International Migration from Tonga, South Pacific: A Behavioral Approach

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine socio-cultural aspects of international migration from Tonga and its impact based on the behavioral approach, which has thus far been neglected in existing literature associated with the country's migration. An interview and questionnaire survey of 150 households from the three island groups in Tonga was conducted. As a result, the following findings were obtained. Household size has recently decreased due to transformation from the extended family to the nuclear family and emigration from Tonga. Consequently, the number of migrants per household is larger than before. The individual or nuclear family rather than the extended family plays a greater role in migration decision-making now. With respect to the reason for migration, an increasing motivation to migrate for study abroad since the 1990s is remarkable. Reliance on remittance is not significant partially due to the increase in student migration. Furthermore, there is an obvious tendency for migrants to marry persons with Tongan nationality, and, thus, they are quite likely to settle in their host countries and not return to Tonga.

Key words: student migration, decision-making unit, remittance, dependency model, MIRAB model, Kingdom of Tonga

Introduction

International migration in the South Pacific region including Tonga began as a mere trickle in the early 1950s and eventually led to the dramatic outflow of people into the Pacific Rim countries of New Zealand, Australia and the United States in the 1960s and 1970s (Bedford and Lloyd 1982; Connell 1983a; Trlin 1987). The South Pacific region contains three indigenous population groups: Melanesia,¹ Micronesia² and Polynesia.³ The Melanesian islands have more than 75% of the population living in rural areas, but rural-urban migration is now conspicuous (Bedford 2002; Connell 1990). Fiji is an exception due to the political upheavals ensuing from the 1987 and 2000 *coup d'états*,⁴ resulting in the dramatic emigration of the Indo-Fijian population (Bedford 1989; Chetty and Prasad 1993; Mohanty 2001). In contrast, the international migration of Micronesian and particularly Polynesian island countries is having a great impact on the home country population.

The remarkable diversity of the South Pacific

region, coupled with the scattering of small islands of approximately 551,059 km² across a vast ocean of 30 million km², clearly makes the geographic distances between small island states within the region generally very great. As a result, these islands encounter 'special disadvantages associated with limited domestic markets, remoteness, a narrow resource base, indivisibilities in investment and proneness to natural disasters' (Cook and Kirkpatrick 1998: 845). The smallness of Pacific societies, however, does not imply that world development has been irrelevant to the region (Haberkorn 1997: 220).

The historical commencement of international migration from the Pacific Islands is greatly embedded in the colonial connections to the metropolitan countries (Appleyard and Stahl 1995; Brown 1998a; Connell 1990). This explains the diversification of emigration trends from various Pacific Island countries. For example, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau became 'Island Territories' of New Zealand in the late 1940s (Hooper 1993), and it has given them the privilege of New Zealand citizenship by birthright (Connell 1990; Hooper 1993). The

Western Samoans are granted citizenship for an annual quota of 1,100 by the New Zealand government (New Zealand Immigration 2002a).

Tonga is a unique case. Since the country was a British protectorate until 1970 (Campbell 2001) and lacked any political dependence with any Pacific Rim countries, it has often confronted various obstacles in obtaining visas to enter destination countries and international migration has become significant only in the 1970s (Hayes 1992; Connell 1990). Exceptional options associated with migration were through educational institutions and Christian churches (Bedford and Gibson 1986; Connell 1990; Hayes 1992). In addition, a temporary labor scheme to New Zealand was one way of facilitating the out-migration of unskilled workers from Samoa, Tonga and Fiji in the late 1970s (Bedford and Lloyd 1982; Bedford and Gibson 1986; Connell 1983b; Levick and Bedford 1988). This scheme was terminated in the 1980s due to labour market restructuring, which caused job losses in the manufacturing sector of New Zealand in the 1990s (Fletcher 1995; Statistics New Zealand 2002).

It is noteworthy that there are more Tongans living abroad than the home population. To date, the only available sources have been various population censuses of host countries because of the lack of a recording system in Tonga to monitor emigration, implying that the specific numbers are undocumented and mainly estimates (Connell 1983a). New Zealand is by far the most significant destination (Bedford and Gibson 1986; Trlin 1987; Brown 2002) for Tongan migrants. As of 1996, there are 40,716 in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2001), 36,840 in the United States (United States Census Bureau 2001) and 8,430 in Australia (Fisi'iahi 2001). The New Zealand government recognizes the contributions made by the Pacific migrants to the country's economy and society (Brown 2002) and started Pacific Access Category (PAC) grants to 250 persons from Tonga, 75 persons from Tuvalu and 50 persons from Kiribati in 2002 (New Zealand Immigration 2002b). Table 1 illustrates the comparison of populations between the country of origin and New Zealand (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2001).

Table 1. New Zealand census counts by Island population estimate

Nationality	New Zealand census count	Island population estimate
Samoan	115,017	170,900
Cook Islander	52,569	19,300
Tongan	40,716	99,400
Niuean	20,148	1,900
Tokelauan	6,204	1,500
Tuvalu Islander	1,965	10,000
Total	236,619	303,000

Estimate at mid-2001 prepared by the South Pacific Commission Demographic/Population program.

Source: <http://www.stats.govt.nz>.

Organization of this paper is as follows. After a literature review on international migration focused on the South Pacific region, the aim of this article is presented. Next, the study area, Tonga, is briefly explained and the interview and questionnaire surveys are outlined. Then, the survey results are discussed by pointing to the significance of the obtained findings. Finally, concluding remarks are presented.

Literature Review

Previous studies on international migration of the South Pacific region produced two well-known frameworks: the dependency model and Migration, Remittance, Aid and Bureaucracy (MIRAB) model (Hayes 1992). While the dependency model is derived from various country reports⁵ by Connell (1983a, b, 1987), the MIRAB model is from the joint study of Bertram and Watters (1985, 1986). Both models have the two constituents of the island (or internal) system and the international system. The former system consists of the three sub-systems: socio-cultural, demographic and economic. The latter system represents the connection between a particular country of the South Pacific and the destination countries, and has elements such as culture/education, aid, labor markets, trade and remittances.

The dependency model demonstrates the penetration of the global economy into the island economies and the transformation of the traditional value orientation and the aspiration of the islanders under consideration. According

to the model, migration is encouraged by increasing aspirations for a satisfactory standard of living, desirable occupation and sufficient accessibility to various services including education and health (Connell 1983a, 1990). Consequently, there occurs a reduction both in the quality and quantity of the labour force in the island country through selective emigration of the educated or skilled and an influx of remittances from host countries. Noteworthy is that the dependency model lacks any equilibrating process, implying that the island population continues to decline (Hayes 1992).

In the meantime, the MIRAB model was made from the studies of the five small South Pacific countries of the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Kiribati by using long-run statistical material. According to this model, a major motivation to migrate is the need to maximise income and to reduce labour surplus within the extended family unit (Bertram and Watters 1985, 1986). Ties and networks between the migrant and the remaining kin are strengthened by remittances and reciprocal visits, which further contribute to the making of a new trans-national corporation of kin.⁶ The MIRAB model assumes equilibrium in population change due to the constant exile of surplus labour, which leads to the constant flow of remittances into the islands. Population decline does not occur because out-migration is compensated for by high fertility.

According to an interesting and suggestive comparison by Hayes (1992), while the MIRAB model expects that migration is motivated by the kinship system, the dependency model lacks such an idea and attaches importance to the role of individualism derived from Western capitalism. A major contrasting difference between the two lies in view of the migration impact. The dependency model claims that migration fails to promote development in the islands and remittances foment economic inequality and dependence (Connell 1983a, 1983b, 1987, 1990). In contrast, the MIRAB model argues that island economies manage to be financially sustainable by the continuous emigration of surplus labour that could in turn guarantee the flow of remittance to the islands (Bertram and Watters 1985, 1986; Bertram

1986, 1993). With these contrasting points in mind, Hayes (1992) advocated an integrated model, which incorporates both the 'kinship system in conditioning migration decisions and the growing autonomy of individual family members from kin authority' (Hayes 1993a: 304). Much recently the MIRAB model has been subject to various reconsiderations (Bertram 1999; Poirine 1998).

I would like to devote attention to existing researches that have applied the two models to migration in the South Pacific region.

With respect to the dependency model, Va'a (1992) criticises the model's conclusion that migration should be discouraged and rural development should be encouraged (Connell 1983b). In addition, empirical studies show that severe adverse weather in Niue (Barker 2000) and a lack of human resources especially in the rural areas in Samoa (Muliana 2001) are chief push factors that encourage emigration. There have been fewer studies using or referring to the dependency model than the MIRAB counterpart so far.

The MIRAB model is commonly mentioned in many studies that emphasize the economic contribution of migrant remittances. Previous studies that examined the applicability of the MIRAB model to the Pacific islands include, for example, Fensterseifer (1993) on Western Samoa, Hayes (1993b) on Ware Island in Papua New Guinea, Hooper (1993) on Tokelau, Poirine (1994) on French Polynesia and comparative studies of various countries (Brown 1998a, b; Brown and Connell 2004; Connell and Conway 2000). However, McCall (1996, 1997), Hau'ofa (1993) and Laplagne (1997) criticize the continentalists' views of migration focused on the South Pacific islands as misinterpretation. Other studies include Cook and Kirkpatrick (1998) on Micronesia, Treadgold (1999) on Norfolk Island exemplifying the possibility of getting out of the MIRAB situation and the hopes of boosting agricultural yields and fisheries production to attain greater economic autonomy for Kiribati (Thomas 2002). Unfortunately, with respect to the integrated model developed by Hayes (1992), there has thus far been no detailed empirical investigation.

Next, let me devote attention to previous re-

searches of migration associated with Tonga, the study country of this paper. Although Tonga was not included in the studies that resulted in the creation of the MIRAB model, the features of the model have affected Tonga in many ways. Especially notable is the increasing number of Tongans abroad (Bertram and Watters 1986) and the benefits of remittances and improvement of their social statuses⁷ by an emerging middle class of well-educated commoners (Marcus 1974, 1981, 1993). Previous studies on Tonga (for example, Fuka 1984; Tongamoa 1987; Faeamani 1993, 1995) have emphasized the contribution of remittances to the household economy and to the development of Tonga. These studies concluded that the aspects of the MIRAB economy are inevitable, since there is high dependence on remittances. They argued that migration should be encouraged because it continues to be a success with the strong support of the kinship system. Outstanding remittances sent by migrants and the dominance of the government over aid (James 2002) enable us to classify Tonga as a typical MIRAB economy.

Hence, it can generally be mentioned that, as far as the migration of Tonga is concerned, the MIRAB model has attracted more attention and thus has tended to demonstrate higher explanatory power than the dependency model. Additionally, migration studies by anthropologists were ethnographies (James 1991; Small 1997; Sudo 1997; Morton 1998; Kishida 2000; Evans 2001).

In terms of the structure of the dependency model and the MIRAB model, mentioned earlier, existing studies of the migration of the South Pacific region including Tonga have given much attention to 'remittance' and 'aid' within the international system, 'migration' in the demographic sub-system and 'income' in the economic sub-system within the island system. On the other hand, however, the socio-cultural sub-system has generally been overlooked in the existing literature. Particularly, although the 'motivation to migrate' forms an important element in the socio-cultural sub-system, it has been elucidated only partially. Furthermore, since both the dependency and the MIRAB models take a macro-level ap-

proach, it is difficult for them to carefully examine the much smaller micro units, such as household and individual, which are actually involved in migration.

Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine socio-cultural aspects of international migration from Tonga and its impact based on the behavioral approach, which has thus far been neglected in existing literature associated with the country's migration. Specifically, questionnaire and interview survey on an individual/household basis was utilized. As is well known, the behavioral approach in migration study is not new, having started in the 1960s (Boyle et al. 1998). Nevertheless, such an approach seems very useful and promising within the context of migration investigation for contemporary Tonga.

The Study Area

The study area is the Kingdom of Tonga, located in the South West Pacific within 15 and 23 degrees latitude South and 173 and 177 longitude West. Its population of 101,000 (Tonga Statistics Department 2001) inhabits about 36 of the 170 islands with a total land area of 744.34 km². These islands are scattered along a sea area of 700,000 km² and clustered into three main groups (Figure 1). The population density is 156 persons per km², and the main island of Tongatapu houses 69% of the entire Tongan population. The country has a relatively large young population under the age of 15 (39%). The census of Tonga shows a declining annual growth rate from 0.5% (1976–1986) to 0.3% (1986–1996). A most notable change is the drastic decrease of population aged 15–34 in 1986–1996, mainly due to international migration (Tonga Statistics Department 1986, 1996).

Located just below the Tropic of Capricorn and west of the International Dateline, Tonga is 13 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. Its west and north neighboring countries are Fiji and Western Samoa. The total land area is slightly larger than Amamiyoshima Island (712 km²) of Kagoshima Prefecture, and the sea area is three times as wide as the area of Honshu Island. The smallness of Tonga can be under-

Figure 1. The map of the Kingdom of Tonga.

stood from these facts.

The three main island groups are Tongatapu, Ha'apai and Vava'u (see Figure 1). Tongatapu (259 km²) is the largest island, whose area is half of Awajishima Island, at 40 kilometers long and 20 kilometers wide, with its highest point at 82 meters. The Ha'apai group is comprised of small raised coral islands and atolls. Inclusive in this group is the volcanic island of Kao, which has the highest point (1,033 meters) in Tonga. The Vava'u group consists of one large raised coral island, which is higher on the southwestern side and rises to a height of 213 meters. The major natural resources in Tonga are the land, sea and its people; therefore, the yields from the land and the sea are the major contributors to the Tongan economy (Govern-

ment of Tonga Official Website 2002).

The general household in Tonga has been said to be the extended family, which operates as a basic unit to fulfill socio-economic obligations and therefore plays an important role as the backbone of Tongan society (Vaden 1998). Nowadays, however, Tonga is undergoing family transformation from extended family to nuclear family and it is described in a detailed way in James (1991, 1998), Marcus (1993) and Morton (1996).

A major threat is the natural disaster of tropical cyclones, which hit Tonga annually, in combination with the country's relative smallness and isolation. Cyclones disadvantage the country in competing on an international level for promising trade markets. Hence, international migration is regarded as a safety valve (Connell 1983a, 1990; Appleyard and Stahl 1995), which implies safety measures for economies prone to instability and trade deficits.

Tonga's economy depends largely on agriculture products, forestry and fishery. These sectors constitute 28% of the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2001/02. Other major economic sectors are government services (18.5%), finance, real estate and services (15.1%), commerce, restaurant and hotel (14.2%) and the official estimates for Tonga's real GDP growth rate is 0.5% in this fiscal year. Tonga suffers a very high inflation of 10.6%. This inflation is due, first, to an increase in shipping freight costs, second, the weakening of the Tongan currency (pa'anga) against the United States dollar, Japanese yen and other major currencies, and, finally, the increase of imported goods prices twice or thrice in a year by overseas suppliers.

Tonga has a trade deficit. Large import items are consumer goods such as foodstuff and vehicles. In consideration of the impressive importation of vehicles to Tonga, a continual increase in fuel price is also a chief contributor to the deficit. The country fails to improve the trade balance since the level of exports cannot keep up with that of imports. Ironically, however, there is little effort made to encourage local production. New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Fiji are Tonga's major import partners (National Reserve Bank of Tonga 1999).

Japan, which occupies about half of the total exports, is the largest export partner. The squash export to the Japanese market is a major export item, which nets around 4 to 13 million pa'anga per year (National Reserve Bank of Tonga 2000). The net trade balance for 2000/01 was -96.7 million pa'anga, which represents a deterioration of 38.1% from -70.0 million pa'anga in 1993/94.

Tonga receives support in aid from the European Union, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Japan and other countries. The total grant from abroad, however, accounts for only 3.02% of the Tonga government total revenue for 2000/01 (Government of Tonga Budget Statement 2002). However, remittances constituted about 50% of the GDP in 2002 (Asian Development Bank 2003) and increased by 128.1% from 1994 to 2001. They are the major contributors to Tonga's balance of payments (National Reserve Bank of Tonga 2000). Moreover, it is well known that these official figures of the transfer have underestimated the real amount of remittances that enter Tonga, because a large amount is considered to be through various unofficial channels⁸ (Brown 1994, 1995, 1997; Brown and Foster 1995).

Interview and Questionnaire Survey

The interview and questionnaire survey was conducted in Tonga during July and August 2002 for 150 households of the three groups of islands of Tongatapu (80 households), Ha'apai (20 households) and Vava'u (50 households). Sample households with migrants abroad were selected and information of 200 migrants was obtained from these households. Please note that information about emigrants from Tonga was collected not from the emigrants themselves, but through their family members staying in Tonga. It is not the best survey method; however, household members who were interviewed knew the emigrants very well. This method was inevitable in limited survey time. Worthy-of-note here is that a similar method was also used in James (1991), Faeamani (1993) and Evans (2001).

The "household" in this survey is defined here as people living in the same house. It is similar

to the "household" definition in Tongan Census, namely, a group of persons living in the same village allotment (ideally 0.4 acres) regardless of the number of generations therein. Such group can constitute not only nuclear family but also extended family; actually, about two-thirds of the sampled households in my survey are nuclear families and the rest are extended families. Based on such definition of "household," transformation from extended family to nuclear family in the country has been described in previous studies (James 1991, 1998; Marcus 1993; Morton 1996).

A certain part of the sample households in this survey has plural migrants per household. This is because there is an increasing tendency of emigration from Tonga in recent years and it is not unusual for a particular household to have two or more emigrants, although each household had only one emigrant previously. Regarding the household which has two or more emigrants, the first person who emigrated from it was selected. In the data analyses including figure and tables, 150 households were used for investigation associated with household, and 200 migrants were used for investigation associated with migrants themselves.

The samples taken from Tongatapu were selected from the four main districts (Greater Nuku'alofa, Central, Eastern and Western District). Each district has about 15 to 20 villages. Fortunately, the district officers assisted me in identifying households with migrants abroad.⁹ Two or three households were selected from each village on average. The two outer islands of Ha'apai and Vava'u were also included in the survey to examine differences among the major islands. In these two islands, the survey was attempted only in the principal districts, and five households per village on average were selected from an identified list of families with migrants abroad, based on the author's preliminary investigation.

I gave informal interviews using a prepared questionnaire sheet to obtain information about the migrants' decision-making and migration impact. With reference to the households recorded in the 1996 population census of Tonga, the sample households covered 0.74%, 1.36% and 1.83% of Tongatapu, Ha'apai and

Vava'u, respectively (Tonga Statistics Department 1996). About 25% of the migrants in this survey visited Tonga during the period of my survey, due to various church conferences and family events, which enabled the author to interview them personally. Migrants with email addresses were later contacted for confirmation of information obtained from their families in Tonga. The data obtained from this survey were analyzed using SPSS (version 10.0).

Results and Discussions

Major findings obtained from the interview and questionnaire survey are explained below based on figures and tables. Then, implications for existing literature are discussed.

Table 2 is a summary of selected characteristics of the households and the migrants under analyses. While the items of "gender of migrants abroad" and "kindred of household members currently abroad" concern the migrants, those of "household size," "household members currently abroad" and "pattern of per household migrants abroad" concern the households. The migrants are predominantly 'male' and 'son' or 'daughter.' Meanwhile, the households

are predominantly smaller in size, '4-6 persons' or '1-3 person' in terms of "household size," '1 person' and '2 persons' in terms of "household members currently abroad," and '1 migrant only abroad' and '2 or more migrants in the same destination' in terms of "pattern of per household migrants abroad." Table 2 indicates a smaller household size in comparison with six persons per household on average according to the 1996 population census (Tonga Statistics Department 1999) and suggests an increasing tendency for households to have two or more migrants currently abroad. These findings seem to imply an intensification of emigration from Tonga under way.

Figure 2 illustrates the trend of emigration from Tonga during the past four decades based on the questionnaire survey. The return migrants from overseas are not included and the comprehensive data for emigration from Tonga is not available due to the absence of a departure card recording system by Immigration Department of Tonga. It shows a gradual increase of departures since the 1970s. In spite of annual fluctuation, more than ten emigrations are observed annually in recent years. Whereas the emigration in the 1980s generally arose from

Table 2. Summary of respondents and the migrants abroad

Gender of migrants abroad	Male	110	(55)
	Female	90	(45)
Residential Island	Tongatapu	80	(53)
	Ha'apai	20	(13)
	Vava'u	50	(34)
Kindred of household members currently abroad	Parents	46	(23)
	Son	87	(44)
	Daughter	67	(33)
Household size	1-3 persons	69	(46)
	4-6 persons	76	(51)
	7+ persons	5	(3)
Household members currently abroad	1 person	63	(42)
	2 persons	46	(31)
	3-4 persons	33	(22)
	5+ persons	8	(5)
Pattern of per household migrants abroad	1 migrant only abroad	63	(42)
	2 or more migrants in the same destination	55	(37)
	2 or more migrants in different destinations	32	(21)

Note: The figures in parentheses imply percentage.

Source: The author's questionnaire survey.

Figure 2. Emigration from Tonga based on the questionnaire survey.

Note: The return migrants from overseas are not included and the data for general emigration from Tonga is not available due to the absence of a departure card recording system by the Immigration department of Tonga.

Source: The author's questionnaire survey.

the flexible immigration regulations of destination countries, emigration in the 1990s was largely characterized by student migration and family reunions.

Figure 3 illustrates the initial motivation to migrate obtained from the data the author collected. 'Study abroad' and 'job' constitute the two largest categories, which together form approximately two-thirds of all migrants. The highest rate of 'study abroad' is mainly due to the shortage of post-secondary education institutions within Tonga.

Table 3 reveals the relationship between "means of financing" for migration and the "migration decision-making unit." Regarding

Figure 3. Initial motivation to migrate.

Source: The author's questionnaire survey.

"means of financing," the family's role, shown in 'family overseas' (32%) and 'family in Tonga' (25%), and the economic independence of migrants shown in 'own money' (18%) are conspicuous. With respect to the decision-making unit associated with emigration, 'nuclear family' of emigrants forms the largest share (65%), followed by 'individual' (31%); meanwhile, the share of 'extended family' (4%) is negligible. It could be implied that there is a declining authority of the 'extended family' in the migration decision making process. It has also been mentioned elsewhere (James 1991; Morton 1996) that the decision making of an extended family tends to be limited to ceremonial occasions, while the decision to migrate is becoming atomized.

Figure 4 denotes the relationship between "household income" and "return visit frequency." Generally, the frequency depends

Table 3. Means of financing and migration decision-making unit

Means of financing	Individual	Nuclear family	Extended family	Total
Loan	4	11	1	16 (8)
Family in Tonga	8	40	1	49 (25)
Family overseas	18	40	6	64 (32)
Scholarship	14	4	0	18 (9)
Employer overseas	3	8	0	11 (5)
Own money	12	23	1	36 (18)
Other	2	4	0	6 (3)
Total	61 (31)	130 (65)	9 (4)	200 (100)

Note: The figures in parentheses imply percentage.

Source: The author's questionnaire survey.

Figure 4. Relationship between household income and the return visit frequency.

Note: 1) Case A: low income and high remittance, Case B: high income and low remittance, Case C: high income and no remittance. There are no cases of the three categories 'low income and no remittance,' 'low income and low remittance' and 'high income and high remittance.' The terms 'high' and 'low' here denote annual income of more than, and less than 10,000 pa'anga, respectively. The total income was only cash income quoted by the respondents.

2) 'Frequently' denotes return once in every 2-5 years and 'hardly' denotes return once every 6-10 years.

Source: The author's questionnaire survey.

upon factors such as the visa type, economic affordability and social status of migrants abroad. Please note that the term 'household income' does not contain remittances. Although I was able to obtain income information for each of the households under consideration from the interview, the exact amount of the remittances for each of them was unobtainable. Thus, to anticipate a relative weight of remittance and to discuss its relation with the return-to-visit frequency, I have to use the criterion, based on the answer in the survey, as to whether the remittance is larger than the income, and, finally, classify all households into three groups (Cases A, B and C). The weight of remittance in the household economy decreases from Case A, to Case B to Case C in this order.

Figure 4 suggests that the contribution of remittance to the household economy is not significant, because Case B and Case C constitute approximately two-thirds of all households. Moreover, a great difference among these three cases can, to a certain extent, be explained in terms of the migration time and

the motivation to migrate.

A great majority of Case A consists of migration that aimed at a 'job' overseas and occurred in the recent period, since the 1990s. The dominance of 'annually' and 'frequently' is related to the attendance of church activities and family obligations in Tonga. With regard to other notable migrants contained in this case, the difficulty of obtaining a permanent visa, especially for those in the United States, needs to be mentioned. These emigrants have to continually renew their short-term visas in order to maintain their jobs and continue remitting to their families.¹⁰

Typical migrants of Case B are those who left Tonga to 'study abroad' in the 1990s and find a 'job' in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. Although this case forms the largest share of all households, there is no significant difference in shares of 'annually,' 'frequently' and 'hardly.' Thus, a convincing explanation for the relationship between household income and return visit frequency is difficult.

Regarding Case C with no remittance, there is a tendency for return visits to be 'never' or 'hardly,' although the number of these cases is relatively small. Case C is mostly formed by the motivations 'study abroad' in the past 5 years and 'job' in the 1970s. The low frequency of the latter migrants seems to arise from a developing social network and an increasing will to settle for a longer duration in the host countries.

Table 4 explores remittance uses. To compare the findings here with those in previous studies, investigations by Tongamoa (1987) and Faeamani (1993) are referred to as well. According to my survey, 'daily consumption' (35%) and 'household bills' (21%) constitute major uses, and 'church' and 'education fees' follow. Meanwhile, Tongamoa (1987) indicates that 'daily consumption,' 'church' and 'educational fees' are the three most important uses on a multi-answer basis; Faeamani (1993) clarifies that the remittance uses of 'church,' 'daily consumption' and 'household bills' are important. The results of the three studies including my survey, shown in Table 4, are greatly different from each other. Since such difference may arise from differences of year, place and respon-

Table 4. Remittance uses in three migration surveys on Tonga

Remittance uses	Tongamoa (1987) %	Faeamani (1993) %	'Esau* (2002) %
Daily consumption	84	17	35
Church	71	21	18
Education fees	56	8	12
Household bills	—	12	21
House construction	9	5	7
Other	2	37	7
Total	222	100	100

Source: Tongamoa 1987: 106; Faeamani 1993: 112; and * present study.

Note: 1) Information only for main uses of remittances is presented.

2) 'Household bills' refers to the water, electricity and gas payments.

3) Tongamoa's survey permits multiple-answer way, implying 'total' exceeds 100%.

dents of the survey, it is difficult to extract a general tendency from them.

Table 5 shows the results of "destination country," "communication method" and "nationality of migrant's spouse." The total number (109 persons) of "nationality of migrant's spouse" means that the other migrants are single. Since the strength of the social network between particular origin-destination pairs through chain migration is well known, the data for the major islands are also presented

here. Regarding "destination country," New Zealand, the United States and Australia are popular, in this order. In Ha'apai, however, emigration to New Zealand is exceptionally rare (only one person), although the reason is unclear. Rather traditional methods such as 'telephone only' or 'telephone and postal mail' are the dominant means of communication between the migrants and their family members in Tonga. With respect to "nationality of migrant's spouse," 'Tongan' is quite large (69%) and there is an obvious tendency for Tongan migrants abroad to marry within the same nationality. The nationalities 'American,' 'Austrian' and 'New Zealander' have only 21%, but the most popular nationality among these three countries is 'American,' implying a slight difference of order in terms of "destination country" and "nationality of migrant's spouse."

Table 6 illustrates the relationship between the reason for and duration of the return visit to Tonga. Significant reasons for migrants to return are 'family matters' and 'church activities,' and the most remarkable duration is '1 month.' Some explanation is needed about 'annual conference' in 'church activities.' It lasts for about a week and the main agenda for discussion cover the maintenance of church infrastructure, clergymen reshuffling, progress of church-owned schools, decision of the next con-

Table 5. Destination country, communication method and nationality of migrant's spouse

		Tongatapu	Ha'apai	Vava'u	Total
Destination country	New Zealand	38	1	21	60 (40)
	Australia	14	8	5	27 (18)
	United States	20	6	17	43 (27)
	Other	8	5	7	20 (13)
	Total	80	20	50	150 (100)
Communication method	Telephone only	46	14	14	74 (49)
	Tel & postal mail	20	5	29	54 (36)
	Tel/postal mail/email	14	1	7	22 (15)
	Total	80	20	50	150 (100)
Nationality of migrant's spouse	Tongan	48	8	19	75 (69)
	American	5	2	5	12 (11)
	Australian	3	2	2	7 (6)
	New Zealander	1	0	3	4 (4)
	Other	3	4	4	11 (10)
	Total	60	15	33	109 (100)

Note: The figures in parentheses imply percentage.

Source: The author's questionnaire survey.

Table 6. Reason for return trip and its duration

Return visit	2 weeks or less	1 month	2 months	3 months or more	Total
Family matters	5	42	8	2	57 (53)
Church activities	6	28	3	2	39 (36)
House building	2	5	2	3	12 (11)
Total	13	75	13	7	108 (100)

Note: 1) 'Family matters' refer to birth, weddings, funerals, and reunions. 'Church activities' refer to annual conferences and inauguration of church property.

2) Figures in parentheses imply percentage.

Source: The author's questionnaire survey.

Table 7. Transition of marital status of migrants

before \ after	Single	Married	Divorced	Remarried	Widowed	Total
Single	58	73	0	2	0	133 (66.5)
Married	0	57	0	5	0	62 (31)
Divorced	0	0	2	2	0	4 (2)
Remarried	0	0	0	0	0	0 (0)
Widowed	0	0	0	0	1	1 (0.5)
Total	58 (29)	130 (65)	2(1)	9 (4.5)	1 (0.5)	200 (100)

Note: The figures in parentheses imply percentage.

Source: The author's questionnaire survey.

ference venue and so on. Table 6 signifies that church-related activities form a very important element in Tonga's contemporary socio-cultural life. 'House building' is also significant due to the damages of the tropical cyclone *waka*. This factor is especially considerable for migrants from Vava'u Island, because cyclones raged in the northern islands of Tonga during the first half of 2002.

Table 7 shows the transition of the migrants' marital status before and after migration from Tonga to foreign countries. Two-thirds of the migrants (133 persons), half of whom are formed by students, left Tonga as 'single.' More than half of them (73 persons) married after migration, although the status of the great majority (118 migrants) remained unchanged. Worthy-of-note is the change of marital status from 'single' to 'married,' implying the making of new ties in the host countries.

Figure 5 depicts the relationship between the current visa status of migrants and their likelihood of return to Tonga. It is very obvious that the migrants with rights of 'permanent residency' or 'citizenship' have a definite will to settle in the host country. The migrants with a

'temporary visa' are likely to return to Tonga once their visas expire. However, half of these migrants are positive as to extending their stay abroad, and, ultimately, to continue living there permanently, if possible. In addition, there is hardly any indication that migrants in the host countries will return even when they retire

Figure 5. Current visa statuses of migrants and the likelihood of return to Tonga.

Note: 'Permanent residency' and 'citizenship' imply the visa statuses acquired from the destination countries after a period of residency.

Source: The author's questionnaire survey.

from their present occupations.

Next, keeping the existing studies in mind, I would like to refer to the significance of the findings obtained here and their implications.

First, household size has been reduced recently for two reasons: transformation from extended family to nuclear family and emigration from Tonga. As a consequence, the number of migrants per household is now larger than the ones previously. This can be confirmed from Tonga's population censuses and similar findings are described in Tongamoa (1987), James (1991), Faeamani (1993) and Morton (1996). Moreover, according to my survey, most households can afford the cost of migration to travel abroad. This finding contrasts with Connell (1990), who indicated that migration is selective and limited to the highly educated and skilled.

Second, my finding that the individual or nuclear family rather than the extended family plays a greater role in migration decision-making is notable. A prominent role taken by the extended family is a major characteristic of the MIRAB model. Given the traditional Tongan way of thinking associated with migration, such a trend is new. It has also been reported elsewhere (James 1991; Morton 1996) that the decision making of an extended family tends to be limited to ceremonial occasions, while the decision to migrate is becoming atomized. This finding including mine is contrary to the MIRAB model (Bertram and Watters 1985) and seems to support the dependency model (Connell 1990), which demonstrates an important role of individualism. Furthermore, based on such a perspective, strong communication networks currently observed may not necessarily lead to longevity of reciprocity between Tonga and the migrants in the host countries.

Third, an increasing motivation to migrate for study abroad during the past decade is clarified, but it has seldom been mentioned in previous studies of migration focused on Tonga. This is related to a high rate (73 migrants, or more than one-third of all migrants) of marital status change from 'single' to 'married' after migration. Quite noteworthy is that the traditional motivation of 'job,' which has attracted great attention in existing literature on international migration, ranks second.

Fourth, according to my survey, reliance on remittance is not significant partially due to an increasing share of student migration. This finding contrasts with previous studies, which demonstrate a strong dependence on remittance (e.g., Fuka 1984; Tongamoa 1987; Faeamani 1993). There has been an interesting debate as to whether remittances were used either negatively (for example, daily life consumption and house building/repair) or positively for future development (for example, investment and savings), as shown in Fuka (1984), Tongamoa (1987) and Faeamani (1993, 1995). Although I cannot answer this question convincingly based on my survey, a certain use of remittance for education fees, which I have elucidated here, seems to serve as evidence that the remittances have partially been directed to positive purposes for future development. An increasing motivation to emigrate for the purpose of study abroad is noticeable, but it does not mean that remittance has been losing its role. However, it is still important particularly for households, which have to depend upon it.

Fifth, although a change in the migrants' marital status in host countries and its implications have hardly been discussed in existing researches associated with migration from Tonga, I have presented the finding that there is an obvious tendency for migrants to marry persons with Tongan nationality. While this may contribute to the persistence of migrant ties with Tonga, it can lead them to develop a new social network within the host countries. The latter view seems to explain other findings in this paper, or a less remarkable role of remittance and a marked likelihood not to return to Tonga among the migrants. It remains unknown, however, whether the fact that emigrants from Tonga get married with persons of Tongan nationality and develop a new social network in the host countries will lead to a possibility that the ties with Tonga and their families decline or to another possibility that it will help to construct a new transnational network including Tonga. This topic needs to be examined carefully on a long-term basis hereafter.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine socio-cultural aspects of international migration from Tonga and its impact based on the behavioral approach, which has thus far been neglected in existing literature associated with the country's migration. An interview and questionnaire survey of 150 households from the three island groups in Tonga was conducted. The major findings obtained are as follows.

The number of migrants per household is larger than before partially due to emigration from Tonga. The individual or nuclear family rather than the extended family plays a greater role in migration decision-making now. With respect to the reason for migration, an increasing motivation to migrate for study abroad since the 1990s is remarkable. Reliance on remittance is not significant partially due to the increase of student migration. Furthermore, there is an obvious tendency for migrants to marry persons with Tongan nationality, and, thus, they are quite likely to settle in their host countries and not return to Tonga.

The specific implications of the findings obtained here for existing studies are already discussed carefully in the preceding section. Thus, I would like to mention a general comment on the two well-known models, the dependency model and the MIRAB model. They were born within the context of survey reports for several countries in the South Pacific region. Although the two models have exerted great influence on migration studies in this region and I have learned a lot from them, the results of this paper do not support one of the two models exclusively. Because the models were made by incorporating circumstances and conditions before the 1980s, we should now attach importance to more recent factors such as an increasing amount of student migration.

Finally, a few problems of this paper need to be mentioned. Because a survey of emigrants dispersed in several host countries was quite difficult, a survey of households that have emigrants from Tonga and live in the country was inevitably attempted. In other words, an inter-

view or questionnaire of the emigrants themselves was not conducted here. As a result, important in-depth information including the migrants' actual legal status, their social network and their will to return/settle could not be collected. In addition, since this article adopts the behavioral approach mainly on a migrant/household basis, macro-level factors, such as political and economic relationships between Tonga and host countries and the government immigration policies of the host countries, are mentioned only partially. How the recent changes in the socio-cultural system, clarified in this study, have affected the demographic and economic sub-systems of the island system is another important topic. However, these issues belong to future research agenda.

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Notes

1. Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Caledonia.
2. Kiribati, Federate States of Micronesia, Nauru, Mariana, Guam, Marshall Islands and Palau.
3. Cook Islands, Niue, French Polynesia, Western Samoa, American Samoa, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Wallis and Futuna, Pitcairn and Tonga.
4. Fiji experienced a *coup d'etat* twice due to political and constitutional crisis resulting in the overthrow of a democratically elected government by military force in 1987 and by civilian

minority in 2000.

5. A major research project undertaken by John Connell producing country reports on migration, employment and development in the South Pacific on behalf of the South Pacific Commission (SPC) Research, which covered 24 countries. The project was sponsored by the United National Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), published by the SPC Noumea, New Caledonia.
6. It allows the kin members to take advantage of the economic opportunities available from the international migration of members.
7. The social stratification in Tonga is based on three main groups, with the Royal family at the summit, the nobility and the commoners, which contains about 98% of the population. The commoners are restricted to this social status and there is no upward mobility since the upper classes are hereditary.
8. Like in Brown (1994: 353), unofficial forms of remittances or correspondences to them in my investigation include money sent delivered by mail or by hand, goods sent, money carried by the migrant, goods carried by the migrant, payments made by the migrant on behalf of a family member, gifts in the form of air fares and board and lodging for overseas visits by family or others to visit the migrant.
9. District officers are nominated as representatives of the government for districts which consist of 15–20 villages. Usually the 'district officer' post is passed on from father to son; hence they have a very good knowledge of their respective districts. The assistance from the officers was very helpful, but the sampling method assisted by them may be biased. This was inevitable in limited survey time.
10. Noteworthy in this present study is that, while regular remittances are not significant, irregular remittances are still significant; This differs from previous findings (Tongamoa 1987; Faeamani 1993) that show remittances were highly regular and seldom requested by the recipients. The occasional remittances for such events appear to confirm the tie of extended families, but its importance seems to be declining.

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