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**The Effect of Migration on Development  
in Tuvalu: A Case Study of PAC  
Migrants and their Families**

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## ABSTRACT

International migration and development have been traditionally treated as separate policy portfolios; however, today the two are increasingly viewed as interlinked. While the development status of a country could determine migration flows, migration can, in turn, contribute positively to national development, including economic, social and cultural progress. Consequently, if migration is not well managed, it can pose development challenges to a country's development and progress. Therefore, partnership through greater networking between countries of origin and destination is needed to fully utilise the development potential of migration.

For Tuvalu, migration has remained a vital ingredient for economic development and more importantly, the welfare of its people. The implementation of New Zealand's Pacific Access Category (PAC) scheme in 2002 offered for the first time a formal migration opportunity for permanent or long-term migration of Tuvaluans. The PAC scheme allows 75 Tuvaluans per year to apply for permanent residence to work and live in New Zealand, provided they meet the scheme's conditions. The goal of this research is to investigate, more than five years after PAC's implementation, the ways in which long-term migration of Tuvaluans, through the PAC scheme, has benefited Tuvalu. To give a broader perspective on the issues explored in this study, the views of Tuvaluan leaders, as significant players in traditional Tuvaluan society, are included, in addition to the perspective of migrants' families in Tuvalu and the migrants themselves in New Zealand.

Combining transnationalist and developmental approaches as a theoretical framework, this thesis explores how Tuvalu's mobile and immobile populations, through articulation of transnationalism, enhance family welfare, and grassroots and national development. The eight weeks' fieldwork in Tuvalu and Auckland demonstrated that the physical separation of Tuvaluans from one another through migration does not limit the richness of the interactions and connections between them. In fact, the existence of active networking between island community groups and other Tuvaluan associations in Auckland and in Tuvalu strengthens the Tuvaluan culture both abroad and at home, thus ensuring strong family and community coherence. Maintaining transnational networks and practices is identified as of great significance to grassroots and community-based development in Tuvalu. However, the benefits of long-term migration can only be sustained as long as island loyalty, or *loto fenua*, and family kinship stays intact across borders, and networking amongst families, communities and church remains active.

*This thesis is dedicated to my three adorable children,  
Papauta Kelsey, Simati Jnr. Loua, and Pie Makoi,  
and in loving memory of my beloved grandparents, Pie and Paufi.*

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## APPREVIATIONS

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
ADB	Asian Development Bank
DBT	Development Bank of Tuvalu
EKT	Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTF	Falekaupule Trust Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IT	Information Technology
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MIRAB	Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy
MUHEC	Massey University Human Ethic Committee
NBT	National Bank of Tuvalu
NELM	New Economics of Labour Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	Nauru Phosphate Commission
NSSD	National Summit on Sustainable Development
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
PAC	Pacific Access Category
RSE	Recognised Seasonal Employer
SIS	Small Island States
SPC	Secretarial of the Pacific Community
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TCS	Tuvalu Corporative Society
TEC	Tuvalu Electricity Corporation
TMC	Tuvalu Media Corporation
TMTI	Tuvalu Maritime Training Institute
TNPF	Tuvalu National Provident Fund
TPB	Tuvalu Philatelic Bureau
TTC	Tuvalu Telecommunication Corporation
TTF	Tuvalu Trust Fund
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USA	United States of America
VLH	Vaiaku Lagi Hotel
WB	World Bank

## TUVALUAN TERMS AND PHRASES

<i>Ahiga</i>	Island community's meeting hall, commonly used by the two northern islands in Tuvalu, Nanumea and Nanumaga
<i>Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu</i>	The dominant church in Tuvalu, with 91% of the population having affiliation with it.
<i>Fagai</i>	Daily or weekly supply of local food provided by the island community to the pastor of the island.
<i>Fakafetai lahi</i>	Thank you very much.
<i>Fakalavelave</i>	Family's traditional commitment to their community or extended family, such as, wedding and funeral where family members are required to contribute in a variety of ways to successfully implement such commitments.
<i>Falekaupule</i>	(i) the island community's meeting hall (ii) the highest decision making body on the island, comprising of the island chief, heads of households and elders of the island.
<i>Fenua o tagata</i>	Isles of men.
<i>Fatele</i>	Tuvalu's traditional dance where a large group of people sit together in a circle, with a group of men beating a wooden box and a tin while the rest clap and sing as loud as they can, and a selected group of young men and women dance to the beat and words of the song.
<i>Initaviu</i>	Interviewing someone about his/her views on certain issues.
<i>Kaiga</i>	Family or relatives
<i>Kaumalaga</i>	Visiting or touring group visiting another island within Tuvalu or from outside Tuvalu to Tuvalu or vice versa.
<i>Kaupule</i>	Executive arm of the <i>Falekaupule</i> – essentially the primary social institution and sovereign power in the islands of Tuvalu with the right to oversee local affairs.

<i>Mataniu</i>	A group of extended families
<i>Palagi</i>	An European or a ‘white’ person
<i>Pulaka</i>	A traditional root crop like a giant taro.
<i>Pule Kaupule</i>	The head of the <i>Kaupule</i>
<i>Sautala</i>	Informal chat between two people or more
<i>Sulu</i>	Sarong – a traditional garment that most Tuvaluans (men, women and youth) use as daily wear.
<i>Takitaki</i>	The leader
<i>Takitaki ote Lotu</i>	Church’s leader
<i>Takitaki ote Malo</i>	Government’s leader
<i>Te Nivaga</i>	Tuvalu’s only passenger and cargo ship received from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands colony’s fleet of vessels after vying for its independence
<i>Tufuga</i>	Traditional massager
<i>Ulusina ote Fenua</i>	Elders of the island.