...it sounds wrong but if they have experienced Tokelau, if they have been there and have learned from the toaina (elders) that should be okay. (M5)*

*... it shows that other people are showing an interest in our culture – like we are learning stuff from them and they are learning stuff from us too. So it's like giving them information and they are sharing them back with us. (M3)*

*(they) are showing an interest in Tokelau language but the down fall is that they might not know everything. (F2)*

*I wouldn't enjoy it. But I will be happy for that person for trying it – but I wouldn't be happy if they were a fiapoto (think they know it all). (F1)*

### ***The Tokelau Cultural Group***

All of these seven youth belonged to the Tokelau Cultural group and said that participation in the recent secondary school Poly festival had been a totally empowering experience personally and, 'for Tokelau':

*(Dancing) with my family and being on stage with them was cool and seeing them having fun. I know we were performing for people but for me it was a cultural experience doing the stuff I like to do and (sharing) our culture with those that have limited knowledge. It's about taking Tokelau forward together. It was great to see other cultures doing the same. The night before I was nervous, but when we started then I felt happy and proud that I was not only representing my school but my culture too. I was happy to do something for Tokelau. (M3)*

*I was shy cos I didn't know how people will react to our performance, because it was the first we have shown it...but when we started, I gained my*

*confidence and I performed my best. I just wanted to keep on performing.*  
(M5)

*I felt proud of myself like I was representing Tokelau and our school – when people were clapping it was really good because they were like appreciating our dances and encouraging.* (F2)

Preparing for the Polyfest and the success of performing, they said, had carried over to influence every other part of their school life.

### **Access to information**

These students were not avid listeners to national or global news programmes. It seems that they got most of their information from the community meetings, school networks; members of their sports teams and the Tokelauan radio programme. Television and text messages were also mentioned as were Bebo<sup>75</sup> (M6) and telephones:

*If there is like something Tokelau on, someone at school will know. The boys I hang out with the Āumāga' the Matauala boys ...they will spread the word.*  
(M6)

*TV news ...if it's like something big and will stay in my head...like somebody's power get cut - is like the one in Auckland. I think there was one in Porirua because of Genesis – that was a big issue for me because it was in our community. I mostly go to the sports page and turn the papers.* (M4)

*I know that Samoa changed from the right side of the road to the left. Heard on the radio...read and watch TV but I'm not really interested in politics and that section of the paper or the news.* (M6)

F9's interest in current affairs had grown because she had voted in the last election:

*I wasn't really concerned much about (politics)...I didn't have a say so, it didn't bother me. I thought because I can't really change anything anyway.*

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<sup>75</sup> Bebo is a social networking site on the internet which is popular with the youth in New Zealand.

*When I became eligible to vote, I had to show some interest like, little by little. (F3)*

Of all these youth, F1 was worried about what he saw as youths' apparent lack of interest in knowing what was happening outside the Tokelauan community. In his view, significant messages were not getting out to youth. He thought Tokelauans might listen to the news if Tokelauan people were featured in the ads or had a role in writing the materials:

*I don't think the youth are really thinking about that stuff right now. It doesn't really hit them... (we) listen to the radio and watch TV... (There could be more items like) targeting youth what they can have in the future and just encouraging them to go far after school... giving them an idea on what courses offer. So, it will be helpful to know about these processes and what is required from the young person. (F1)*

### **Part Three: The Future**

Three main issues were raised regarding the future of Tokelau including how Tokelauans living in New Zealand be defined, the meaning of multiculturalism and, Tokelau's relationship with New Zealand.

First, was the question of what Tokelauans should be known as? For example, were they migrants in New Zealand, NZ-born or New Zealand citizens? On this point F1 said 'if I go to Tokelau ... they will call me a migrant!'

*I'm a New Zealand born and I've lived my whole life in the New Zealand culture. I reckon if I went to Tokelau I will be a migrant. Going to Tokelau will be my first time, and I just feel like I don't know anything – I know the basic stuff (but) I won't know what to do and what not to do. If I went to Tokelau I will probably know more. (F1)*

*I see myself as a migrant – I feel comfortable as a migrant because I feel I belong to my family who came from the islands. (M4)*

*No not a migrant ... because I've been in New Zealand my whole life. (F2)*

... we are New Zealanders too, we are citizens of New Zealand. (M4)

...even though I'm a NZ born (and) I'm thinking of myself as a New Zealand citizen (that) doesn't really sit well with me. I'm really proud to be Tokelauan and I don't think that you should be called New Zealander just because you were born in New Zealand. You should trace back to your roots and just stay true to your own culture. Everyday I'm reminded when I see my friends and family at home or at school, that I may be from New Zealand but I am a Tokelauan at heart. (M3)

I was born here I kind of live and breathe New Zealand. But it's important to know who I am first as a Tokelau. I think it's my nana because she's the one that migrated. (F3)

Migrant? Yes, I do. Because my grandparents moved here, I was born here but if they didn't move here I wouldn't be here, so I did come here. (M5)

Second, were discussions about what New Zealand being a multicultural country meant to Tokelauans. Again there was ambivalence on this point. Some advantages were that multiculturalism would result in people having a better understanding of each others culture. On the less positive side, multiculturalism did not necessarily mean different groups would automatically 'get along' (Table 9).

**Table 9: Advantages and disadvantages of a multicultural community**

Youth response	
<b>Advantages</b>	<p>You see other cultures like Tuvalu...if you see their <i>fatele</i>, they are like sort of similar to us and their language too...they are called <i>fatele</i> too...good to know there's some connections between us. (M5)</p> <p>The good things are that we are PI and we can relate to each other... (M4)</p>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<p>Oh like <i>fakanuku</i> man – like some say something bad about Tokelau and someone say something bad about them and sometimes it's not a good mix. (M6)</p> <p>The bad thing is that two cultures can be enemies ... they won't sort of like get along just because of their culture – just thing like stereotypes... (M4)</p> <p>Some cultures like they might represent their culture hard out that they might not like other cultures that, they might think they are the best and that could cause fights between cultures. (M5)</p>
<b>Advice</b>	<p>...we are all from the Pacific, if they in the Pacific or like in the islands can live in peace than we should be able to live in peace in New Zealand. (M5)</p> <p>We need to understand and know each others culture before they (our cultures) are judged...make everyone feel important. (M4)</p>

In their view, Tokelauan people had (and did) try to connect with people from other cultures in New Zealand and, make a significant contribution to the New Zealand workforce. They also supported newer migrants integrate into New Zealand life and, took the knowledge and skills they learnt in New Zealand back to develop Tokelau:

*When they came over here, they didn't really know much apart from their own knowledge. They started learning and gained knowledge to take back to Tokelau to help them (there). So, we've gained a lot of knowledge and we have built a lot of strength in our country. Tokelauans have made it to university and gained degrees. They take these back to Tokelau to teach every one else. So, we can build our own country too and help our own people. (M3)*

*Tokelau people came here to work hard for their children. While they are working hard they are helping New Zealand as well...my nana told us when they first arrived they worked late night shifts at the hospital and my grandpa too. My mum and brothers and sisters had to learn to be independent. (M5)*

*Economically we have a lot of our people in the New Zealand workforce ...We are also helping our own people (settle in better) especially the ones that have just come straight from the islands ... It's like building a tight bond and looking after each other – it's the Tokelau way, we share and no one is left out...When we provide these services to our people and others we take a lot of pressure off government resources. (M3)*

These youth described a healthy Tokelauan community – which they hoped for New Zealand - as respect for all, equality and democracy:

*A community that respects the cultures within that community (and) treats everyone, every culture, every person equal...no judgments. (M5)*

*A safe place, people who care about each other and where leaders of the community know what their people want and their needs are. (F9)*

*People who help out each other and can talk to each other, like don't see each other differently but see each other as one and acknowledge everyone – like no haters. (M4)*

Three stressed that youth must have voice in building this community and that the future community should be 'built with youth in mind':

*We could have like a board...and each culture can choose someone to represent them so all those people can try and make the best decision for the community. Like each leader can talk to their community first and they take their community's voice forward. (M5)*

*Put the people first and everything else will like come next ... the youth will feel valued and want to build to make it work like the community. I'd like to build my community using the tamā manu as the model...like all the cultures working together and everyone move together. (M3)*

Final views were that the future of Tokelau was very much 'up to the Tokelauan community' supported by New Zealand. Furthermore, the relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau must be based on mutual respect:

*...we are under the New Zealand government...my mum told me that Tokelau is not independent yet ...we are under their rules and that we are not ready to make our own decisions and that we are under New Zealand's decision. (M5)*

*I think 'Tokelau people' and like 'think New Zealand government' too...we are pretty much under their name. So, they should respect us the way we respect them and just not keep Tokelau a secret but not show it off too much. But help us in any way they can, like what we ask. (M4)*

*FI think it's (up to us) because no one is going to do it for us. But I think New Zealand too cos we are not like the other islands... the law says that Tokelau is part of New Zealand. So will be like good for New Zealand government to help Tokelau keep their culture. (F3)*

*I think Tokelau is responsible because if they want to keep Tokelau alive than it's up to them. But will be good like to get some help. (M3)*

Whatever the future held, maintaining the *fakaTokelau* was of vital importance to this group and, youth must participate in this process:

*...because not having our culture will just make us feel like we are the same as everyone else. We need something to say who we really are and belong to. Like if we say we are from Tokelau we feel there is something to work for, to achieve for and to show New Zealand and everyone that Tokelau will keep on doing these things even though it's tiny and small. (M4)*

*It's important for us to be heard because if they didn't hear what we wanted to say then (things won't be good) To be honest if we didn't get our say then we wouldn't want to be a Tok. I reckon because they don't want to listen to us and they don't hear what we want to say and we would rather be like someone that is different. (M4)*

## **Summary**

The important place of the *fakaTokelau* in the lives of these youth came through even more strongly in the individual *talanoa*. Being Tokelauan reinforced their feelings of well-being, identity, security and nationhood and was continually reinforced as they mixed with other Tokelauans. These feelings made them feel positive about everything 'outside' the Tokelauan culture - including their school and their school work. Each knew the importance of education for themselves and, the future of Tokelau. Furthermore, they said the school they attended respected cultural diversity as for example in the availability of Tokelauan Studies (Years 9 and 10) and the Tokelauan Cultural group. While this may be so, the positive feelings generated through their cultural strengths were not being realised in robust educational outcomes. Factors mentioned included them spending too much time on sports, community activities, their own failure to apply themselves and their parents' unsureness of how to assist their children's schooling. This is seen in the words of the student whose parents expected her to be a lawyer. Students also shared significant school-related factors which they saw as affecting their schooling,

including class size, teachers and teacher support. All told, these youth indicated a real desire for more solid support in their schooling by teachers, parents, the KTP and elders. They had a clear understanding of their need to connect better with schooling. They also wanted avenues for youth to participate in decision-making and one stressed the need for youth to be more informed about current events.

Generally these youth were building a strong Tokelauan identity and, had strong networks across New Zealand and into the homeland. They wanted to be known as Tokelauans – although they did not mind being called PIs and acknowledging their relationships with other nations, such as the Samoans. Knowing the Tokelauan language was not regarded as being totally vital to their Tokelauan identity. However, they were highly aware of differences between the homeland and New Zealand born youth. Their passion to learn the *fakaTokelau*, their fierce loyalty to each other and to other Pacific students and their understanding of who they were as young Tokelauans was clearly emphasised. At the same time, impressions were that the feelings of expressed in these *talanoa* were very much in terms of being Tokelauan in New Zealand. There was less discussion about a return home despite their strong sense of connectedness to their culture and language, people and homeland.

## CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

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*Mai te Pā Matua kite Ulufenua*

The Elders and the Youth

This case study has presented the voices of a small group of Tokelauan youth, their perceptions of their identity, sense of belonging, who they connect with and future aspirations. While the focus is on youth – the unheard voice – in the *fakaTokelau* a young person is part of a family and community. So this research was discussed first with community elders to gain their blessing before the project proceeded. These discussions with the elders helped set the research context, provided valuable insights and established community wide support to the research process. While the elders' views are presented in this thesis, this is not to contrast or compare these with the youth but to set the background against which youth voices can be set to be understood.

This research captures several points which make the Tokelau youth experience unique from that of youth from other Pacific nations. For example: Tokelau is a minority group within New Zealand's larger Pacific community. Second, is the special relationship between New Zealand and the three small and very isolated atoll groups which make up Tokelau as well as the fact that the Tokelauan population living in New Zealand today is almost five times that of the homelands. Third, the two recent referendums on Tokelau's self determination add another dimension to the research, especially the fact that only those living in the homeland for more than three months were permitted to vote. As seen, the referendum process was regarded as dividing a Tokelauan community which had always organised as one and as creating tensions between the homeland and those in New Zealand.

A *talanoa* methodology was used in this research, which proceeded from *talanoa* with elders, to a group *talanoa* with ten students (aged 15-19 years, comprising male and female and representing the three atolls) followed by individual interviews with seven youth drawn from the group *talanoa*.

The profile of the ten youth is of interest in itself and is probably a picture of the wider Tokelauan community in New Zealand today. As discussed nine of the youth were New Zealand-born and one was born in Tokelau: three were second generation

and one was a third generation New Zealand-born. In addition to the one born in Tokelau, two had been to the homelands. Tokelauan was the first language for one; six said they could speak Tokelauan reasonably fluently, while two defined themselves as English speakers. The main groups these youth affiliated to were Tokelauan community groups and/or church groups (Tokelau and/ or Pacific). Four had attended pre-school, one of which was on Tokelau. In sum, the composition of the sample enabled the testing of theories of acculturation and ethno-cultural continuity. Another question of interest here is whether and how the historical separation of the three atoll communities had carried over in the New Zealand experience.

### **Identity and sense of belonging**

While these youth had their own experiences, shaped by their own environment, each student identified strongly as Tokelauan and spoke of their strong physical, emotion and spiritual connections to the homeland. This came through especially as they shared the stories of their families journeying to New Zealand in search of the better life for their children and for Tokelau. These youth were very aware that their elders regarded them as the ‘lucky generation’ and, as the future of Tokelau, the ones who would pass on the *fakaTokelau*. A small number did not mind being called PI - and were proud of their links with other Pacific groups especially Samoans. However, they preferred to be known as Tokelauan. Comments made suggested that these youth felt an acute awareness of Tokelau’s place as a small, vulnerable and minority population. Coming through in every *talanoa* was a sense of the importance of making Tokelau better known in the public domain and of sharing what it meant to be Tokelauan. While nine declared their firm loyalty to New Zealand, ‘the land of my birth’ Tokelau was a strong first in the minds of all ten. It is notable that none described themselves as ‘New Zealand-born.’ However, many comments were made that more must be done to assist youth born in New Zealand to understand the *fakaTokelau* and, language.

It is notable, that these youth did not see speaking the mother tongue as essential to being Tokelauan. Instead, emphasis was given to feeling Tokelauan, the spirit of being Tokelauan, and, wanting to be Tokelauan. They also felt the family and the

community should take more responsibility for teaching the language and culture - backed by government support to a Tokelauan language programme in schools.

To this group, being Tokelauan meant values such as family and community, respect for elders, *inati* (sharing) and cooperation and working together for the good of all. The *fakaTokelau* was also demonstrated and symbolised in oratory, song and dance – they talked about the connections between the movements, words and the tunes and the influence of the past, on the present and the future. They described Tokelauan people as strong and resilient and said that it was the *fakaTokelau* which had ensured their survival in the harsh and isolated conditions of their small atoll communities and, their survival as a community in New Zealand.

While these youth had strong views about being Tokelauan, very little was said about a return to the homelands. They very much spoke about being Tokelauan in New Zealand. This point warrants further research. Equally important, the elders had mixed views about whether and how the *fakaTokelau* may have changed in New Zealand. Some saw change as a natural and inevitable process. Others said the *fakaTokelau* was now ‘a bit of a smorgasbord.’ One almost stopped the conversation with the words ‘which part of our culture have we lived in New Zealand?’ There were also questions about whether the ‘return home’ was now but a dream.

### **Who youth connect with**

The main agencies these youth connected with were the family (the core group) the *Mafutaga Tokelau Porirua* (community group) and the *Mafutaga Tupulaga* (youth) sports groups, church and schooling. Overarching all, these youth expressed a passion for cultural engagement especially in the cultural group performances of the *mafutaga tupulaga* (youth) and, the school cultural group.

### ***Family***

Each of these youth lived in extended family households which included cousins, grandparents, aunts and uncles. There was a special relationship between the grandparents and these youth. The grandparents were influential in contributing to these youth knowledge about the homeland, the *fakaTokelau* and Tokelauan issues. The shared stories by family members, especially the grandparents, were prominent in shaping the young people’s visions of the homeland. Another finding was that

youth who spent more time with their grandparents had more knowledge of Tokelau history and language than those who did not.

### ***The Mafutaga Tupulaga***

These youth spent a significant amount of time in Tokelau-related activities especially those associated with the *Mafutaga Tupulaga*. In fact, findings were that there was an activity on at the Matauala most nights of the week – which was seen by one as not so good for school work. Basically, the Porirua hall building, the dance, the language, the friendships and family were important in the daily life for these youth. These youth also considered the *mafutaga tupulaga* to be the place where the focus was totally on them as youth. Here, for example, the traditional experts (elders) paid attention to them by teaching them how to perform the Tokelauan dance. Time was also given to explaining the meanings of the songs and, increasing their understanding of the language, and their knowledge of the *fakaTokelau*. The group performances attracted big audiences and provided the opening for youth to share their culture with others and learn from others.

In addition to the Porirua based activities, these youth referred with affection to the biannual national tournaments where, they said, they connected with youth (and family) from all over New Zealand, the homeland and the world. These events had become especially important now they were used as national trials for teams for the South Pacific Games for example. These national activities also reaffirmed feelings of Tokelauan identity and nationhood as well as relations between the New Zealand based and homeland communities. The *Mafutaga Tupulaga* movement provides the *tupulaga* with a sense of ‘oneness’ and, Tokelauan unity (*māoopopoga Tokelau*). These youth were extremely disappointed when they heard that the 2010 Tournament had been cancelled. They said this was not in the youth interest and, that youth had not been consulted on this. They also questioned how this might influence the future cultural security of other youth. The issue of youth participating in decision making came through strongly in both the group and individual *talanoa*. Youth understood that this was at odds with the respect to elders. At the same time, they saw this as a matter of urgency.

In the youth view, cultural performances were an effective way to sustain culture. On the other hand, while acknowledging that they had a responsibility to instruct youth,

the elders also saw the *mafutaga* as a way of keeping youth together and out of trouble. The elders did not elaborate on the nature of these troubles.

### ***Friends***

Some differences in friendships were noted by gender. For example, the boys said they played for outside sporting clubs while the girls played netball for the Tokelauan local team. Tokelauan and Pacific were the preferred friendship groups, and both males and females said they tried to speak Tokelauan with their friends. However, the females indicated they were starting to choose friends from outside the Tokelauan circle who they had fun with, while the males said they tended to stay close with their Tokelauan and Pacific friends. It is notable also that the females included males in their list of friendship. This group of youth did not display much interest in connecting to local events or news and this was a real concern to one of the male youth. Instead, they tended to get the information they needed from people such as their mother (who gets this at the Tokelau *mafutaga*) and their friends. One, who had recently become eligible to vote, said she now followed politics more closely.

### ***Gender roles***

These youth were very aware of the gender roles underlying the *fakaTokelau* and linked these gender roles to educational outcomes. They saw girls' better educational achievements as a result of them being closely supervised, staying around the home and doing more intellectual work, compared with males who were expected to do the physical work. One male said that while girls should be looked after by their brothers, as in the *Feagaiga*, there should be similar expectations for both males and females so as to reduce the differences in educational outcomes.

### ***Education***

Their lack of connection to schooling and education was probably of most concern to these youth. They appreciated the time given to cultural activities, but they also knew that education was important to them and to the future of Tokelau. The youth described their school as culturally diverse and, as respecting all ethnic groups. The majority of pupils at their school were Polynesian and a significant number of this group were Tokelauan. As discussed, Tokelau Studies was taught in Years 9 and 10, there were two Tokelauan teachers and the school had a Polynesian Club and a

Tokelau Cultural Group. These youth indicated their schooling was influenced by them spending too much time on sports, their lack of attention to school work and having few role models. Other comments indicated significant teacher related factors including teacher inability to connect with the Tokelauan students and too large classes. Again this aspect warrants further research.

Finally, these youth strongly emphasised their desire and need for more family and community support to their education. This seemed to contrast with the views of the elders who seemed to give more priority to ensuring basic needs were met including the cultural security of the Tokelauan community.

### **Conclusions**

Participants said that the *talanoa* had given them the chance to discuss issues which were not usually raised or debated openly. Two points can be made. First, the *talanoa* took place at a time of quite intensive questioning within the Tokelauan community. The consultation process leading up to the referendums raised community awareness about the New Zealand-Tokelau relationship. It also challenged treasured aspects of the *fakaTokelau*, more especially the relationship between members of the Tokelauan community in New Zealand and with the homeland. While some say that the referendum caused a division between the homeland and outside communities, the process also acted as a much needed time for all Tokelauan people to rethink Tokelau's future together. Second, the *talanoa* reinforced the vital importance of listening to and hearing the youth voice – a voice not often consulted and yet a voice which is vital in policy and programme programming especially. For example, the early scholarship scheme was labelled a failure by the Tokelau and New Zealand administrations due to the low pass rates and the fact that few students returned to Tokelau. Little account was taken of the undoubted struggles or bias these students faced as they adjusted to schooling in this new land - away from their family. In fact, the scholarship students had not been asked their views at all. Today, former scholarship students have become the *vae ma na lima* (arms and legs) of the Tokelauan community and youth support movement in New Zealand today. They know the issues youth face and what must be done. The referendum process has brought added urgency to rethinking the how decisions

are made including youth participation in decision making. Clearly, the Tokelauan community in New Zealand are affected by any changes in the homeland.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this research. These are not prioritised.

1. These New Zealand based youth have a strong sense of identity as Tokelauan. Their knowledge of the *fakaTokelau* has been learnt reinforced in their families, community and youth groups, schooling, friendship groups and church, and in the national biannual meetings of the *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau I Niu Hila*. Their sense of belonging is being constructed in New Zealand and comprises the shared stories passed on by their elders and families and, their New Zealand experiences. As such, these Tokelauan youth fit the concept of ethno cultural community.
2. These youth understand they have a duty to pass on the *fakaTokelau*, just as their elders passed this on to them. They know the stories of the migration journeys and have been told by their elders that it is important to know who they are and the *fakaTokelau*. They are also aware that the *fakaTokelau* is changing in New Zealand and, in the homelands and that more Tokelauan are living in New Zealand today than the homelands. Impressions are that the expectation to pass on the *fakaTokelau* is a heavy responsibility.
3. The main groups these youth (and elders) connect to are Tokelau based and related. There is less evidence that they are connecting to other agencies at all. As a result, they are not enjoying the fullest benefits of social and economic participation in New Zealand society.
4. These youth emphasised a strong desire to be better connected to schooling – as for example to teachers, and the school curriculum. Further, they expressed a wish for their parents and community members to connect better with education and career agencies which would support youth development as well. Broadening the *mafutaga* from a sharing of cultural and traditional knowledge to school learning as well was suggested.

5. While respecting the role and voice of elders, these youth saw youth participation in decision-making to be a high priority. The elders note that young people are not present in community gatherings today. The youth, on the other hand, say that when they participate in community things, they get bored. Further, that while they are expected to be present in community activities, youth are not given an opportunity to participate and be involved. This raises questions of how does Tokelau define youth?

As the Tokelauan community continue to look to the future, there has been a danger that there has been less of a focus on the lives of the younger generation. I believe that the focus, as in this research, must be on today's' young people as the leaders and carriers of knowledge to the next generations.

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## APPENDIX ONE

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### **Youth Voices Youth Choices Project (YVYC)**

#### **Centre for Applied Cross Cultural Research, VUW**

New Zealand has managed relatively well in maintaining racial and religious harmony in the face of rapid social change. However, there are risks as well as benefits to New Zealand's increasing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Without a "whole of government" approach to strengthening the relations within and between the diverse communities the core elements of social cohesion- belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy- may be undermined and the risks associated with diversity- particularly, discrimination, isolation and exclusion- are likely to increase.

The Youth Voices and Youth Choices (YVYC) project aims are to identify the indicators and determinants of participation and success in ethnic youth in culturally and religiously diverse Aotearoa/New Zealand. Objectives are to identify the indicators, drivers and determinants of participation and success in ethnic youth in New Zealand:

- 1) How do youth construct their identities and negotiate issues pertaining to cultural maintenance and participation in the wider society? And;
- 2) What strategies or interventions promote positive identity, integration, cultural and social connectedness and leadership within and between ethnic and religious communities?

The YVYC aims are to ensure that youth voices are heard on these and other issues. The YVYC project concentrates on three groups of youth in New Zealand: the Chinese, Pacific and Muslim youth. These groups were selected on the basis of historical, political and social factors and are distinguished on ethnic cultural and religious grounds. The Pacific component of the project, of which this Masters research is a part, comprises three case studies: the hip hop community, Pacific connecting through participation in Polynesian Clubs and, the voices of Tokelauan youth in New Zealand.

The Youth Voices, Youth Choices (YVYC) links into two significant strands of government work: the Ministry of Social Development's (MSD) draft Immigration and Social Cohesion Report and the 2006 Cabinet paper Strengthening Relations between our Diverse Communities and the associated MSD and Office of Ethnic Affairs (OEA) Connecting Diverse Communities (CDU) project. Aligned to this is the government's response to the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations report and high-level symposium and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs' (MPIA) Ala Fou-New Pathways: Strategic Directions for Pacific Youth in New Zealand.

Data from the YVYC presents a knowledge base that significantly reduces the gaps in the information available about different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in New Zealand and the relations between them.

## APPENDIX TWO

### Age-Five Year Groups by Atolls of Usual Residence

Age – Five Years Groups – Te Matua Fakavahega Taki Lima Tauhaga	Atoll of Usual Residence – Fenua e Mahani Nofu ai				
	Atafu	Fakaofu	Nukunonu	Samoa	Total
0 to 4 years	57	44	58	7	166
5 to 9 years	71	55	42	4	172
10 to 14 years	66	72	36	2	176
15 to 19 years	60	64	43	3	170
20 to 24 years	39	32	37	-	108
25 to 29 years	27	25	24	2	78
30 to 34 years	37	28	38	6	96
35 to 39 years	29	31	28	2	100
40 to 44 years	25	27	24	1	77
45 to 49 years	30	28	16	3	77
50 to 54 years	11	30	12	2	55
55 to 59 years	18	12	15	-	45
60 to 64 years	7	11	20	-	38
65 to 69 years	14	13	13	1	41
70 to 74 years	12	10	2	-	24
75 years and over	14	11	18	-	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>426</b>		<b>1466</b>

Source: Statistics New Zealand and the Office of the Ongoing Government of Tokelau (2006).

## APPENDIX THREE

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### **Tokelau Referendum (2006 and 2007)**

Following the years of the British colonial administration, Tokelau came under the New Zealand administration in 1926. In 1948, the Tokelau Act made Tokelau an external territory of New Zealand. Tokelau then entered the United Nation's list of non-self governing territories. Under the UN Charter, Tokelau can express their desire for self-determination under the following three options:

- a. *Independence*: Tokelau become an independent state in its own right.
- b. *Integration*: Tokelau become part of New Zealand (existing independent state) on the basis of 'complete equality between the peoples of the erstwhile non-self governing territory and those of the independent country with which it is integrated, and potentially with a special degree of local autonomy.
- c. *Free association*:<sup>76</sup> Tokelau has a special relationship, with an independent state.

Tokelau's process for self determination has two main elements: *Tokelau's draft constitution* (in progress since the 1990s<sup>77</sup>) and *The draft Treaty of Free Association between New Zealand and Tokelau*. The principles of the draft Treaty were approved by the *Fono Fakamua* in August 2005 and later approved by New Zealand's Cabinet (Nov 2005). The Treaty makes the relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau explicit and maintains the support and advice from the New Zealand Parliament.

These two documents are the foundations for Tokelau's journey to nation building and self determination. They also set the basis for the *Fono Fakamua* referendums on self determination in 2006 and 2007. Eligibility to vote in these referendums was restricted to inhabitants of Tokelau who had been in Tokelau for three consecutive months or longer. People were given one proposal to vote on for both referendums:

That Tokelau become a self-governing state in free association with New Zealand on the basis of the Constitution and the Treaty.

Both referendums failed to acquire the two thirds majority required for acceptance. Tokelau remains a dependent territory of New Zealand and is one of the few remaining territories in the world. For Tokelau, this means that the *Fono Fakamua* which gives governance to Tokelau continues to be administered by New Zealand Parliament.

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<sup>76</sup> Also known as 'self government'

<sup>77</sup> This comprised representatives from each atoll lead by two Tokelau lawyers with advice from Tokelau's Constitutional Adviser and in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## APPENDIX FOUR

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### **Ethics Application**

#### **Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) – Human Ethics Committee (HEC)**

The ethics approval for this research was granted by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (HEC) on the 10 July 2009 based on the following:

- 1) The participant's full consent will be obtained through a signed consent form.
- 2) The data collection through group and in depth interviews (semi-structured) will be digital recorded.
- 3) The research is neither anonymous or confidential. Pseudonym will be used to protect the identity of participants in thesis unless they wish to use their real names.
- 4) The participants will be informed and made aware of the purpose and intentions of the research with regards to the data collection (form part of the thesis, contribute to the Youth Voices Youth Choices Project (FORST), use for conference and publication).
- 5) The rights of researched participants will be made known - may withdraw from the research at any time without a given reason and can contact me or my supervisor should they have any requires about the research.
- 6) The researched participants would be provided with a copy of the transcript at the conclusion of the interview for accuracy and addition if necessary. The researcher will provide informal feedback to the key organisation (*Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua* (MTTP) during the course of the study.
- 7) The transcripts will be accessed only by myself and supervisor and will be kept in a locked file, electronic information will be kept in a pass-word protected file accessed only by me and all materials will be destroyed 10 years after the conclusion of the study.

## APPENDIX FIVE

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TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI



### Participant Information sheet

**Title of Project:** *Tokelau Youth Voice*

My name is Paula Faiva and I am conducting this research as part of the requirements for a Masters thesis in Pacific Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, under the supervision of Professor Tagaloatele Dr. Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop. This research has been approved by the university's Human Ethics Committee.

The aim of the research project is to explore the views of Tokelau youth on the following subjects:

- Tokelau youth's views on 'identity'.
- The range and nature of cultural activities these youth engage in and how/if these activities reinforce Tokelau youth's feelings of identity, enhance school achievements and strengthen intercultural relations.
- The cultural activities and interventions introduced and available in schools and the Tokelau community to enhance Tokelau youth's feelings of identity and capacity building.

The research features interviews and group meetings with a group of Tokelau youth who are members of the 'Mafulaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua' (MTTP). This group will also keep a reflective diary recording their experiences. Group meetings will also be held with parents who are involved with the MTTP and parents who have not been involved. The interviews and *maoopopoga* will be no longer than 90 minutes.

The results of the study will: i) contribute to the 'Youth Voices: Youth Choices' project (FORST), ii) be submitted for publication in a professional journal, or presented at professional conferences, and iii) will form part of my MA thesis which will be submitted for assessment.

I would like to invite you to take part in this study. If you agree contact will be made to arrange a time and location that is suitable to you for the interviews and *maoopopoga*. Your permission will also be sought to use a digital audio recorder, field notes and/or other suitable forms of recording the *talanoaga* (discussion). The individual *talanoaga* can be stopped at any stage by you (the participant) and will only re-commence when you are ready. You can withdraw from the study without question up to two weeks after the interview and all information disclosed by you will not be used. The interview will be transcribed by me and returned to you to check for accuracy.

Audio tapes, interview notes and the transcripts of the interview will be held by me in a secured cabinet for a period of ten years after which they will either be returned to you or destroyed. Transcripts of the interview will only be accessed by me and my supervisor. All information provided by you for the purpose of this study will remain confidential and your identity will not be revealed unless consent is gained.

Fakafetai for your participation. You may contact me or my supervisor for any queries.

Researcher: Paula Faiva  
Email: [paula.faiva@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:paula.faiva@vuw.ac.nz)  
Phone: 04 463 9971  
Supervisor: Professor Tagaloatele Dr Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop  
Email: [Peggy.Fairbairn-Dunlop@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Peggy.Fairbairn-Dunlop@vuw.ac.nz)  
Phone: 04 463-5857



### Fakamatalaga agai ki te hukehukega

#### Igoa o te hukehukega:

*Ko te leo o te tupulaga talavou Tokelau*

Ko toku igoa ko Paula Faiva. Ko taku hukehukega ko he vaega o taku Master thesis I te Pacific Studies I te Iunivehite a Vitolia I Ueligitone (Victoria University of Wellington) I lalo o te taunikilaga a Professor Tagaloatele Dr. Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop ma kua iei te fakatagaga mai te komiti Iloilo a te Iunivehite (Human Ethics Committee) ke fai ai taku hukehukega.

Ko te kakano o te hukehuke, ke hakilikili na lagona o Tupulaga Tokelau I na vaega e tuhia I lalo:

- Na talitonuga ma na lagona o te tupulaga talavou Tokelau agai ki o latou 'identity' – fakatatakiga: Ko ai au? Ko ai koe? Ko ai ki matou?
- Ni a na vaega fakatino (cultural activities) ma na itu kaiga fakatinoga e fai e ki latou e fakamakeke ma fakamautu ai o latou manatu ma na lagona ki o latou 'identity'. E vehea foki ona lagolago ma fehoahoani na lagona (feeling of identity) ki a latou akoakoga, ma atili fakamakeke ai a latou hokotaga I loto o latou hikohikomaga (intercultural relations).
- Ni a na vaega o te aganuku (cultural activities) e fai e na akoga ma te kaiga o Tokelau ke fehoahoani ai ki te tupulaga o Tokelau ke atili fakamakeke ma fafaga ai o latou loto, mafaufau, lagona (identity) ke tuputupu pea ai a latou taumafaiga.

Ko na matakupu ie nei e faka talanoa ma ni tino taki tahi vena ma ni maopoopoga ma he vaega o te tupulaga o te Mafutaga a te tupulaga a Porirua (MTTP). Ko te vaega tenei e fai a latou fakamaumauga (reflective diary) ki na mea kua pa pe na pa ki latou ki ei. E fai foki na maopoopoga a matua ke talatalanoa agai ki te latou pito. Ko na talanoaga e he ova atu ite 90 minute.

Ko te ikuga o te hukehukega tenei ka: i) fehoahoani ki te 'Youth Voices: Youth Choices' project, ii) tuhi ihe tuhi (professional journal), fakatalanoa ini fonotaga (professional conferences), iii) ma fehoahoani lahi ki taku pepa (MA thesis).

E taua tau fehoahoani mo te hukehukega, oi e fakafehokotaki atu koe kite taimi ma te koga e talafeagai ma koe mo na talanoaga. E manakomia tau fakatagaga ke puke ai na talanoaga. E mafai na talanoaga tau toka tahi ke taofi I ho he taimi oi toe kamata ai I to malie. E mafai foki koe ke tumuli ma te hukehukega I te lua vaiaho e uma ai te talanoaga ma he fakaaoga tau tufa mai. Ko na talanoaga puke e taipa e au oi kavatu ai ke hiaki pe talafeagai.

E puipui uma na fakamaumauga o na talanoaga, ma ko kimaua ma te faiakoga te kikila ki ei, ma e loka mo he hefulu tauhaga oi fakafoki atu ai pe fakakino e au. Kae fakafetai mo tau lagolago mai ma tau tufa mai, kae kafai e fia maua ni e tahi fakamatalaga oi logo mai au pe ko te faiakoga.

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**Consent Form – Community and Youth**

**Title of Project:** Tokelau Youth Voice

**Researcher:** Paula Faiva

I have been given and understood an explanation of this research. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have been addressed by the researcher to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from the research two weeks after the interview and any information I may have disclosed will not be used for the study.

- I only consent to undertaking this interview under the condition that the published results will not use my name, and that no opinions will be attributed to me in any way that will identify me.

*Or*

- I consent to information or opinions which I have given being attributed to me in any reports on this research.
- I understand that I will have the opportunity to check the transcripts of the interviews for accuracy before publication.
- I understand that the data I provide will not be used for any other purposes or be released to others without my consent.
- I would like to receive a summary of the research when it is completed.
- I agree to take part in this research.

.....  
**The parents or guidance’s consent is required for participants aged 15 or 16 years.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a copy of the summary send to:

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



**Fakatagaga (consent) – Tupulaga ma kaiga Tokelau (Maopoopoga)**

**Igoa o te hukehukega:** *Ko te leo o tupulaga talavou Tokelau*

**Tino hukehuke:** Paula Faiva

Ko au kua malie katoa ki na fakamalamalama kua kaumai ma na maua te avanoa ke fai ai ni aku fehili. E ko iloa ko au e mafai ke holomuli ma te hukehukega I te lua vaiaho e uma ai na talanoaga ma ko aku fakamatalaga na fai ka he fakaaoga I te hukehukega.

- Ko au e malie ke kau ite hukehukega kafai e he fakailoagia toku igoa pe ko aku fakamatalaga e ono matea ai au

***Pe***

- E talia e au na tulaga uma e ono pa ki ei aku fakamatalaga I ho he lipoti e lipoti ai te hukehukega tenei.
- Ko au e malamalama kafai e uma te taipa ona o taku tufa agai ki te hukehukega e kaumai ke toe kikila au ki ei kae heki lolomia.
- Ko au e malamalama k otaku tufa kit e hukehukega e he fakaaoga mo he tahi mea kae he fakailoa maia.
- Ko au e fofou ki he lipoti pukupuku (summary) o te hukehukega kafai e uma.
- Ko au e malie ko au ke kau I te hukehuga.

.....  
**E manakomia te faktagaga ate matua pe ko te tauhi kafai koe e i lalo ote 16 tauhaga.**

Igoa: \_\_\_\_\_

Haini: \_\_\_\_\_

Aho: \_\_\_\_\_

Ko au e fofou ki he kopi o te lipoti ke lafo mai ki:

Tuatuhi: \_\_\_\_\_

Emeli: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX SIX

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### Interview Question Schedule

#### 1. Background

- Age, M/F, Family size, Place in family
- Place of Birth? If born outside of New Zealand, age of migration?
- Have you been to Tokelau? Discuss.
- Parents: Place of Birth? Affiliations? E.g. atoll, religious, other. Occupation? Hopes for their own lives, lives of their children, Tokelauans in New Zealand, and Tokelau the homeland?
- Preferred language at home and school

#### 2. Education

- Attended ECE? Present school and class? Length of time at this school?
- List any Tokelauan/Pacific programmes at your school.
- Describe your participation/non participation, and factors influencing these.
- Friends, affiliations with other ethnic groups (school and community).
- Feelings about the school and the culture of the school.
- Schooling progress, subjects, teachers and factors influencing educational outcomes

#### 3. Identity and culture

- How do you identify yourself? (e.g. Tokelauan/PI/New Zealander/NZ-born Tokelauan/ atoll group/ other)
- What does it mean to be a Tokelau / Tokelauan youth in New Zealand today?
- Any challenges and constraints and, how do you meet these?
- What are the factors that influenced or contributed to your perception of who you are? E.g. family, church, community, fashion, music.
- What does culture mean to you and, how do you show this? Are there gendered roles?
- Have there been changes in the Tokelauan ways? Who is responsible for keeping the Tokelauan culture alive in New Zealand? (E.g. family, community, school) and how should this be done?
- Are Tokelauans in New Zealand different to Tokelauans in the islands? Discuss.
- Are we blending in with the wider New Zealand community? How will this influence our *fakaTokelau*?

#### 4. Language

- How confident are you in speaking /understanding/writing Tokelauan? (1 – not confident, 5 – very confident)
- What is your main language / preferred language (in different situations - home, peers, church)
- If you speak Tokelauan, where did you learn to speak it?
- Do you think you need to speak Tokelauan to be a 'real' Tokelauan?
- What advice would you give others to keep learning their mother tongue?
- Are Tokelauans in danger of losing our language and culture?

## 5. What groups do you belong to?

### (a) *Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelau Porirua and other Tokelauan cultural programmes*

- How long have you participated in the MTTP or Tokelauan activities? Why did you join?
- What kinds of activities does the MTTP (or other Tokelau group) run for youth
- Are these appropriate/ relevant?
- What is enjoyable/ valuable (and not) in these programmes?
- Are there other programmes that could be run for Tokelauan youth?
- Who should run them and how should this be done?
- How has your involvement in these programmes influenced your life, schooling, and relationships with other Tokelauan families, the Tokelauan community and, the wider New Zealand community? Has your participation with Tokelauan cultural programmes/performances such as dances, songs contributed to you being a young Tokelauan leader?
- What attitudes, knowledge and skills have you have gained in these activities and how have you applied these?

### (b) *Wider community participation*

- What activities outside the Tokelauan community do you engage in?
- What are the criteria for participation? Do they differ from the MTTP criteria?  
Yes/No

### (c) *Friends*

- Who do you associate with most of the time and, what do you do?
- How do you choose your friends? What influence do they have on you? Who is the main leader of your group? How did she/he become the leader? How do you resolve differences amongst yourselves? How do you celebrate achievements?

### (d) *Church and other agencies (e.g. sports)*

## 6. Leadership and participation

- How do Tokelauan youth participate in family and community decision making?
- How are the leadership roles delegated in family, in the MTTP/ generally in Tokelauan activities?
- Which leadership styles are appropriate for Tokelauan young people in New Zealand today?
- What makes a good/bad leader?
- What are the important skills, knowledge and attitudes for young Tokelauan / Pacific leaders in New Zealand today and in the future? What do we need to examine and perhaps change?

## 7. Future

- What are the main challenges for Tokelauan youth today and, how can these be addressed?
- What do you think the future holds for Tokelau?
- What is your understanding of the relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand?
- What did you think of the referendum?

- What is your vision, dream for Tokelauan people in NZ and, in Tokelau? Where do you see yourself living your life?
- Does the Tokelauan community need to mobilise today to ensure the continued valuing of the *fakaTokelau*? Discuss.

8. Other