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# *Fakalalakalaka*

The impact of a Tongan notion of development  
in a contemporary transnational world

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## Abstract

This paper aims to explore a Tongan notion of development – *fakalalakalaka* – in light of Western notions of development. Two case studies of international development aid schemes illustrate the impact of Tongan development ideas in practice. Drawing on a number of ethnographers' work on Tonga, *fakalalakalaka* appears broader than the Western notion of development. The latter is characterised by influential ideals of controllability and industrialisation. The notion of development among Tongans, on the other hand, tends to be directed by an underlying persistence that, for instance, reflects Tongan core values regarding social organisation. The production of textile *koloa*, controlled by women, emerges as central to the accomplishment of this three-dimensional development notion of intertwined physical, mental and spiritual aspects. The importance attributed to this specific kind of textile has increased in recent years and found two additional roles, or development strategies, in Tongans' contemporary transnational world.

**Key words:** *Anthropology, development, migration/transnationalism, textile koloa, Tonga, women.*

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## 1) Introduction

Research on international development aid schemes in an anthropological manner commonly concludes that they are problematic, if not simply failures.<sup>1</sup> As anthropology largely is concerned with peoples subjected to development, among anthropologists this relationship with development is one of ambiguity. In this paper it is shown that where the imposition of global forms (such as Western development aid schemes) meets local peoples, the ‘actual global’ in the local response is uncertain. A unique global assemblage is so formed. In the implementation of my two case studies of development aid schemes from Tonga local priorities were unintentionally used and successful development occurred. However, no success was recognised by any of the funders; arguably due to their narrow notion of development. Therefore, by focusing on the ‘actual global’, the outcome would be more certain.

The main purpose of this paper is to explore a Tongan notion of development, known as *fakalakalaka*, and the historical as well as socio-cultural context in which it appears. One of my case studies results in a considerable Tongan overseas migration as an alternative development strategy, and for that reason two inevitable foci of this paper are those of migration and transnationalism. My second case study deals with the traditional production of specific kinds of textile made exclusively by women, which is central to development according to Tongans. Emphasis is hence also put on the production and exchange of such, so called textile *koloa*. Also, in order to gain insight into the enterprise of Western development aid schemes targeting Tongans, Western notions of development are outlined as a background. This in turn allows for a better understanding of why actors of different historical and socio-cultural backgrounds regularly misunderstand each other in development contexts.

Among the insights that emerge throughout this paper, thanks to the work of Ruth ‘Ilaiu (1997), is that of *fakalakalaka* encompassing three dimensions. Strictly speaking, the dominating Western notion of development only corresponds to one of these three – the physical aspect – in isolation. According to the Tongan women heard by ‘Ilaiu, on the other hand, ‘development’ cannot take place without the well-being of the individual’s mind and soul, beside his/her body. Family members are thereafter considered, and subsequently the

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Peter Bunyard (1997) on a dam project in northern India; James Ferguson (2002) on various schemes in Lesotho; and Graham Hancock (1997) on a transmigration project in Indonesia.

rest of the community, as well as the Tongan nation. With regards to such material development, another insight that emerges is that contemporary Tongans take on opportunities, offered by Western capitalism, to an extent that might be underestimated. For example, the frequent interaction among Tongans on Internet sites and the wearing of clothes, made up of traditional textile items, continuously reaffirm the national identity among the large migrant communities of Tongans dispersed throughout the entire world. This sense of belonging, in turn, assists in securing the position of Tongan migrants in the capitalist world. By considering such insights of what actually happens in the world, the outcome of development aid schemes targeting Tongans would be more certain, or at least easier to comprehend. Commenting on how the Oceania region is looked upon by the rest of the world, this is what Epeli Hau'ofa wants to express: 'Only when we focus our attention also on what ordinary people are actually doing rather than on what they should be doing, can we see the broader picture of reality' (1993:12).

### **1.1 Outline**

The following chapter, 'Global assemblages', presents a number of globalisation theories that proves useful to my paper in two ways. Firstly, the phenomena of migration and transnationalism are dealt with. In fact, in the Tongan case, they appear as inevitable aspects of the formation of any global assemblage due to a generally strong desire among Tongans to migrate. Thereafter, the characteristics of the development aid scheme are identified, where the concept of global assemblages is useful again. The analysis of metaphors, introduced by Doug Porter (1995), is also presented in chapter two as an analytical tool that I repeatedly use to structure different development ideas throughout this paper. Chapter three, 'Notions of development', outlines conservative as well as nuanced Western development ideas as a background before *fakalalakaka*, including nuanced perspectives of this Tongan notion of development, is dealt with. In order to comprehend the development thinking of Tongans, I found it vital to here also include a wider context of how 'development' up until today has been realised throughout the twentieth century through the production and exchange of textile *koloa*. Chapter four, 'Case studies of development aid schemes', introduces two, as the name implies, such schemes; one of scholarships and one of micro-credits – both funded by Western donors to illustrate the different notions of development in practice.

## 2) Global assemblages

Current anthropological theory discusses the effects of contemporary phenomena intensified by globalisation – such as migration, transnationalism and development aid schemes – on individuals and groups. This paper mainly uses the approach formulated by Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier (2005) on global phenomena. The term which holds their anthology-title, global assemblages, refers to the interaction between overarching structures on a global scale (global forms) and given starting points among actors on a local level, referred to as the ‘actual global’. A specific assemblage of global and other elements cannot be explained by one single rationale; and its outcome is incalculable. The global element does not result in the same effect everywhere, but the implication for actors life can be understood only once it is assembled with other elements (Ong & Collier 2005:11ff). Additional such *globalisation theories* are formed by Jonathan Xavier Inda and Renato Rosaldo (2002). By looking at what actually happens (global assemblages) in the contemporary world, they reject many influential Western views on globalisation. Perhaps most relevant for this paper, they discard globalisation merely as a cultural flow ‘from the West to the rest’. Conversely, Inda and Rosaldo emphasise that non-Western actors do respond, and also that the core has been ‘peripheralised’ as the heterogeneity of the West increases (2002:18).

### 2.1 Migration

The increased migration of non-Western people to urban centres in the search for a future mainly in the West is one indication that Inda and Rosaldo point at in their argumentation (2002). Migrants have always, to varying degrees, maintained social relations to their place of origin. In the contemporary technology era, communication and transport facilitate and intensify such maintenance (Inda & Rosaldo 2002:18f,30note26). By using a classic anthropological example of Mexican migrants in the USA<sup>2</sup>, Inda and Rosaldo show how contemporary migrants are cultural bifocals, forming imagined communities of belonging, and live transnationally, ‘in-between’ of different cultures (Inda & Rosaldo 2002:19f). Marshall Sahlins develops this idea (1999): Whilst the people who remain in the country of origin rely on their ‘outliers’ in hosting nation-states overseas for material purposes, the migrated ‘outliers’ themselves are symbolically focused on their country of origin, which defines their identity. They might intend to return, a possible event for which they prepare by

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<sup>2</sup> This example deals with Mexican migrants from the town of Aguililla, now residing in Redwood City of Silicon Valley in the American state of California to be more precise (Inda & Rosaldo 2002:19).

remitting; periodically visiting their countries of origin; sending their children for schooling or visits; and in other ways maintaining their ties to the country of origin as well as their local status (Sahlins 1999:xviii). In her concept of *flexible citizenship*, Ong refers to a kind of citizen who flexibly selects sites of positioning themselves in the world to choose economic and political conditions that are most optimal to their overall situation and to avoid those that are least favourable (2002:174). Obviously, such transnationalism challenges the Western idea of the nation-state. As shown below, it is also a useful way of describing and locating Tonga in a contemporary transnational world.

### **2.1.1 Tongan migration in the past**

By putting Tongan migration into a historical context, it comes clear that it is not a new phenomenon. In fact, archaeological evidence shows that the *Lapita*-people, originally from Southeast Asia, were the first peoples to settle Tonga about 5,500 years ago (Kiste 1994:10). Simultaneously, they settled nearby Fiji to the west and Samoa to the north. For maps of Tonga and the region, see Appendix D. The earliest forms of Polynesian culture evolved there over the following thousand years. Around the time of the birth of Christ, some of these people are thought to have begun to explore and settle unexplored parts of Polynesia. The descendants of the *Lapita* seafarers appear to have possessed impressive seafarer skills (Kiste 1994:10). The social organisation that evolved in Tonga had clearly defined social classes, because of high population pressure on limited land resources (Kiste 1994:13). This is furthermore reflected in Tongan socialisation – commonly perceived as authoritarian – as values of obedience and respect for social superiors<sup>3</sup> are passed onto upcoming generations (James 1997:13).

When Europeans arrived in Tonga, they encountered people who already possessed certain ideas on exercising and resisting an empire, though the previous ‘Tongan empire’ was not necessarily an empire in the European sense of the word (Petersen 2000:26). The most influential Europeans in Tonga’s history were the British, whose missionaries were prominent in shaping the Tongan kingdom in 1845 (Kiste 1994:23). Strictly speaking, Tonga was never a colony. However, in 1900, the British gained, and consequently exercised, control over Tongan foreign affairs. Robert Kiste stresses that, besides this, its internal affairs were also influenced by the British to a high degree (1994:27). This is both reflected in the Tongan

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<sup>3</sup> Social superiors (*eiki*) can today include any of the following: chiefs, church leaders, family members, or government leaders (James 1997:17).

constitution, in which systems of government similar to Western ones can be traced (Hempenstall 1994:34) and in the official state religion – the Wesleyan Methodist Church – to which supposedly forty percent of the population belong (James 1997:2).

In the 1930s, the Tongan population was distributed across some thirty habitable islands as described by Cathy Small and David Dixon (2004). They report that no more than about ten percent lived in the capital Nuku'alofa on the main island Tongatapu, whose population altogether not even included half of the Tongan population. Subsequent to the Second World War, an internal urbanisation began as generally young Tongans moved from outer to main islands as well as from smaller to larger towns. The land shortage attracted migrants to Tongatapu, due to its educational and work-related opportunities. In order to obtain training also overseas, relatively privileged Tongans thereafter began to emigrate in the 1950s (Small & Dixon 2004). Newly installed king Tupou IV opened up Tonga in 1967. Beside increased global economic and cultural flows, the international migration now augmented dramatically (Morton 1996:21f). During the following decade, Tonga withdrew from the British protectorate (Macdonald 1994:179). Still today, the Tongan state can refer to itself as 'the only remaining Polynesian kingdom' (Besnier 2004:11).

### **2.1.2 Contemporary Tongan transnationalism**

Not only privileged, but also commoner Tongans emigrated in the 1970s and 1980s, a period where the overseas migration rate continued to grow rapidly (James 1997:1; Small & Dixon 2004). These early migrants looked for work opportunities in order to improve living conditions for family left in Tonga. Explicitly, they intended to return eventually, but many of them ended up residing permanently overseas. A so called chain migration arose, as early migrants supported newly arrived, migrating family members. Eventually, Tongan migrants established communities of considerable sizes overseas. Today, almost every Tongan household has at least one relative that is residing abroad (James 1997:1; Small & Dixon 2004). Although official government statistical reports are subject to inaccuracies<sup>4</sup>, simply by drawing on such figures, they suggest that about half of the all the Tongans in the world live outside the Tongan islands. New Zealand holds the largest overseas Tongan population,

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<sup>4</sup> Among the problems with the collection of statistics are the definition of Tongan and part-Tongan; and the host countries' amount of illegal immigration. This occurs particularly where so called 'overstayers' overstay visa expiry dates (Lee 2004:237).

thereafter the USA, and thirdly Australia (Lee<sup>5</sup> 2004:237).<sup>6</sup> The largest Tongan overseas communities can, consequently, be found adjacent to urban centres of Auckland, Honolulu, Melbourne, Sydney, (James 1997:1; Small & Dixon 2004), Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Utah (Besnier 2004:10), but also Canada and Europe have been mentioned as destinations for Polynesians (Hau'ofa 1993). Referring to historical facts (such as those outlined in the previous section), Hau'ofa argues that Oceanians, including Polynesians, always conceived their world as large. In line with their cosmologies and oral traditions, they 'enlarge their world' and 'expand networks for circulation' also in the contemporary world. Therefore, he argues that their world 'certainly encompasses' not only Tonga but also their just mentioned communities overseas (Hau'ofa 1993:11f). Tongan language and traditions have been maintained within these communities, and social services<sup>7</sup> have been established specifically for Tongans. Apart from migrated relatives, these widespread social networks constitute another place where new Tongan migrants potentially can find economic and social support, and the chain migration continues accordingly (James 1997:1; Small & Dixon 2004).

It can be said that these Pacific Islanders, in developing quite sophisticated trans-Pacific links and networks, have grasped the notion of being global citizens and are light years ahead of the rest of us who still feel limited by physical boundaries. Pacific Islanders have grasped the idea of developing a people, irrespective of location, rather than developing a country. They have separated nation from state in an unprecedented way (Maiava 2002:3).

This quote on Oceanians migrating to New Zealand and elsewhere suggests that the nationalism of Tongans is still flourishing – not in the form of the nation-state but in the form of transnationalism. One arena where this takes place is the Internet, which I would like to emphasise as an increasingly important means of communication amongst Tongans abroad. Particularly young Tongans from all over the world are constantly producing and reproducing a transnational Tongan community by regularly visiting Internet sites such as Planet Tonga<sup>8</sup>. Tongan-American doctoral student in transnational issues, Anapesi Ka'ili, who is actively writing for the Planet Tonga site from her home in Salt Lake City, regards the site as a 'cyber homeland' allowing for emotional and symbolic returns 'home' (Lee 2004:247).

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<sup>5</sup> Helen Lee (Ni-Morton).

<sup>6</sup> The most recent census conducted by Tonga Department of Statistics recorded a total population of 97,784, of which 98.2 percent were Tongan or 'part-Tongan' (1999). Statistics New Zealand recorded 40,700 Tongans living in New Zealand in its 2001 census, the most recent one (2003:1). This makes New Zealand the primary emigration destination, after the USA. Their 2000 census recorded 35,800 Tongans. Together with the third most popular emigration destination Australia, which according to its 2001 census holds 14,889 Tongans all three comprise 92,429 (Lee 2004:237).

<sup>7</sup> Not least the social service of churches plays a noteworthy role in the reinforcement of Tongan culture (James 1997:17).

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.planet-tonga.com>.

The establishment of Tongan overseas communities have given rise to flows of cash and goods that travel to and from them. Some of the remittances to Tonga are officially recorded as transfers of money through banks, whereas some consist of unofficial transfers of cash and Western goods<sup>9</sup> either for use or for resale (James 1997:2). Following the hierarchical nature of Tongan social organisation as well as Christian traditions, remittances in the Tongan case are generally intended for a narrow range of immediate family members rather than the extended family or the whole community<sup>10</sup> (James 1997:3,7f). Primarily, they are transferred to the remitter's parents and thereafter to siblings. In addition, remittances for Tonga-based children, usually in the care of their grandparents and their mother's sister, sent from migrated parents account for large parts of Tongan remittances (James 1997:7f). Contraflows, on the other hand, flowing from Tonga overseas can consist of local delicacies<sup>11</sup>; and lastly but most important to this paper, the specific types of textile – *koloa* – that are produced exclusively by women as traditional wealth items (James 1997:3). Before discussing the significance of these contraflows and such transnationalism in terms of a Tongan development strategy (in section 3.2.2), further exemplified my case study of scholarship schemes (section 4.1), I now introduce the main focus of this paper, development.

## 2.2 Development aid schemes

In order to structure various notions of development in the following chapter, I use Porter's analysis of metaphors (1995). Porter defines a metaphor as an apparatus that – in a deep-rooted and pervasive way – constructs the way people think and act. Moreover, metaphors create certainty, order, and means of how to make sense of the world (Porter 1995:65). He distinguishes three different, though not disconnected, kinds of metaphors: i) underlying *master metaphors*, which are subject to constant reoccurrence irrespective of time and place; ii) *organising metaphors*, which basically enter the scene in a particular era as a distinct development phenomena; iii) and lastly *metaphors of practice* that arise in particular, local contexts of development aid schemes (Porter 1995:66). Although Porter based his analysis upon recordings of the use of the term development in Western settings, I find it useful also to structure Tongan notions of development. Porter argues that the master metaphors alone ultimately possess the actual influence of shaping Western notions of development by pointing at a continuity and persistence of this influence throughout history. Organising

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<sup>9</sup> Examples of such Western goods are clothes; make-up; food; kitchenware; agricultural tools; mechanical tools; and vehicles (James 1997:2).

<sup>10</sup> In the Samoan context, conversely, remittances are directed to the village to a greater extent (James 1997:2f).

<sup>11</sup> Such as different kinds of root crops and seafood as well as the Polynesian liquor kava (James 1997:3).

metaphors have existed since the post-Second World War era only. These comparatively current metaphors as well as metaphors of practice may run parallel to the master metaphors. But, in his view, they are both superficial and do not constitute any serious threat to the more powerful, underlying master metaphors. This persistence allows for prevailing development actors to remain legitimised (Porter 1995:64). The reason I find Porter's analysis useful in the Tongan case is that also *fakalakalaka* is characteristic of an underlying persistence – master metaphors – despite the occurrence of nuanced perspectives (mainly influenced by Western ideas, see section 3.2.3) comparable to organising metaphors.

Before proceeding to notions of development and my case studies, I find it necessary to identify the development aid scheme; the site where unique global assemblages are formed according to the master metaphors that structure the thoughts and actions of its participants. The development intervention can be seen as the global form imposed everywhere, whereas the local response constitutes the actual global. In essence, I envision the development aid scheme as a complex cross-cultural meeting which provokes social change. Norman Long argues that in similar structural circumstances different outcomes develop due to the way in which actors try to come to grips with the situations they face. These outcomes comprise intended as well as unintended results of social action (Long 2001:20). The development aid scheme is so, in his view, constantly reshaped by the inherent dynamic of the actions of development aid personnel as well as by local groups. Long talks about 'multiple realities' of development aid schemes referring to the different notions of development held by the different actors involved (2001:72).

### **3) Notions of development**

In different social and cultural contexts of the world, the notion of development can be differently understood. The main objective of my paper is to explore a Tongan notion of development, but as a background I first outline the dominating Western paradigms that structure development. One might discard this dualistic approach for being too simplistic. Below it comes clear that these two contexts overlap to certain extents. This is true not least in the sections called 'nuanced perspectives', which in the Western case tends to approach the Tongan and vice versa. For analytical purposes, however, I make a distinction between Western and Tongan notions of development. In the first case I draw upon scholars of different disciplines to get a holistic view, whereas the latter case builds upon observations of

Tongan culture. These are mainly carried out by two anthropologists<sup>12</sup>, both with longer experiences of fieldwork in Tonga, specialising in the topic of transnationalism.

### **3.1 Western paradigms**

As shortly will become apparent, the dominating Western paradigms strictly account for Porter's master metaphors. The most powerful notion of development among Westerners is shaped by the idea of an apparent, 'rational' need for external intervention and management in a state of chaos. Modernity, technology, and economic growth emerge as core ideals. According to a pre-modern Western notion of development, on the other hand, change was regarded as natural, cyclic processes, in which destruction was inherent. Purposive human intervention had the capacity to improve, but not to thoroughly prevent destruction (Cowen & Shenton 1995:30f). In eighteenth century Europe, the modern ideas of progress, including the belief in unrestricted improvement through independent human effort, gradually replaced the former notion of development as recounted by Michael Cowen and Robert Shenton (1995:30f). Michael Watts stresses the desire for economic growth as crucial to the Western notions of development emerging in this era (1995:48f). The impact of nineteenth century's natural sciences and technology on the master metaphors that structure Western notions of development is strongly emphasised by Porter (1995). They express meanings linked to science-related ideals of control, order and stability. In a development context, this involves a controlled manipulation of change in favour of these ideals (Porter 1995:64). Development hence involved the creation of strategies aimed at managing disorder (Cowen & Shenton 1996:25f). In addition, an optimistic belief in that surplus of economic growth would 'trickle down' to everyone, including less affluent people, arose. These ideas also gave rise to the formulation of models defining a number of stages through which human economic activity was thought to evolve, or – to develop (Cowen & Shenton 1995:31f).

Such models assume an absence of development among peoples at not yet 'evolved' stages. This supposed 'undevelopment' among what Western colonisers historically perceived as primitive or uncivilised peoples has also impacted on Western notions of development, according to Watts (1995:49). By the early twentieth century, intentional development

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<sup>12</sup> These anthropologists are Kerry James and Cathy Small. Australian James is married to a Tongan national and divides her time between Australia and Tonga. Altogether she spent more than two years in Tonga for research since 1981. American Small conducted fieldwork in Tonga between 1981 and 1984, and for additional periods in 1987 and 1995. She has also done briefer ethnographic work since 1990 among Tongan-Americans in the USA.

interventions became more explicit also in colonial territories (Lewis 2005:474). However, the true starting point for explicitly planned development is commonly set to mid-twentieth century. It was officially introduced by American President, Harry Truman in his famous 1949 speech on the world's – not only undeveloped but also – 'underdeveloped' areas: '[t]heir economic life is primitive and stagnant /.../ our imponderable resources /.../ [g]reater production is the key to prosperity /.../ the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge' (Truman, cited in Porter 1995:66f). As outlined in section 2.2, the first organising metaphor emerged in the post-war era, veiling the core values of the Western master metaphors. These extracts demonstrate that the world's 'underdeveloped' peoples, though no longer necessarily colonised, officially were intended to be subject to controlled reconstruction in the form of international development aid and technology transfer.

Jane Parpart describes how Walt Rostow, in the immediate post-Second World War era, argued for a model of different stages of development, which came to be known as *modernisation theory*. At that point, the legitimacy of modernisation as a notion of development was never disputed (Parpart 1995:257). For example, Leslie White wrote in the 1950s that technology was the basis for a culture; whereas the social organisation existed mainly in order to put technology into practice and so determined by the technological base; mentality was the top layer of a culture that simply determined the way people reflected upon their technological activities (Sahlins 1999:xiii). In the following decades, a number of Marxist intellectuals argued for a so-called *dependency theory*, formalised by Immanuel Wallerstein among others as narrated by Thomas Eriksen (2001:204f). Dependency theorists argued that the economic progress of one country occurs at the expense of other, less affluent countries, which are dependent and exploited by the affluent countries (Eriksen 2001:205). Sahlins argues that also their arguments were based on modern ideals (1999:ii). Although they represent strictly opposing political viewpoints, I agree on that modernisation and dependency theorists have a number of similarities. In sum, the power of these two theories is to generalise, homogenise and objectify (Crush 1995:22). Majid Rahnema refers to the power of development in terms of its charisma, which in the neo-colonial era, attracted the former colonial powers as a continued way of domination; the local elite leaders of the new, independent nation-states who wanted to modernise; and the masses who sought to free themselves from any form of domination (1997:ix). The myth of development – irrespective of paradigm – he writes, emerged as an ideal construct at this point (Rahnema 1997:ix,xii).

These similarities show that Westerners largely have understood development in terms of modernity, technology, and economic growth, in line with Porter's master metaphors despite the parallel presence of organising metaphors.

### 3.1.1 Nuanced perspectives

There is a wide range of influential critics of the paradigms presented above, of which I present a selection (post-modernism, agent-orientation, neopopulism<sup>13</sup>). They are all in line with anthropological globalisation theories of global assemblages – what actually happens in global phenomena and in development aid schemes in particular – as described in chapter two. Drawing on Porter's analysis of metaphors, I question whether these nuanced views really reflect what has been described as a 'sea-changing move' by Paul Sillitoe (2002:3), and whether Westerners really recognise past errors as such, as suggested by Robert Chambers (1997:128f). Is it simply the introduction of yet more novel organising metaphors, comprising catchphrases such as empowerment and participation, incapable of modifying underling master metaphors?

As stated in the introductory chapter, development aid schemes have historically, commonly been reported as failures. By referring to such historical contexts, the *post-modern* stance constitutes a stark critic of the dominating Western paradigms. Vernacular societies of the world with their diverse and sustainable ways of living have been damaged by the influence of modern paradigms as shown by the approximately forty contributors to *The Post-Development Reader*, according to its editors (Rahnema & Bawtree 1997). In its focus on diversity, post-modernism stresses the significance of local contexts. The *actor-oriented* perspective emphasises local contexts as well, and as the term implies local actors in particular. Long argues that all actors, including those in apparent inferior positions, for instance in development contexts, exercise power to some extent (2001:17). To my knowledge, one of the first counter-modern, actor-oriented approaches was formulated by Paulo Freire in the early 1960s, in his *participatory action research* (Manzo 1995:247). It widens the former material-oriented notion of development to also include the immaterial aspects of politics and psychology (Maiava 2001:17f). Nevertheless, he does not fully reject development intervention (Manzo 1995:247). Also renowned in this context is Chambers,

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<sup>13</sup> I am aware of that the neopopulist viewpoint is left-oriented and that no right-oriented one is represented. However, since the political divide is of less importance according to my overall argument, the political orientation is not directly relevant to my argument.

primarily for the approach *participatory rural appraisal*. Chambers himself describes it as a growing family of approaches and methods, including applied development anthropology and peasant studies (1997:102). Neither Freire nor Chambers are anti-development but instead they encourage participation of local peoples. As already shown (see section 2.2), development aid schemes are characteristic of social change. According to Susan Maiava, however, in stark contrast to the dominant paradigms a minimal change of existing cultural elements is required in actor-oriented approaches (2001:19f). The potential mix of already existing and new elements as a result of the development encounter is acknowledged in the *populist* or *neopopulist*<sup>14</sup> perspective. Neopopulism opens up the possibility of having not just one or two paths to ‘development’ but many diverse ones (Maiava 2001:34). Anthropologist Sahlins stresses how capitalism and technology are adapted by vernacular societies to suit their specific aspirations. Instead of imagining separated economic and social spheres as in the Western world, he emphasises that in a number of vernacular societies there is no such separation. Material transactions are ordered by kin relations for instance. In addition, Sahlins draws attention to a tendency according to which the greater a person’s or family’s success in the market economy, including those with overseas education or training, the more they engage in vernacular habits by using money as a means of carrying this engagement out (Sahlins 1999:x,xvff). This is perfectly valid in the Tongan notion of development *fakalalakalaka* and the cultural context in which it is formulated, as we will see.

Not only the nuanced notions of development, but all Western notions previously presented in this chapter have also been reflected somewhat in the history of the anthropological discipline (for a brief account, see Appendix A), as it was taking place in the part of the world generally considered Western.<sup>15</sup> David Lewis outlines three positions which anthropologists historically have taken and may still take in relation to development – what he calls ‘an uneasy relationship’ – involving different degrees of engagement: i) antagonistic observers; ii) reluctant participants; iii) engaged activists (2005:472). He notes that none of the three

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<sup>14</sup> A distinction in the definitions of populism and neopopulism is suggested by Taylor Boas that principally, however, refers to political strategies in the Latin American context (2005). According to his definitions, classical populism implies the creation of new organisations for previously excluded parts of the population, which aim to circumvent conventional political institutions. A contemporary form of populism, present since the 1980s, is referred to as neopopulism. It differs from classical populism because such formal organisations are not created as the target groups today rather include dispersed peoples in the ‘periphery’ (Boas 2005:29f). The term is used somewhat differently in a development context, but since most of the populist criticism is contemporary and does not deal with any organised organisation, I henceforth primarily use the term neopopulism.

<sup>15</sup> I am hence not ignorant of anthropological traditions taking place in parts of the world, which traditionally are not understood as Western.

positions generally exist in isolation, but instead are elaborately intertwined. As a result, an anthropologist rarely holds a single position (Lewis 2005:483). Although much of the criticism was not entirely new, a number of academics, including anthropologists, paved the way for a post-development era in the 1990s. These theorists explicitly rejected the notion of development altogether (Rahnema 1997:xi). Arturo Escobar is one of them, as he talks about alternatives *to* – rather than *of* – development. The motivation for doing this is based on development in the form of the phenomena that has produced and managed the Third World primarily since the post-Second World War period (Escobar 1995:212f). If taking Porter’s analysis to the extreme, the criticism outlined in this section accounts for his organising metaphors only. This would mean that the nuanced views do not interfere with the dominating master metaphors. Equally, Watts argues that neopopulism is exercised within the world-view of the modern paradigms to some degree (1995:60). Catchphrases are widely used in development aid policies. If critically examined, such phrases are in many cases modified to suit the world-view of the adoptee (chapter four’s case studies show such tendencies for example). A master metaphor can, thus, still influence the development aid scheme in question beside such organising metaphors and/or metaphors of practice.

### **3.2 Tongan socio-cultural paradigms**

As already stated in chapter two’s historical section (2.1.1), Tongan kinship is traditionally strictly hierarchical. Today, it remains hierarchical to the extent that a great deal of energy, money, and time is spent on honouring family relationships in appropriate ways; material manifestations of these relationships play a significant role in Tongan culture. Particularly the two specific types of textile that are produced exclusively by women – *koloa fakatonga* which means ‘Tongan wealth’ (hereafter referred to simply as textile *koloa*) – occupy a special place in these intergenerational relations. Those two types are decorated barkcloth and fine mats (for photo illustrations, see figure 1 and 2 respectively). Senior women of the Tongan household are expected to provide textile *koloa* for exchanges as well as for household use. Formal presentations during exchanges of prestigious textile *koloa* items create and maintain relationships between Tongans, and direct the flow of goods and services/obligations between people of different social standing (James 1997:5,11f). The obligations implied in the hierarchical relationships between social superiors and inferiors are fundamental to Tongan culture (James 1997:20). People in a hierarchically higher position generally control the distribution of textile *koloa*, which they receive from people in lower positions, in the name of

obedience and respect. There is moreover a particular relation of debt with regards to labour between the younger and the older generations. The parents' efforts to raise and educate their children and possibly to leave them an inheritance are expected to be returned by material contributions for the care of the parents and on behalf of the family at community ceremonies (James 1997:5,11f). These socio-cultural values are historically so central to Tongans that they have a profound impact also on the Tongan notion of development, *fakalalakalaka*.

### **3.2.1 *Fakalalakalaka***

'What does development mean to you?' This was a key question, posed to twenty-four Tongan women of different ages, of 'Ilaiu's ethnographic interviews carried out in Nuku'alofa during two months of 1996, starting in May ending in July (1997:2,5). Development was by these women described as something 'new'; 'different'; or as a 'movement' – either forward or from one life-stage to another. The informants furthermore recognise that development is something that one actively creates; that is, something that they themselves have to be part of in order to achieve ('Ilaiu 1997:81f). 'Ilaiu explores the Tongan notion of what true development really is, as in *fakalalakalaka*. To my knowledge, 'Ilaiu's work constitutes the only true study of this notion. *Fakalalakalaka* is mentioned in academic literature, but usually without further explanations simply translated into 'development', the closest corresponding term in English. As demonstrated below, it carries a broader meaning than the English notion of development (as outlined in the previous section 3.1). *Fakalalakalaka* also differs from the Western paradigms in that the needs of the family generally are prioritised before those of the nation-state are fulfilled. Lastly, the production and exchange of textile *koloa* shortly appear as an important means of bringing development among Tongan women.

Similarly to 'Ilaiu's informants, Tongan Konai Thaman literally translates *fakalalakalaka* into 'moving forward' or 'stepping forward' in the Tongan language. The assumption of this notion is, in her view, that one steps towards something better in the future seen in a cyclic perception of time, characteristic of many Oceanian cultures. The past, the present and the future are all considered at the same time (Thaman 2002:234). The constantly changing term *fakalalakalaka* did initially foremost stand for 'moving forward' in the 1960s, but today also for 'development' according to 'Ilaiu (1997:42). The period following the 1960s, characteristic of rapid change (as illustrated in section 2.1.1), is itself, according to Helen Morton, called *fakalalakalaka* by Tongans. Her translation of the notion in this context is 'progress' (Morton

1996:21f). Elsewhere, *fakalakalaka* has been translated to ‘what Tongans value’ (Horan 2000:1). So how do these different explanations interconnect? True development was according to ‘Ilaiu’s informants seen to involve the ‘development of the *complete* person’ (‘Ilaiu 1997:83, emphasis in original). This holistic and profound notion of development involves all spheres of life. *Fakalakalaka* was according to ‘Ilaiu’s female informants conceived as a three-dimensional kind of human development. It encompasses the following three aspects, which make up such a complete individual: physical, mental and spiritual. To illustrate, one of her informants says that ‘development takes place firstly when body, mind and soul are well’ (‘Ilaiu 1997:83). In their view, one aspect alone brings hence not improvement, or ‘development’.

The physical aspect of *fakalakalaka* would include all the material development occurring as a result of development schemes in buildings of houses, roads etcetera funded by the Tongan government as well as international aid development funders for example. Evidently, this aspect ties to economic and technological factors. This also involves increases in standards of living as a result of the adaptation of Western goods such as modern clothes for instance (‘Ilaiu 1997:83,85). The physical aspect, thus, largely resembles the dominating Western notions of development. The mental aspect, on the other hand, refers to the development of people firstly through education. Thereafter ‘not so much environmental and physical development’ takes place according to one informant (‘Ilaiu 1997:84). Instead, the Tongan women are pointing at the ability within people themselves to overcome the limitations of their world; to think politically; and to be empowered in order to make themselves be heard. Lastly, the spiritual aspect of *fakalakalaka* refers partly to the internal well-being of the individual, which is upheld by a high level of moral. Partially it also refers to the external nature of the individual, which is strengthened by the enrichment of cultural values of family and identity (‘Ilaiu 1997:83ff). Regarding Tongan women’s status, it has historically and continues today to principally be achieved in the link between the members of the extended family (*kainga*) and moral authority that falls under this spiritual aspect (‘Ilaiu 1997:93f). This shows that ‘mowing forward’, ‘stepping forward’, ‘development’, ‘progress’ and ‘what Tongans value’ are altogether covered by these three aspects. I suppose that ‘development’, and the adjacent term ‘progress’, in the Western sense of the terms fall under the physical aspect. However, understood as ways of ‘moving’ and ‘stepping forward’, it can be considered also mentally and spiritually. ‘What Tongans value’, lastly, foremost derives from the spiritual aspect, although Tongans value also the physical and the mental spheres of life.

*Fakalalakalaka* foremost applies to the individual Tongan on a personal level. It is about the development of the individual according to his or her specific needs. Secondly, it extends to individual families and thereafter to the development of the community. In this view, gradually, as every individual's need is being satisfied, Tonga as a whole would also develop ('Ilaiu 1997:82ff). Similarly, John Connell and Dennis Conway stress that remittances foremost are sent as a means of improving the family or household's situation, rather than as part of a national development strategy (2000:59). One way of doing development as in *fakalalakalaka* is to play the domestic-oriented role of a Tongan woman, which is broader than the one recognised in the West. It includes the textile production of *koloa* for example ('Ilaiu 1997:43). Through personal communication with 'Ilaiu, Jane Horan discovered that the participating Tongan women drew attention primarily to the production of textile *koloa* in the discussions on development. Tongan women can potentially accomplish *fakalalakalaka* by making textile *koloa*, she argues, since – from a Tongan cultural point of view – each of the three aspects of *fakalalakalaka* is enhanced or facilitated by textile *koloa* (Horan 2002:216). Physically, this Tongan notion of development can be associated with textile *koloa* as an explicit, material manifestation of *fakalalakalaka*. Mentally, on the other hand, textile *koloa* gives women, implicitly or indirectly, expanded opportunities within Tongan exchange ceremonies. Last but not least spiritually, textile *koloa* defines principles valued in Tongan culture and world-view (Horan 2002:216).

Reversely as well, textile *koloa* is from a Tongan viewpoint synonymous with wealth (Horan 2002:209). It is believed to possess life-enhancing qualities (James 1997:12). Textile *koloa* symbolises the importance in Tongan society attached to social relations as well as to kinship. For contemporary Tongan commoner women, textile *koloa* represents materially as well as immaterially the principal form of wealth (Horan 2002:209). Married Tongan women feel great shame if their home is not equipped with the two specific types of *koloa* textile to protect from a life crisis. Women in waged work, with insufficient time to produce textile *koloa*, have the option to either buy or barter in order to obtain them. James reports that families seek bank loans to get in hold of textile *koloa* items to avoid the feeling of shame. In the community, a diminished status of such families gives rise to negative social sanctions, such as gossip, which potentially can lead to a lessened interest in employing or marrying anyone of this family or to persuasion of respectable employers not to hire anyone from that family (James 1997:12).

Arguably, the possession of textile *koloa* can be seen as a precondition for ‘development’. Just like *fakalalakaka*, textile *koloa* itself has hence more than one dimension. Its socio-cultural value is worth money but is still far more worth than money as it involves both the semi-subsistence sphere and the capitalist sphere (James 1997:19). Horan distinguishes three different contexts for the exchange of textile *koloa* items, holding varying degrees of socio-cultural and economic value respectively: i) the organised, celebratory group exchange (*katoanga*) between groups from different geographical places that gives the participating women additional returns from prestige and through so-called ‘love gifts’ (*fakamafana*)<sup>16</sup>; ii) the less ritual bound regional or global exchange with no additional returns apart from the goods or cash received; iii) the strictly commercial exchange where it is bought and sold (in a capitalistic sense) between two parties that do not know each other and therefore the social relation is unimportant (2002:211f).



**Figure 1:** This photo shows a fine mat, which constitutes one of the two kinds of textile *koloa*. For the decorated barkcloth that makes up the other type, see figure 2.

<sup>16</sup> The ‘love gift’ or *fakamafana* (which literally means ‘giving warmth’) is an exchange that takes place subsequent to the agreed-upon, arranged exchange ‘by the spontaneous warmth and happiness one feels at the occasion’ as Tongans would say. Besides of being viewed as an expression of affection *fakamafana* can also be viewed as a battle of prestige based on generosity. No agreement is made concerning the *fakamafana* and it is hence determined by the donor. In fact, there is no explicit expectation of a return-gift but according to Small’s research, a ‘love gift’ was without exception countered with another gift (Small 1995:239f).

### 3.2.2 Textile *koloa*

Since the previous section attributes textile *koloa* a vital element of achieving *fakalalakala*, I find it at this instant necessary to put the significance of textile *koloa* in a historical context. This context demonstrates that its importance is possibly greater than ever, as textile *koloa* in the contemporary transnational world plays two additional roles, which can be seen as development strategies. Prior to the establishment of the monarchical order, inter-island exchanges of *koloa* items were tightly associated with a hierarchical social organisation linked to kinship. Chiefly women controlled the redistribution of textile *koloa* produced by commoner women (Small 1995:235). These items were originally presented to ancient gods to guarantee soil fertility and prosperity. Women were considered to guard the gods as they, for the gods, were weaving textiles, which also were associated with godlike chiefs of high rank. These associations were gradually rather replaced by links to the aristocracy, and they are still associated with the oldest and most valuable of textile *koloa* items, held in the art collection of the Royal Palace in the Tongan capital (James 1997:5,12,22). As chiefly women supplied the employment demands of the new kingdom's state bureaucracy in Nuku'alofa, commoner women in rural areas were left alone to control their textile *koloa* production and exchange. The exchanges of commoner women's *koloa* items started as an inter-island exchange within Tonga during the first two decades of the twentieth century (Small 1995:235). Based on ethnographic interviews from her field studies in Tongatapu, Small estimates that from approximately 1910 onwards manufacturing of textile *koloa* begun to occur in groups of roughly twenty to thirty women – known a *kautaha*. This collective system allowed more women than ever to participate in kinship-based exchanges (Small 1995:236). Later in the century, however, the kin-relationships were outplayed by demands for specific types of *koloa* produced in specific locations (thus not easily obtainable through the own kinsmen) as the motivation for exchanges, as shown by Small (1995:237,243). Beginning in the 1930s these exchange networks expanded to include groups of women in Fiji and Samoa as well, enabling *kautaha* groups to obtain an even larger variety of *koloa* items (Small 1995:237).

The rapid changes that characterised the late 1960s (as described in section 2.1.1) resulted in an expansion of manufacturing and exchange of textile *koloa*. In Tonga, women still produced these items for family-related obligations, but increasingly also – as the exchanges gradually

came to incorporate Oceanian and Western commodities or cash<sup>17</sup> – for obtaining such goods. Additionally, this increase in workload was accompanied with growing burdens caused by the intensification of waged work among Tongan women. Consequently, in order to meet these new challenges the *kautaha* groups in Tongatapu were in the 1960s replaced by *tou langanga* – an even quicker and more efficient production system. Once again, more women than ever were able to enter the Tongan exchanges (Small 1995:242f,238). As a result of the beginning of the wave of Tongan international migration (see section 2.1.1), migrant Tongans overseas came to be involved into the textile *koloa* exchanges in the last two decades of the twentieth century through individual arrangements with Tongan-based relatives. Subsequently, the exchanges of Western goods and cash with Fiji and Samoa diminished. Not only urbanisation, but also emigration spurred the demand for traditional *koloa* items in return as the proportion of relatives, making *koloa* textile, diminished (Small 1995:243f).

As we have seen, mainly cash and Western goods make up remittances whereas contraflows generally are made up by Tongan-specific goods (see section 2.1.2). Migration-remittances processes are generally seen as a potential ‘development’ strategy of the island nations, which are not economically sustainable but dependent on remittances (James 1997:3). James criticises strictly economic studies of Oceanian migration that dismiss contraflows as being simply symbolic (1997:4). In line with Sahlins, who wants to see that remittances are understood in the context of reciprocity (1999:xix), James emphasises that reciprocity is so central to Tongan culture that reciprocal contraflows play vital roles, worth more attention (James 1997:1,20). As contraflows continuously remind migrants of their economic and social obligations toward their socially superior family members at home, these roles are both economic and social (James 1997:3). By sending textile *koloa* to Tongans overseas, a unity between migrants and Tonga-based family members is sustained (James 1997:5). In a similar vein, Hau’ofa criticises economists for ignoring the fact that ‘for everything homelands relatives receive they reciprocate with goods they themselves produce, and they maintain ancestral roots and lands for everyone, homes with warmed hearths for travellers to return to’ (1993:12). Not least the textile *koloa* created by women are crucial to the migration-remittance process, according to James. They strengthen hierarchical and economic kinship relations that are so dominant within the Tongan community. This way, kinship functions to

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<sup>17</sup> Western commodities and cash were similar to previous goods in one respect, namely that they all constituted goods that certain *kautaha* groups specialised in and that other *kautaha* groups, thus, could ‘request’ (Small 1995:240).

motivate the search of wage work and the return of money and goods to Tonga (James 1997:20). The contraflows can hence disclose the nature of relationships that promote the current high rate of remittances (James 1997:1) (for a discussion of the longevity of this rate, see Appendix B).

An illustration of how migrants themselves look at their remittance behaviour, in terms of economic and social obligations, emerges in a study carried out in 1995 by Mele Vete<sup>18</sup> among Tongans in Auckland on the determinants of their remittances, drawn upon by James (1997), as well as Connell and Conway (2000). Tongans commonly state their motivation to remit to be the fact that they support the family. The social factor is here, however, more important than the economic one. The main reason to 'support the family' is so that the remitters fulfil their family obligation towards socially superior family members; whereas they are less concerned about what their family members use the money for (James 1997:5). Among the informants of the study, only one percent was concerned about the specific use of their remittances, whereas two-thirds were indifferent of how they were used. Furthermore, a significant rationale for sending remittances among Tongans in Auckland is to contribute to special occasions or rites of passage such as birthdays, weddings and funerals. The amount of the remittance depends on the remitter's relation to the central person of the occasion (Connell & Conway 2000:64). About two-thirds had bought at least one airline ticket for a relative after the remitter had migrated, which constitutes another significant determinant (Connell & Conway 2000:70). By maintaining social ties to Tonga, the migrant invests in, what can be seen as, a social insurance. This way, in case of an eventual return to Tonga, he/she has someone to come back to (Connell and Conway 2000:64). The economic and socio-cultural aspects are thus elaborately intertwined. These ideas do not suggest any imbalanced dependency relationship as commonly thought of in literature on migration-remittances, but rather a relationship of interdependency. Instead of seeing the Tongan part of the exchange as passive and dependent on remittances, these comments demonstrate their important 'developmental' role in securing the experiences of overseas Tongans.

James wants to focus attention on remittances that often are reported to be intended for communal institutions and other organisations<sup>19</sup> are generally not sent directly to these

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<sup>18</sup> The details of the article of Vete (ni-Fuka) to which I indirectly reference to, due to inaccessibility, are: Vete, Mele (1995). 'The Determinants of Remittances among Tongans in Auckland'. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 4 (1):55-68.

<sup>19</sup> Communal institutions and organisations such as churches; schools; sport organisations; youth organisations; or women's development groups (James 1997:6).

institutions, but indirectly via family members. Especially in the case of churches, she describes why: Once a year a church ceremony is taking place in Tonga, namely the *misinale*, which is aimed at inducing God to give blessings and a long life in return of donations. In an extremely visible official manifestation, the amounts of the gifts are announced in the church. As a result, all family members obtain either honour or dishonour according to the donated amount. The main reason of remitting is, therefore, to enable the Tongan-based family to gain status in the community for being pious, wealthy, charitable and properly Tongan. The fact that migrants support the local church is of less importance (James 1997:6f,14). The sending of money to parents for the church is seen as an obligation to parents as well as to God (James 1997:20).

To remind migrants that they have to remit for such occasions, contraflows are being sent to Tongans overseas. On the last decades' occurrence of Tongan women's exchanges of textile *koloa*, a Tongan woman engaged in the handicraft industry, reports that already at that time, ten years ago now, more textile *koloa* than beforehand was sent overseas. Her informant claims that this is not simply because of the larger sizes of migrant communities, but also because their demand for textile *koloa* is higher (James 1997:14). According to other Tongans heard by James, at ceremonies overseas, the amounts of *koloa* items that are presented overseas exceeds those taking place in Tonga, even among noble families. Tongan church leaders overseas often control and direct these items to an extent that is rarely seen in Tonga. The three main reasons James' informants expressed for this difference were: i) the goods are a means through which they can reaffirm their identity and fellowship with Tongan communities all over the world; ii) this in turn, enables recent migrants to join other Tongan migrants and to take part of textile *koloa* exchanges within the Tongan migrant community; iii) and also, migrants have to pay money for these *koloa* items, so that huge presentations represent their prosperity within the migrant communities as part of the Tongan attribute of material manifestations<sup>20</sup>. A presentation of large amounts of items (of textile *koloa* or money) can be seen as a way of claiming that they are successful in their new position, although migrant Tongans – like any immigrants – may be insecure in the new host country (James 1997:17). Nowadays, there is sometimes no connecting link, or the connecting link can simply consist of (as did the *katoanga* exchange that James witnessed in the mid-1990s)

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<sup>20</sup> One of Small's informants in 1993 commented on 'love gifts' that: 'They will not want to be embarrassed by not giving a lot – this is the Tongan way' (Small 1995:251).

the kin relationship between one or two participants (James 1997:15f).<sup>21</sup> From this observation, she concluded that the value of textile *koloa* was carefully estimated on a scale.<sup>22</sup> In an description of the current situation James says that: ‘the goods that were formerly presented to ancient gods /.../ now /.../ tap the economic forces that, like the gods of old, lie beyond the horizon – in Pacific Rim countries – but, this time, through the intermediaries of successful entrepreneurial migrants and other “high priests” of capitalism’ (1997:22). On her historical account of women’s exchange networks, Small concludes by the following, similar words:

The exchange institution flourishes in the 1990s, eight decades after its inception, not simply because ‘old Tongan ways die hard’, as some might believe, but because relationships among Tongans, and the traditional wealth that cements these, has taken on a new and tangible place in contemporary Tonga and in the challenges of migrants in their new and capitalist homes (Small 1995:249).

To summarise, the cultural processes around textile *koloa* exchanges were previously linked purely to a commitment to Tongan culture and tradition including the social stratification principally based on rank. In the last four decades of rapid change, including the rise of Tongan transnationalism, they have transformed and found additional, new roles. Among the three reasons given to James (1997:17), the two first reasons point to a new role for textile *koloa* in securing Tongan migrants economic and social position, arguably as a development strategy. The last reason indicates that textile *koloa* is suddenly being bought for money, underpinned by the cultural desirability of presenting large amounts of wealth among Tongan families – and so today in the form of cash. This section now proceeds discussing the first mentioned new role – which probably is the more prominent of the two – whereas the following section (2.3.2) touches on the second role of textile *koloa*.

Among the exchange contexts that exclude the strictly economic one, textile *koloa* can be gained by migrant women if someone sends these items as gifts or if the women exchange Western goods for them (James 1997:16). Groups of Tongans that visit relatives in migrant communities bring *koloa* items to exchange with their relatives who frequently give, not only money, but also their hospitality in return (James 1997:15). Despite their considerable economic value (see note 22), they are rarely officially recorded in export statistics as the vast

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<sup>21</sup> The *katoanga* exchange ceremony that James witnessed in the mid-1990s took place on a small island off the island group Vava’u (James 1997:15f).

<sup>22</sup> At that time, the value of roughly twenty-three meters of barkcloth was equal to four mats of nearly four meters each on average. The monetary value of either item was one thousand Tongan dollars in Tonga and one thousand US dollars overseas each more or less depending the demand and the quality, according to that scale (James 1997:15f).

majority are part of such Tongans unofficial exchanges with migrant relatives and others (James 1997:14), with whom they have an established social relation that in this case is vital to the exchange. The occurrence, partly of mats and barkcloth in migrant homes but maybe mainly of waist mats as part of formal dresses worn by Tongan migrants, symbolises their national identity and creates a sense of belonging among Tongans in migrant communities (James 1997:16f). Tongans are regularly referred to as having held a strong sense of cultural identity and nationalism throughout their history (Macdonald 1994:179). I understand this sense of belonging as a precondition for how Tongan migrants, in line with other Oceanians, create relationships with each other as a strategy of economic and social ‘development’ (development in the sense of improvement).

As recent migrants in competitive, economically insecure, as well as culturally and socially unfamiliar settings, Tongans within migrant populations have for generations commonly created links with members of other family networks – fictive kinship – partly through gifts of textile *koloa*.<sup>23</sup> This often represents attempts to create culturally recognisable patterns of hierarchical relations, though neither related through genetics nor through intermarriage. If recognised as such, donations of textile *koloa* are expected to be countered with obligations. One such obligation would be to assist other, recent migrants to meet their needs. Generally, the exchange of *koloa* items within migrant communities creates, maintains and strengthens a diverse set of social relations that are required to meet migrants’ needs. Migrant families that have achieved a prominent standing both at textile *koloa* exchange ceremonies overseas and in the host country’s employment market, play an important role in supporting or ‘developing’ Tongans, currently, of less prominence. This might, for example, enable some individuals to gain advantages over others in employment markets (James 1997:3,18f). Small’s field studies in Tongan communities in the San Francisco Bay area confirm this setting, adding that, in some cases, *koloa* exchanges create mutual support among migrants that is sufficient in helping to secure, and advance, not only economic but also social status. The exchange is also a function of the new life conditions as an immigrant including ‘class structure, racism, ethnocentrism, and language barriers that, for many Tongan immigrants, have resulted in their limited mobility, strained relationships with non-Tongans, and cultural misunderstandings that invite social distance from other /.../ residents’ (Small 1995:246).

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<sup>23</sup> Other ways in which fictive kinship is created within migrant populations are in marriages and through child adoptions and fosterage (James 1997:18).

### 3.2.3 Nuanced perspectives

Just like Western development discourse changes, so does the Tongan notion *fakalalakala*. Although the changes to the Tongan women's exchange system already extant prior to the Second World War may appear 'modernising', Small emphasises the importance still devoted to the community for reasons of prestige. In addition, a discourse of kinship reciprocity still embraced the exchanges although the relationship between participants could be one of non-kin (Small 1995:238f). Small stresses how cash and Western goods were treated as a distinctive kind of *koloa* in many respects. The vast majority of the some fifty exchanges that she studied consisted solely of goods other than cash and Western products.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the main motivation to include money or Western goods was its signifying prestige (Small 1995:240f). It is thus obvious that there is an acceptance of Western notions on development resulting from the Western influences through migration, education and media. Younger women, exposed to, what 'Ilaiu expresses as, an 'endless list of choices' in terms of their future, were more likely to accept these influences in Tongan society than older Tongan women, who never had such opportunities ('Ilaiu 1997:94f). The higher priority given to the family and to the home at the expense of individual life dreams is, however, reflected amongst all age groups interviewed ('Ilaiu 1997:96). James also acknowledges that young Tongans and particularly the second-generations in migrant communities realise that the Western impact (*anga fakāpalangi*) conflicts with 'the Tongan way' (*anga fakatonga*) in a lot of ways that is rarely openly expressed (1997:20). The relations of hierarchy implicit in Tongan kinship become for these young Tongans increasingly problematic. However, a moral community still exists overseas in the sense that the feeling of helping each other, especially relatives, remains strong to Tongan identity. Some migrant parents manage to instil traditional family values into their children, and others noticeably do not (James 1997:20f).

Although not regularly sold by Tongan women in the past, textile *koloa* can today be traded just like a commodity, James (1997:14) and Horan (2002:212) argue. This fact, that textile *koloa* is being sold for money, shows an alignment with the Western notion of development and constitutes the second new role of textile *koloa*. Separated from other exchanges of textile *koloa*, the social relation between the trading partners is unimportant. Ideally, they do not know each other. Such wealth constitutes a powerful and exclusively female controlled form of savings, and there is a lot one can do with it today, Horan argues (2002:212). She points at

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<sup>24</sup> Indeed, less than ten percent of the cases showed a situation where one of the *kautaha* groups provided cash and Western goods only (Small 1995:240f).

the use of textile *koloa* as security in different money-lending situations for example: '[b]anks accept textile *koloa* as collateral for loans' and '[t]here are now many pawn shops in Tongatapu, and I know of a few in Auckland, that deal exclusively in *koloa*' (Horan 2002:212). James points at a few women in Nuku'alofa who when possessing cash, purchases textile *koloa* for a reasonable prize from women in need of quick money but unable to sell them in the market. When the market demand goes up, due to a special occasion or rite of passage for example, they sell the items off more expensively than they purchased them for. Additionally, she refers to that a small number of women brings textile *koloa* in overseas travels for the explicit purpose of exchanging them for Western goods and money (James 1997:14) and as we have seen according to Horan there is a market for textile *koloa* in Auckland. Horan accounts these textiles can be brought into Auckland relatively easily (Horan 2002:212). They frequently accompany community institutions and organisations on their visits to New Zealand for example (James 1997:14f). There are indications that a textile *koloa* market, similar to that of valuable antiquities or collector's items in Western contexts, is expanding among the Tongan migrants in Auckland, including second-generation Tongans. In the mid 1990s, a Tonga Development Bank officer witnessed that instead of disregarding Tongan goods, these migrants were requesting 'the best ones' including the waist mats for instance (James 1997:18). Tongan women overseas are often wagers who have, according to James, 'poured thousands of dollars' to Tonga in order to obtain textile *koloa* (James 1997:16). From his field studies at a marketplace in Nuku'alofa in 2000, Niko Besnier concludes that sellers desire to display certain things from the West, and from their relatives overseas, for sale but not others (2004:35). Considering *fakalakalaka*, however, the act of selling – whether textile *koloa* or Western commodities – only represents its material aspect (see section 3.2.1). To what extent the Tongan or the Western notions dominate depends on personal outlooks, and the nature of the families involved, according to the probable answer given by 'Ilaiu (1997) as well as James (1997).<sup>25</sup> For Western development aid actors, this answer is likely to prove unsatisfactory for their planning activities. As shown by the case studies below, this leads to ignorance concerning the notion of development among Tongans. As a result, they have largely been implemented in the spirit of a Western notion of development.

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<sup>25</sup> As this paper foremost presents a collective view among some twenty Tongan women reflected in the work of 'Ilaiu (1997), further research including field studies would be useful to verify these data by hearing individual Tongans. Probably not everyone agrees with the notion of developments presented here, but due to the limitations of this paper it has not been possible to include such research.

#### 4) Case studies of development aid schemes

In his analysis of metaphors, Porter argues that specific notions of development occur in the particular development aid scheme, so-called project metaphors (see section 2.2). To illustrate the different notions of development examined above, including the two new roles of textile *koloa* as development strategies, I believe that the following two case studies are useful exactly as illustrations. Though I acknowledge that they constitute points of weaknesses of my paper; since they are not based on extensive field studies. In both cases, the development aid policies involve the Western master metaphor of modernisation but also nuanced perspectives appear. The latter may, however, be subject to organising metaphors and metaphors of practise and thus not have any impact in reality. In the sections of ‘global assemblages’ below, I give an account of what actually has occurred, and may still occur, as specific assemblages of global and local forces meet in the two cases. Ironically enough, both development aid schemes are regarded as failures in the Western development discourse, but it can be argued – according to the Tongan notion of development – that successful development has occurred.

##### 4.1 Scholarship schemes

One development aid scheme targeting Tongans are scholarships offered to them for tertiary studies abroad. To illustrate the most prominent of the new roles assigned to textile *koloa* (studied in section 3.2.2) and particularly its transnational element, this paper deals with one such scheme, offered by New Zealand’s International Aid and Development Agency (NZAID). Scholarship schemes have historically accounted for a large majority of New Zealand governmental aid expenditure on education.<sup>26</sup> In 2001, NZAID put a new education policy into effect in order to give greater prominence to basic education needs on behalf of tertiary education (Waring 2005:73f). According to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), this shift was welcome because basic education is where ‘the greatest social and economic benefits could be realised’ (OECD 2005:39). At the same time, they recommended NZAID to continue reviewing its scholarship schemes in order to increase ‘their development impact and cost-effectiveness’ (OECD 2005:45) in a state characteristic of ‘unclear linkages with the development needs and priorities of developing countries’ (OECD 2005:85).

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<sup>26</sup> Over the last decade this implied that they accounted for about a third of the total aid expenses that bilaterally go to another national government. This accounts for a total spending of almost NZ\$320,000 000 in the last decade of the twentieth century (Davenport & Low 2004:6).

Tracer studies, as the term implies, endeavour to track – in this case previous scholarship holders. Such studies would be useful to this paper, but I found it problematic to get hold of any. According to the NZAID officer that I contacted, the *NZODA Tracer Study: Case Studies of NZODA Scholarship and Award Holders in the Pacific 1990-1999* from 2004 is the only one available. It was conducted by New Zealand ‘socio-cultural’ scientists Eileen Davenport and William Low.<sup>27</sup> The Western development aid discourse that dominates this study, as well as that of OECD, suggests that the scholarships are failures, or at least in need of modification. Two of the eight ‘main’ scholarship schemes, presented by Davenport and Low, have been terminated by the time the report was published mainly because of a high rate of students not completing their studies (Davenport & Low 2004:68f). Today, NZAID are supporting four schemes (NZAID 2006a), of which only two schemes have the same naming as those presented in the study. It is clear that even more profound changes have occurred, possibly as a result of recommended optimising administrative measures (as we will see in the following section, DAC is one such recommender). In 2005 OECD reported that three scholarship schemes have been, or were in the process of being, terminated or wound down. This, they claim, was due to their inadequate performance or decreased relevance to contemporary, targeted development outcomes (OECD 2005:42).

To track previous scholarship holders, Davenport and Low used the contact details of NZAID’s so called Student Information Database (Davenport & Low 2004:8). Interviews were carried out with former scholarship holders in the last fifteen days of June 2002. Henceforth, I will focus on the results for Tonga in particular.<sup>28</sup> Of the 411 Tongans in the database, 390 were successfully traced (Davenport & Low 2004:12). As different interviewers were employed in the different countries, it was sub-consultant Lia Maka, who interviewed the participating twenty Tongan women and sixteen Tongan men (Davenport & Low 2004:145,149). The tracer study was, according to the NZAID officer mentioned above, not widely distributed and I was advised that the sample of respondents was representative only in the narrow sense defined by the study. Davenport and Low acknowledge that there were a number of such methodological constraints<sup>29</sup> inherent to their study (2004).

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<sup>27</sup> However, the tracer study in question was itself informed by some twenty other existing tracer studies also conducted primarily by NZAID from 1995 onwards (Davenport & Low 2004:46ff).

<sup>28</sup> Though interviews for the study took place in the Cook Islands, Samoa, and Vanuatu as well (Davenport & Low 2004:11)

<sup>29</sup> Among these were: limited resources; the short timeframe for the in-country interviews; uses of sub-consultants in this process meant that the people analysing the results did not do it soon enough, and naturally they did not have the same contextual familiarity as the interviewer; and lastly project management within

I focus on [one scholarship scheme, namely the New Zealand Development Scholarships and particularly its public category. It targets people from selected ‘developing’ countries, including Tonga, to enable them to study full-time at a New Zealand tertiary educational institution (NZ Aid 2006d).<sup>30</sup> The fields of study in which they can engage are ‘identified priorities’ determined by NZ Aid in a bilateral relationship with the Tongan government (NZ Aid 2006b; NZ Aid 2006f). In some cases of long-lasting scholarships there is a possibility for immediate family members of the scholarship holder to accompany him/her (NZ Aid 2006d), which encourages further chain migration (as explained in section 2.1.2).<sup>31</sup> The scholarship is available to applicants recommended by the Tongan government (NZ Aid 2006g:1), but since NZ Aid holds the right to make a final decision on the offering of any of their scholarships (NZ Aid 2006g:4) I question who holds the main controllability of the scheme. The New Zealand Development Scholarships are moreover given also in those ‘priority study fields’ that are in line with NZ Aid’s focus on what they define as the development needs of the Tongan region (NZ Aid 2006c).

Whereas the Tongan government may impose conditions on the scholarship, NZ Aid asks the candidates to sign a declaration stating that they will comply with their conditions of the scholarship. It includes an acknowledgement of the precondition that a scholarship holder cannot submit an application for a work permit or permanent residence of New Zealand during their study and within two years of completion of their scholarship. Another prerequisite is that scholarship holders return to their country of origin within fourteen days of the completion of their scholarship to gain a work position that makes use of their study skills for at least two years (NZ Aid 2006e). According to me, these conditions are reminiscent of Porter’s master metaphor. It becomes crystal-clear in year 2000’s declaration, which is attached in Appendix C. The conditions of scholarship were remembered and remarked upon by Tongan respondents of Davenport and Low’s study, as shown in the following quote:

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NZ Aid (Davenport & Low 2004:79ff). In addition, respondents were distorted towards students who successfully completed their studies as one would expect (Davenport & Low 2004:9,15). Moreover, as we have seen, the Tongan cohort is distorted towards women. A likely reason is the greater tendency for women than for men to participate in interviews, according to Davenport and Low (2004:149).

<sup>30</sup> A New Zealand development scholarship covers tuition and enrolment fees; travel costs related to the scholarship; medical and travel insurance; as well as essential day-to-day living costs of accommodation, food, clothing, and costs related to the course for example (NZ Aid 2006d). In the academic year of 2007, up to eight such scholarships will be offered to Tongan applicants (NZ Aid 2006g:1).

<sup>31</sup> For those scholarships that last for one and a half years or longer the scholarship holder has the possibility of applying for their immediate family members to accompany them in New Zealand when he/she has at least a year remaining to complete. If accepted and the family members in question join, the student receives additional basic day-to-day living payments for these family members (NZ Aid 2006d).

‘Should return back to Tonga and work and should not apply for residency in New Zealand’ (Davenport & Low 2004:23).

#### **4.1.1 Western development aid policy**

The aid policy on the scholarship scheme resembles the Western notion of development to a large extent. As demonstrated below, words such as ‘cost-effectiveness’, ‘technology and knowledge transfer’, ‘development need’ occur frequently in policy documents. The rationale for NZAID scholarships, referred to in Davenport and Low’s study, is ‘to contribute to sustainable economic and social progress and justice in ODA partner countries through the transfer of knowledge and skills’ (Davenport & Low 2004:40). This instantly reminds me of Truman’s speech (presented in section 3.1). Today, however, the wording of the rationale for NZAID scholarship schemes is somewhat different. It is ‘to contribute to NZAID’s aim of poverty reduction by enhancing the skills, training and knowledge of NZAID students and thereby strengthening the human resource capacity and capability of targeted developing countries’ (NZAID 2006a). Furthermore, two of the central objectives of the tracer study were to provide education and training to meet needs in developing countries regarding their workforce; and to ensure cost-effectiveness (Davenport & Low 2004:41ff). Three main solutions of how to achieve the last objective were proposed by DAC’s peer review mentioned above. Firstly, they recommend scholarships be incorporated more effectively with country programme strategies, local labour markets and human resource development needs. Secondly, they want to see an optimisation of the administration, for example through alignment of NZAID’s support with that of recipient governments to diminish transaction costs. Thirdly, they want to place greater emphasis on regional or national schooling as they are regarded as more cost-effective than study in New Zealand in terms of programme completion and student return rates (OECD 2005:41).

Approximately forty Tongan students held such a scholarship for study at two tertiary educational institutes in Fiji about one and a half years ago (Waring 2005:74). One respondent of the tracer study says: ‘It would be easier to study here [in Tonga] /.../ Assuming that the instructions would be in Tongan, I believe this would enhance my understanding of difficult concepts etc’ (Davenport & Low 2004:39). Slightly more popular was, however, the opposing

view of preferring to study abroad if possible (Davenport & Low 2004:38).<sup>32</sup> Cost-ineffectiveness is reflected in those scholarship students who do not return to their home country subsequent to their studies, according to research done by the New Zealand Ministry of Education. They do not see this as contributing to the development of the country in question because of this loss of professional workers and conclude that NZAID expenditure on non-returning students is a waste. The declaration, that the students are asked to sign, only requires them to return for the limited period of two years subsequent to the completion of their studies (Davenport & Low 2004:44f). After these two years, the Ministry of Education confesses that: ‘the person is free to pursue his/her career and life anywhere in the world, an option increasingly open in a globalising world, with some Pacific Islanders’ citizens (particularly in Polynesia) benefiting from special access to New Zealand, Australia, France and the USA’ (Davenport & Low 2004:45).

#### **4.1.2 Global assemblages**

Despite the methodological challenges of Davenport and Low’s tracer study, a large part of their results reveal some of the features of the different notions of development explored in chapter three. Arguably, the study itself asked questions that largely derive from Western paradigms just like the aid policies above. The four areas of development impact were: i) successful completion of programme of study; ii) return to home country; iii) use of skills learnt during study in paid employment; iv) use of skills learnt during study in civic/private life (Davenport & Low 2004:13). Explicitly though, Davenport and Low raise two questions that express positive viewpoints on non-return: i) Can remittances contribute to a positive development in the country of origin of the scholarship holder? ii) Can Oceanians working overseas contribute to a better reputation of their country of origin in their host country? (2004:17). They actually identify migration as being one of the most challenging issues for development aid in – particularly the Polynesian part of – Oceania (Davenport & Low 2004:140). Therefore, they argue that these issues should inform the shaping of development aid to Polynesian countries, not least in the context of scholarship schemes (Davenport & Low 2004:142). Evidently, these views touch on those in section 2.1.2 on transnationalism. Davenport and Low discuss the extent to which Tongan families intentionally plan to send family members for education and employment abroad. The larger purpose of such strategies

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<sup>32</sup> In fact, 19 interviewees said that they would not have preferred to study in Tonga if it would have been possible, whereas 16 people said that they would have preferred to study in Tonga if it would have been possible. One respondent did not give any response (Davenport & Low 2004:38).

would be the potential of offering opportunities to future generations thanks to permanent access to the migration destination (Davenport & Low 2004:143f). However, as we have seen, they were not able to interview many previous scholarship holders that remained in New Zealand. In the case of former, Oceanian scholarship holders, Davenport and Low distinguish a category of migrants that they call ‘late returners’. These people return after many years abroad following scholarship studies, either to work or to spend some time with accompanied, immediate family that they created overseas (Davenport & Low 2004:140).

Besides, the results of the study confirm a situation of contemporary Tongan transnationalism (as described in section 2.1.2). First of all, just half of the almost four hundred tracked Tongans were known to be in Tonga. Consequently, almost as high a proportion was known to be overseas (Davenport & Low 2004:19).<sup>33</sup> Among all the Tongans in the consulted database whose location was known and specified – excluding those in Tonga – a vast majority was located in New Zealand; besides that, some were in the two Western countries of Australia and USA both of whom, as we have seen, have considerable Tongan migrant communities. The most common location in the closest region was Fiji, but this number did not compare to the number of Tongans in New Zealand (Davenport & Low 2004:18).<sup>34</sup> The significant size of the Tongan population in New Zealand is given as a reason for these statistics (Davenport & Low 2004:20). This reasoning points at an awareness of chain migration patterns. Since interviews were carried out in Tonga rather than overseas, former Tongan scholarship holders currently overseas were not well represented in the tracer study.

Three informants can be used to illustrate a difference in personal outlooks, and so three different ‘kinds’ of transnational Tongans. One former Tongan scholarship holder currently overseas was eventually located and is my first example. This respondent reports that she never thought she would migrate to New Zealand. To the contrary, today she does not envisage herself living permanently in Tonga but possibly working there temporarily on leave from her current position. Instead, she sees herself assisting the Tongan community in New Zealand to integrate whilst maintaining Tongan culture and language by virtue of her senior position at a tertiary institution – thus retaining the Tongan language next to English. Her reasons for not returning to Tonga are both personal and professional; her family has also

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<sup>33</sup> To be exact, of the 390 tracked Tongans, 205 (52.6 percent) were in Tonga, whereas 164 (42 percent) were overseas and an additional 21 (5.4 percent) at unknown whereabouts (Davenport & Low 2004:19).

<sup>34</sup> Among this group of 173 overseas Tongans in total, 132 people were located New Zealand; 21 in Fiji; 13 in the USA; 4 in Australia; and 3 in Vanuatu (Davenport & Low 2004:18).

migrated and her current position is not offered in Tonga (Davenport & Low 2004:135f). Among the Tongan-based informants, a woman in her early twenties considers that her scholarship studies were crucial to ensure her current government employment. For her family, the scholarship funding was welcomed to lift the financial burden an overseas study would have incurred, according to the informant. Today she is providing money to three cousins from the outer islands allocated for their education. She says that she sees herself still in Tonga in five years time (Davenport & Low 2004:137f). Of all the respondents seventy-five percent said that they will be in Tonga in five years, a number that drops to less than fifty percent when the time period increases to ten years (Davenport & Low 2004:24f).<sup>35</sup> Lastly, to illustrate a former scholarship holder who did not envision himself working in Tonga even in five years time, I refer to a male in his late thirties who graduated with a degree within development itself. Working in Tonga, he considers that he uses the knowledge and skills he learnt during his masters very often, for example in project planning of rural regional development. His salary benefits his immediate family and some members of his extended family as well. His reasons to wanting to leave Tonga are for the sake of his professional career (Davenport & Low 2004:136f). The reasons may be diverse, but from Davenport and Low's study, it is clear that there are many structural problems with having return as a controllable precondition for the NZAID scholarship schemes in today's transnational world.

#### **4.2 Micro-credit schemes**

New Zealand overseas development aid (generally abbreviated to ODA) provided multilaterally, through three other development aid actors, a micro-credit scheme to the Tongan Development Bank in the mid-1990s. Of concern for my second case study, is the part of the micro-credits that were earmarked to promote commercial development of Tongan women's production of textile *koloa* (Horan 2002:206). This is in line with the new role of textile *koloa*, in which it is being sold for money (examined in section 3.2.3). As stated already, this is not dominating the Tongan notion of development but rather a nuanced perspective not exercised as commonly by Tongans.

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<sup>35</sup> For the remaining 25 percent on the question whether the respondent will be in Tonga in five years time, 16.7 percent said 'maybe'; whereas 8.3 percent answered no. On the question whether the respondent will be in Tonga in ten years time, on the other hand, 45.7 percent gave a positive response; 34.3 said 'maybe'; 11.4 percent did not give any response; whereas 8.6 gave a negative response (Davenport & Low 2004:24f).



**Figure 2:** The photo shows a length of decorated barkcloth, which makes up one of the two kinds of textile *koloa*. For the fine mat that constitutes the other type, see figure 1.

#### **4.2.1 Western development aid policy**

The Western development aid actors assumed that since Tongan women in rural areas and in the outer islands spent ‘so much time making [*koloa*] textile’ that their work could be ‘made productive’ if these women could make money from it within the cash economy (Horan 2002:206f). The fact that their textile production generally is undertaken in groups (as explained in section 3.2.2) was by the funders seen as advantageous. This was justified by referring to the successful outcome of the renowned micro-credit schemes of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, whose success rested on the usage of groups of borrowers (Horan 2002:207). The explicit development aims were to encourage a culture of loaning and saving in Tonga (Horan 2002:215). Such private sector mercantile market activities obviously reflect

Western development paradigms. Horan also recites rhetoric of empowerment as being part of the aid policies of this scheme, which exemplifies nuanced views. Despite optimistic plans, the scheme was deemed a failure; the main reason being that none of the Tongan women actually disposed of their textile products as commercial handicrafts on the tourist market to make money. This rejection of the cash economy was on behalf of producing for the ‘non-economic’ exchanges. The critics viewed this as merely the making and retaining of valued cultural objects, and to support this only was therefore regarded as a waste (Horan 2002:208). In short, the message of the Western development actors was that no development was taking place and the funds were, thus, determined a failure.

#### **4.2.2 Global assemblages**

‘What was envisaged by the funders and their advisors, and what ensued, proved to be two different things. What the funders considered to be “development” and what the [Tongan] women recipients did as “development” were not contiguous’ (Horan 2002:208). This quote indicates that Horan considers that the failure lies more in the funders’ limited notion of development. She argues that the micro-credit scheme actually was a significant success (Horan 2002:209). As revealed in section 3.2.1, from a Tongan perspective on development as in *fakalalakala*, textile *koloa* constitute the wealth that, as a component of a complex traditional exchange system, allows women to increase their status in the community. Small reports that some women in Tonga have curtailed their production of *koloa* items destined for the tourist market, in order to produce them solely for sale, exchange, and gifts to relatives and friends overseas (1995:246). Similarly, James states that most of the textile *koloa* sent overseas is not destined for the tourist market but for use and exchange within Tongan migrant communities (1997:14). She reports that textile *koloa* manufacturing groups (such as *tou langanga*) take out development bank loans, comparable to those of this case study, to purchase raw materials for their production (James 1997:14).

One of the three aspects of *fakalalakala*, however, is material and encompasses the cash economy. As we have seen (in section 3.2.2), changing practices are now drawing textile *koloa* into the global cash economy since demand for *koloa* as well as Tongan emigration remains high. Skilful women can, thus, take the opportunity to advance their status by producing textile *koloa* for commercial transactions within modern private-sector development (James 1997:19), such as intended in this case study. As long as the items of

textile *koloa* are associated with the aristocracy, the family, and Tonga and as long as these items are valued overseas for these meanings, Tongan women may find an export market in such traditional wealth (James 1997:21f). Still, it is important to bear in mind the fact that this only represents one out of the three aspects. In fact only a few Tongan women regularly sell textile *koloa*, and when they do they may sell to obtain cash for specific purchases, such as airfares or school fees (James 1997:14). In line with an actor-oriented viewpoint (section 3.1.1), the Tongan woman chooses to act in the way which is most favourable to her and her family negotiating between all three different dimensions. For a few Tongan women, it might be to sell textile *koloa*. According to the different dimensions of exchanges of textile *koloa* (section 3.2.1), generally there are more gains to be found by presenting such items at exchange ceremonies. Nevertheless, the micro-credits that they once were granted, gave them the opportunity to produce more textile *koloa* regardless of their specific usage. This way, it can be argued that the scheme was successful.

## **5) Conclusions**

My exploration of the Tongan notion of development – *fakalalakalaka* – in the light of Western notions of development, has throughout this paper generated a number of insights into Western development aid schemes targeting Tongans. First of all, development is generally seen as improvement or ‘moving forward’ among Tongans as well as among Westerners. What differs, on the other hand, are the development goals and ‘how to get there’. As examined in section 3.2.1, the dominating, materialistic Western notion of development corresponds largely to one of the three dimensions of *fakalalakalaka*. The mental and spiritual dimensions, which beside the material dimension are necessary for any improvement to take place in the Tongan notion of development, have nothing corresponding to them in a conservative Western development perspective. According to *fakalalakalaka*, on the topic of ‘how to get there’, the immaterial aspects seem to be of at least equal importance to the material aspect, if not more. This is openly expressed by ‘Ilaiu’s informants, who state that no improvement can be accomplished unless all the three aspects are in a good shape (see section 3.2.1). The dominating Western notion of development, however, tends to favour modernity, technology and economic progress as the key to ‘develop’. White’s model of how all socio-cultural characteristics are shaped by economic and technological circumstances, demonstrates clearly how immaterial aspects are of secondary concern (as pointed out in section 3.1).

Another similarity between the Tongan and the Western stances is the fact that one dominating discourse on development, embedded in wider historical and socio-cultural contexts, in each case directs the way in which Tongans and Westerners respectively think and act with regards to development. This is what Porter calls a master metaphor (1995). His analysis comprises also so-called organising metaphors, which emerge in nuanced perspectives, and metaphors of practice, which emerge in the specific context of a development aid scheme (such as the case studies of chapter four). Arguably, nuanced Western views on development (exemplified in section 3.1.1) that tend to resemble *fakalalakalaka* to a larger extent than the Western paradigms, are not threatened by the underlying master metaphors of development after all. Similarly, the nuanced Tongan development views (see section 3.2.3) mainly featuring the materialistic development aspect of *fakalalakalaka*, which is similar to the dominating Western notion of development, is, nonetheless, not threatened by the core values of the Tongan culture. Hence, although Tongans agree to take on capitalism to some extent, the importance given to the hierarchical family structure, for instance, seems to remain (as discussed in section 3.2.3). Therefore, I argue that Porter's analysis of metaphors is applicable also to the Tongan case. Tongans are subjected to nuanced views (organising metaphors) and development aid schemes (metaphors of practice), but in general they think and act in accordance with master metaphors, which have been deeply rooted in the Tongan context for a long time.

The case studies of chapter four validate these insights further. The measurement of success of the Western funders' evaluation of the micro-credit scheme (section 4.2) was mainly based on modern principles of economic growth. Success, according to the targeted Tongans on the other hand, can be achieved by excelling in the production and exchange of textile *koloa* to ensure a high status of one's family in the community, which in turn not only generates material but also immaterial gains. Textile *koloa* is, thus, more than just a commodity, and since each of the three aspects of *fakalalakalaka* is facilitated by textile *koloa*, Tongan women can bring about improvement by making such textile (as shown in section 3.2.1). The nuanced perspective of selling textile *koloa* for money does not appear as a dominating master metaphor. The dismissal also of the success of the first examined case study, the scholarship scheme (section 4.1), by Western actors depended largely on its cost-ineffectiveness and the fact that the scholarship holders were not controllable enough in terms of their future location. I conclude that Tongans see migration as an alternative development strategy, where the material aspect can be met. They have furthermore developed sophisticated transnational ties

in order to succeed immaterially, socially and culturally (see section 2.1.2) and this accounts for the other new role assigned to textile *koloa*. The insight that Westerners are more concerned about developing the nation-state, whereas Tongans foremost are focused on developing the immediate family is also demonstrated in this case study. As we have seen, this development that starts on a personal or familial level can, however, indeed be accomplished by practising transnationalism – for example on Tongan community sites on the Internet – and potentially it can also lead to the development of the Tongan nation as a whole.

The anthropological discipline has long had, and still has, an ambivalent attitude towards development. This does not necessarily imply that anthropologists refuse to engage in development aid schemes (see section 3.1.1). Holistic explorations of historic and socio-cultural contexts among vernacular peoples, in line with what this paper has sought to achieve among Tongans, aiming to come to a closer understanding of their own notion of development has been seen as one way of taking part in this engagement. As I researched the literature for this paper, I came across a wide range of such accounts. As development notions change constantly, and as long as development aid schemes are still carried out, I believe that it is important to continue such work in order to influence, and possibly to broaden, the view of development actors holding narrow views – as those presented in my case studies. These are two examples of schemes which have likely been considered successes by the targeted peoples. This likeliness I ‘simply’ estimate by looking at the global assemblages of *what actually happens* around us in the contemporary world...!

## Appendix A: The notion of development in Anthropology

To illustrate the notion of development in Anthropology chronologically, Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection of the nineteenth century was influenced by anthropology and vice versa. Anthropologists generally believed in a universal model of social evolution; that is, the idea that human societies develop in a certain direction through a number of stages. Also models of development stages were adopted within anthropology, notably by American Lewis Henry Morgan and by James Frazer (Eriksen 2001:11f). An opposing, relativist approach gained precedence in the early twentieth century primarily through German-American Franz Boas who rejected the generalist ideas on development by promoting *historical particularism* and *cultural relativism* (Eriksen 2001:13ff).

To my knowledge, the generalist versus the relativist as well as the structural versus the actor-oriented debate is still taking place today. The reliance of grand unifying theories such as evolutionist theory were, however, during the first decades of the twentieth century gradually replaced by the ethnographic, in-depth study of single, small-scale societies based on the Boasian principle of understanding every cultural setting on its own terms. Suddenly, the models of 'development stages' by Morgan and Frazer were purely considered to represent history (Eriksen 2001:17f). Nonetheless, neo-evolutionist ideas have emerged throughout this period as well (Eriksen 2001:20). Some neo-evolutionists were inspired by Marxist ideas and dependency theory, thereafter advanced in peasant studies carried out by Eric Wolf among others in the following decades (Eriksen 2001:20f). This, in turn came to be one of Chambers' sources of inspiration (as noted in section 3.1.1). In the mid-1970s the applied *development anthropology* that takes part in Chamber's participatory rural appraisal was established (Escobar 1997:500,504f), based on a development notion structured by Porter's master metaphor of order. In a manner similar to the dependence theorists, they argue that global inequalities are caused by economic, political, and historical factors.

A post-modern development notion, on the other hand, is the *anthropology of development* from the 1990s (Escobar 1997:500,504f). Their arguments are similar to the post-development criticism (as we have seen in section 3.1.1). Both anthropological stances agree with Long's concept of agency, which moreover relates to the anthropological views on globalisation and how global forms result in unique, unpredictable global assemblages as outlined in chapter two. In a number of regards anthropology and neopopulism show similarities in their development approach. Just like anthropologists' actor-oriented analysis, populists emphasise the role of culture and human agency in the interplay between internal and external dynamics. Global forms, such as development aid schemes, can be adapted and manipulated at grass root levels. The view on vernacular peoples and their institutions as useful for the development scheme is in stark contrast to the unifying development theories. The fact that similarities exist is confirmed in the following quote on populist attitudes towards development: 'Populism is not anti-development although it may have an ambivalent approach to it' (Maiava 2001:23). However, in the case of anthropology I suggest a slightly different emphasis, namely that anthropology has an ambivalent approach to development although it may not be anti-development – 'an uneasy relationship'.

## Appendix B: Tongan remittances in the future

As the migration-remittance process has been described as a ‘development’ strategy, a vital question in the literature on these processes is for how long the level of remittances will remain at a similarly high level. Although not the focus of this paper, I briefly comment on this question in this appendix. Small and Dixon report that the level of remittances does not appear to decline markedly with the amount of time a migrant is overseas (2004). A clear distinction is, however, made between children that are Tongan-born and those who are overseas-born raised by migrant parents. Although the parents of the latter group attempt to pass Tongan values onto them and reproduce ‘the Tongan way’ (*anga fakatonga*), they have neither grown up nor lived in a village with Tongans in Tonga, and consequently have not felt loyalty to a local noble. Moreover, approximately only forty percent of them can speak the Tongan language to the extent that they can hold an everyday conversation. Small and Dixon conclude that it is unlikely these overseas-born part-Tongans will remit to the same extent as Tongan-born migrants currently do (2004). James also writes that the Tongan-born with close ties to family in Tonga are the most generous remitters (1997:2). Some migrant parents send their overseas-born children to Tonga to live with their grandparents or other relatives to ensure that values of obedience are passed onto them (James 1997:21). In a similar fashion, Lee sees this migration-remittance phenomenon to be ‘under serious threat’ by focusing on these younger, second-generation Tongans abroad (2004:236). This is of particular concern in New Zealand, where the overseas-born outnumber the Tongan-born Tongan migrants (Small & Dixon 2004). As shown in section 2.1.1, circular migration has been part of Tongan culture for thousands of years. This fear of its continued duration is in a longer perspective not very plausible. Over the years it has taken different forms, but if the current form proves unusable it is likely that Tongans would invent new forms of continuing their living.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> For a similar discussion, see Sahlins (1999:xx).

## **Appendix C: NZAID's scholarship declaration**

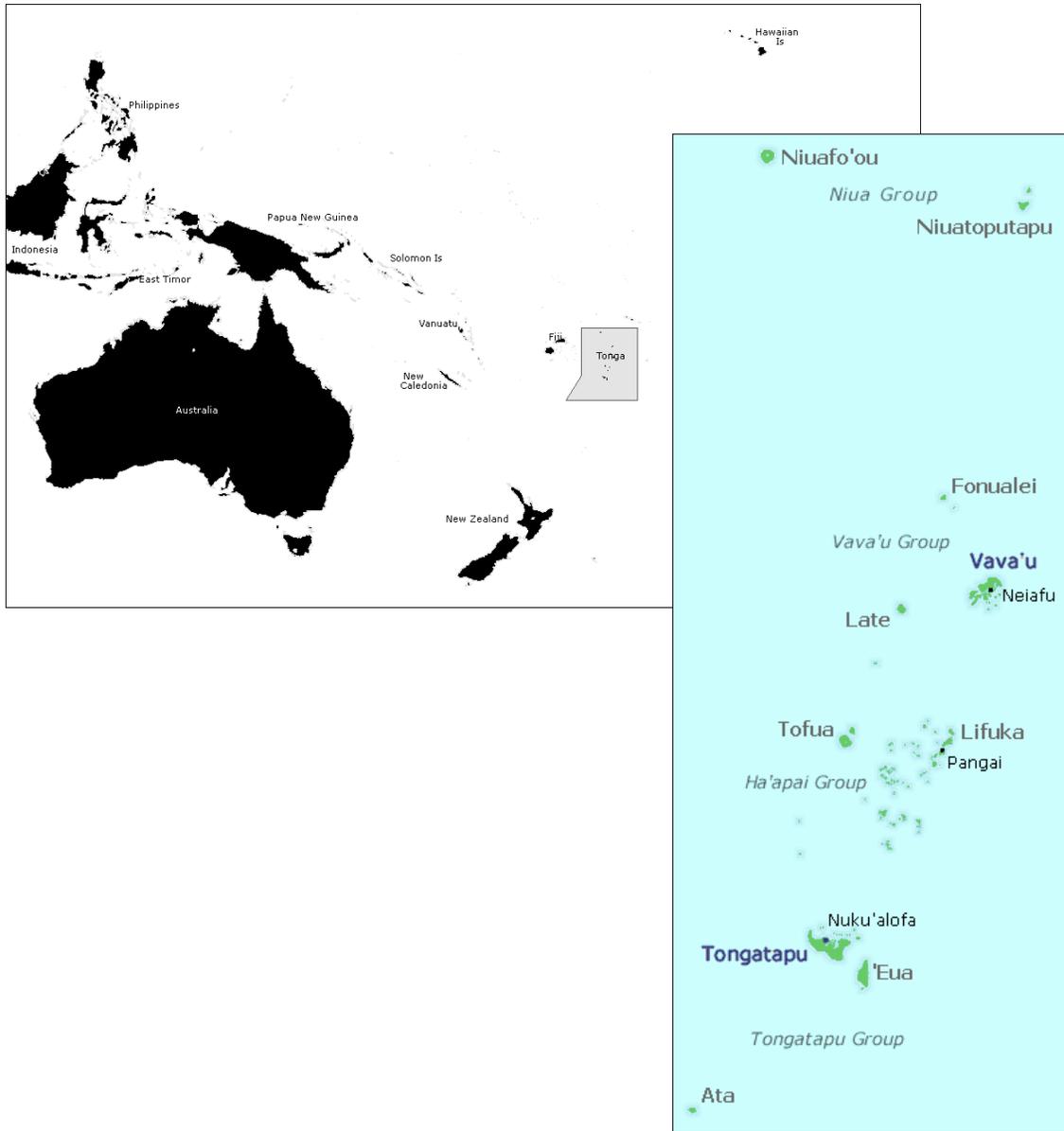
The following is a quote of the NZODA Scholarship Declaration from 2000:

I fully understand that if:

I seek to gain New Zealand / Australian Resident status before completion of my study in New Zealand or before returning to my country of residence my scholarship may be terminated and/or I may be required to refund to the New Zealand Government the whole or part of the cost of my scholarship,  
or

I do not return to my country of residence on completion of my study in New Zealand, I may be required to refund to the New Zealand Government the whole or part of the cost of my scholarship. Any such refund will be a debt payable to the New Zealand Government and payment will be enforceable under the New Zealand Law (Davenport & Low 2004:20).

## Appendix D: Maps of Tonga



The reference map in black and white derives from the Internet but has been edited since, URL: <http://www.mapability.com/ei8ic/maps/prefix/maps/oceania.gif> (2007-01-09)

The coloured map of the Tongan islands derives from the Internet but has been edited since, URL: <http://www.mapsouthpacific.com/tonga/index.html> (2007-01-09)

## **List of figures**

### **Figure 1**

This photo of a fine mat derives from the Planet Tonga site on the Internet,  
URL: <http://www.planet-tonga.com/eshop/fine-mats/DSC00272-fix.jpg> (2007-01-09)

### **Figure 2**

This photo of decorated barkcloth derives from the Internet,  
URL: <http://classroom.sdmesa.edu/jcastro/images/ngatu.jpg> (2007-01-09)

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