

Fall 2006

Malo le Folauga Brain Drain: A New Perspective

Mirna Carrillo
SIT Study Abroad

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Carrillo, Mirna, "Malo le Folauga Brain Drain: A New Perspective" (2006). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. 306.
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/306

This Unpublished Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Study Abroad at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

Malo le Folauga

Brain Drain: A New Perspective

Mirna Carrillo

Advisor: Asenati Liki

Academic Director: Jackie Faasisila

S.I.T. Samoa

Fall 2006

Abstract

The migration of people is a prominent issue in Samoa. According to statistics, Samoa has a high emigration rate compounded with a small yet significant brain drain (Docqueir and Marfouk 2006: 174, 188). More and more skilled Samoans are going abroad for greater economic attainment and career advancement. However, the term brain drain implies that the migration of skilled professionals is a severe loss to the Samoan nation; it does not take into consideration the benefits of migration. The objective of this study is to qualitatively measure the accurateness of the term brain drain when describing the international movement of skill Samoans.

Research was conducted by using both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources consisted of interviews with Samoan government officials and students, educators and staff members of the University of the South Pacific Alafua campus. A survey was also handed out to the students. Secondary sources consisted of available literature on remittances, migration and brain drain.

Results showed that the migration of skilled Samoans provide many benefits to the Samoan society. In conclusion, the term brain drain should be excluded when describing the migration of skilled Samoans because it defines it in a Western derived context that skilled Samoan migration does not fit. The phrase *folauga ia tautua* has been suggested in its stead.

Contacts

Asenati Liki - Assistant Lecturer DFL – (685) 21617 ext. 230
Sefuiva Reupena Muagututi'a – CEO of for Statistical Services – (685) 21372
Faaiu Sialaoa – Senior Immigration Officer - (685) 20291
Lemalu Lemi Taefu – Business Manager of the University of South Pacific Alafua campus - (685) 21617

Acknowledgements

I would like to formally thank all those individuals who made this study possible. The guidance of Asenati Liki was invaluable. I thank her for the many informative chats we had together. I would also like to thank Jackie Faasisila, the academic advisor, for her endless support and assistance. The information provided by Asenati Liki, Faaiu Salaoe, Sefuiva Reupena Muagututi'a and Lemalu Lemi Taefu was imperative. Finally, I would like to thank all the students, educators and staff members at the University of the South Pacific Alafua campus that provided me with their time and patience in order for me to gain a little more insight into life in Samoa.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	5
3. Brain Drain: A New Perspective	7
• Migration	7
• Remittances	9
• Qualifying to Migrate	10
• The Migration Process and Brain Drain	11
• Education	13
4. Survey Findings	14
5. Analysis	15
6. Conclusion	16
7. Bibliography	19
8. Glossary	22
9. Appendix	23

Introduction

Migration, for the purpose of engaging in the world's capitalist economy, is an important issue for the independent island nation of Samoa. For Samoans, this type of migration began in the early 1960's and continued through the early 1970's primarily to New Zealand; massive migration followed after Samoa gained its independence due to the stipulation set by the Treaty of Friendship, an agreement between Samoan and New Zealand, which allowed 1500 Samoans a year to enter the New Zealand borders¹ (Shankman 1988: 157; Liki 1994: 11). These early migrants were characteristically from the urban Apia area and were educated and wealthy (Shankman 1988: 158). By the 1970's, the remittances² sent by these migrants were essential to individual household incomes and a major component of the national Samoan economy (Shankman 1988: 162). Therefore, in 1975 when the New Zealand government reduced the number of migrants allowed within its borders the Samoan economy showed its dependence and vulnerability as remittances dropped (Shankman 1988: 165). To mitigate the dire economic effects people looked for new opportunities by migrating to American Samoa, the United States and Australia (Shankman 1988: 166). In the 1980's Samoans again saw their migration restricted by the American and Australian governments who were concerned with the increasing number of migrants entering their borders (Shankman 1988: 166).

Today, migration to New Zealand, the United States, American Samoa and Australia continues. In fact, Samoa is described as a MIRAB state that is a state whose economy is centered on migration, remittances, aid, and urban bureaucracy (Connell & Brown 2005: 5; Liki 1994: 10). The Asian Development Bank describes Samoan migration as a response to the "uneven economic and social development" characteristic of the Polynesian region (Connell &

¹ Currently, the number has been reduced to 1100 Samoans a year.

² Remittances are the transfer of money or capital, in any form, from foreign workers to their home country.

Brown 2005: vi). Otherwise, the migration of Samoans is invariably described as a safety valve against unemployment and population growth (Alburg 1991: 1; Connell 1990: 6; Connell & Brown 2005: 3). According to the data from the 2001 Census, Samoa's population is about 176,710 with an annual growth rate of about one percent in a time when life expectancy and birthrates are increasing; this low growth rate would not be possible without migration (Salele 2006: 95; Muagututi'a 2006: 5). In addition the 2001 Census data show that foreign remittances continue to be a main resource for individual household incomes and invaluable to the national economy as they total twenty percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) (Salele 2006: 99). At least for the short term, Samoan analysts suggest that migration for employment, which implies the sending of remittances to Samoa, is necessary for the functioning of the Samoan economy (Muagututi'a 2006: 67; Salele 2006: 102).

While migration must continue to keep the Samoan economy going, there is a concern about the makeup of those who migrate. Samoa is described as a country with a high emigration rate and low selectivity; it is believed that the majority of Samoan migrants are unskilled (Docequier & Marfouk 2005: 174 – 175). Nevertheless, in a study published by the World Bank, Samoa is ranked ninth among the top thirty countries with the highest emigration rates of skilled emigrants; although most migrants are unskilled there is sizeable proportion of skilled migrants (Docquier & Marfouk 2005: 175). Thus, Samoa is said to have a small yet significant brain drain (Docquier & Marfouk 2005: 188). In general, it is perceived that there is a lack of skilled professionals to fill qualified positions in Samoa because of the brain drain to overseas countries (Liki 1994: 23).

Brain drain is a term originally coined by the British Royal Society in 1972 to describe the movement of British professionals to the United States during 1950's and 1960's. Today,

however, it is a term used to describe the migration of skilled professionals and students from the Third World (used interchangeably with developing countries) to the First World (used interchangeably with developed countries) (Liki 1994: 23). This latter type of brain drain has been caught in a debate formulated by two perspectives: the nationalist and the internationalist. The nationalist perspective of brain drain describes the migration of skilled professionals as a movement that reinforces colonial ties by maintaining the Third World in a state of dependency and underdevelopment while the First World progresses (Liki 1994: 27). The internationalist perspective describes the movement of skilled professionals as a good thing for both individual migrants and the global community because it embodies the free distribution of human resources and the openness of the international labor market (Liki 1994: 32). However, both perspectives emphasize the backwardness of the sending countries and the prowess of the receiving countries.

The debate and literature on brain drain presents the migration of skilled Samoans as irrational and detrimental in terms of their ability to contribute to the development of Samoa. Little attention is given to the reasoning behind migrating and the contributions made by skilled Samoans to Samoa. The migration of skilled Samoans does not fit the Western derived literature on brain drain and migration. Samoans have Samoanized the process of migration to fit their needs. Thus, when factoring in the rationale behind migration and the contributions that skilled migrants make to Samoa it appears that the term brain drain is an inappropriate way to describe the migration of skilled Samoans. The purpose of this study is to provide a different perspective on the migration of skilled Samoans and contribute a more accurate term to describe their movement.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The second section describes the methodology. The third section explains migration and brain drain from a more Samoan

perspective. This section is followed by a report on the survey conducted at the University of the South Pacific Alafua campus regarding students' sentiments about education and their future plans to work. The fifth section is an analysis of this study. The sixth section concludes the paper with a personal reflection on the term brain drain.

Methodology

The primary objective of this study was to provide a more accurate term than brain drain to describe the migration of skilled Samoans. This was to be accomplished by attaining a Samoan perspective on migration and brain drain and comparing it with existing literature on migration, remittances and brain drain.

The Samoan perspective on migration and brain drain was gathered by conducting interviews with Samoan citizens. Letters requesting interviews were sent to key government departments: Samoan Immigration Office, Commission of Labour, Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance. Of those requests two were answered and followed by interviews. Despite many efforts to contact the other ministries the time constraint of three weeks compiled with parliament being in session made government officials unavailable for questioning. Interviews were also conducted with students, educators and other staff members of the University of the South Pacific Alafua campus. Contacting students was difficult because the ISP period coincided with their final exams. Some statistics on remittances and migration were obtained by interviewing staff members at the Central Bank of Samoa and the Statistics Division respectively.

Literature and documents regarding migration, remittances and brain drain were available through the University of South Pacific Alafua campus library. Limited research was done via the internet.

The study also includes a case study based on the Samoan students of the University of the South Pacific Alafua campus. In October, thirty surveys asking about students' feelings toward education and their future plans to work were handed out³. Only twenty surveys were returned. A second survey that asked more specifically about future work plans was emailed in

³ Sample of survey is included in the appendix

late November to the Samoan students' school email accounts. Only two students responded so the survey was discarded.

The home base of the research was the University of the South Pacific Alafua campus. The location was ideal because students engaged in tertiary education (potential future skilled migrants) were easily accessible along with staff members of all education levels. Moreover, the campus was located near Apia making it easy to travel to the different government ministries of interest.

Brain Drain: A New Perspective

Migration

Brain drain takes place under the larger scope of migration. Literature on international migration, especially from the Third World to the First World, perpetually describes the process through negative terms. The movement of Samoans out of the country is thought to maintain the “backwardness” that qualifies it as a Least Developed Country (LDC)/ MIRAB state by creating a Samoan national dependency on the remittances received from the developed world. Moreover, once the distribution of remittances ensues within the country literature usually focuses on the devastating consequences it has for the Samoan society and depicts the irrationality of their expenditure. Overall, literature on migration seems to favor finding ways to reduce it. Unfortunately, through the process of describing migration and remittances in terms of economic dependency and irrationality little has been said about the Samoan ability to engage in the world’s capitalist economy and become a part of the global community.

A new economic order calling for the climate of equity has been in place since the post Cold War era; it was made official by the “New International Economic order” written in the United Nations Declaration of 1974 (Jones 1998: 2). The New International Economic Order dictates that macro-scale trade (external transfer of goods; international trade) is necessary for the developing countries to earn capital. As a consequence of the economic gains made through trade, the internal infrastructure and development of the nation is increased (Jones 1998: 1). Today, it is this plan that many developing countries, including Samoa, are adhering to in order to develop.

Traditionally Samoa has depended on agriculture and fishing to maintain a subsistence livelihood and to generate export products (Muagututi’a 2006: 47). Following independence,

taro was Samoa's largest export; until 1993 it generated about half of all the export revenue. But, the 1994 blight destroyed the crop and taro never regained its status as an import. In turn, the taro blight caused an increase in the production of copra and coconut oil. In total, agricultural exports amounted to about 7.6% of Samoa's GDP for 2004 (Muagututi'a 2006: 48). Their contribution to the GDP has varied due to agriculture's susceptibility to natural disasters and in general, production has been steadily declining (Muagututi'a 2006: 48). Fishing, however, remains as one of the primary sources for consumption and exports; it generated about 5.8% of the GDP in 2004 (Muagututi'a 2006: 48). While fishing and agriculture contribute to the economy and employ a substantial amount of the workforce, they do not produce the foreign exchange necessary to keep the Samoan economy going (Muagututi'a 2006: 47).

While the environment poses limitations to the production of natural exports, Samoa has successfully put in place another export that has proven to be very profitable and reliable. Samoa relies on the export of labor (skilled and unskilled) or the migration of people to sustain the economy. Samoan migrants have proven to be reliable remitters; the amount of remittances entering Samoa has steadily increased over the years and is important to the GDP. According to the Central Bank of Samoa, Samoan migrants remitted more than 200 million tala for the 2005 fiscal year (Central Bank of Samoa 12/7/06: Interview). Although labor may not be an export explicitly proscribed by the New International Economic Order, it has provided a method for Samoa to engage in the transfer of goods and the international market. And regardless of how labor is depicted as a second rate/ backwards export in literature, it is no different than other exports produced by the First World. Labor is as equally susceptible to global economic influences and as equally efficient in producing revenue within the international market as are more widely accepted exports. Through migration and its subsequent remittances, Samoa has

become a part of the global capitalist economy by providing individual household with a cash income.

Remittances

Much has been written about the use of remittances in Samoan households. Their use has been described as irrational and unproductive because of the lack of investment; remittances are not fulfilling their developmental potential (Alburg 1991: 35) Instead, most remittances are used for consumption purposes meaning food, house construction, *faalavelave*⁴, church donations and school fees (Peau 21/11/06: Interview). However by dismissing the use of remittances for consumption it undermines the role of Samoan culture and migrant motivations.

Remittances as part of the household income are underlined by two factors: lack of government aid and the strong ties to family. With little economic help available from the Samoan government, Samoans have to provide for themselves. In fact, the number one reason migrants cite for leaving Samoa is to help their families have a brighter economic future in Samoa (Sialaoa 10/11/06: Interview; Muagututi'a 15/11/06: Interview; Liki 24/11/06: Interview). Using migrant motivations as a meter then remittances are being used for the purpose ascribed to them. Their extensive use is readily seen throughout the villages with more and more *palagi*⁵ style houses being erected, bigger churches being built and the availability of technological goods (Muagututi'a 15/11/06: Interview). Furthermore as part of a communal culture, money is not to be saved for this can be taken as a sign of greed. As Fa'aiu Sialaoa puts it jokingly, you can not be a Samoan if you save; money is spent communally. Money is first and foremost for the use of the entire family (Sialaoa 10/11/06: Interview). The family is an investment and should be considered as such; money expenditure then should not be seen as irrational and

⁴ Faalavelave is a Samoan term which literally translated means much trouble but refers to family occasions or ceremonies.

⁵ Palagi is the Samoan term that refers to foreigners and more specifically Europeans and/or their customs.

unproductive. By giving to the family remitters are doing what is socially the most acceptable and viable investment, maintaining family ties.

Qualifying to Migrate

Samoans typically migrate to New Zealand, American Samoa, the United States and Australia. New Zealand, however, is the most popular destination (Muagututi'a 15/11/06: Interview). To qualify to enter the New Zealand border under the Samoan Quota (part of the Treaty of Friendship) certain requirements must be met (Liki 24/11/06: Interview). Overall, there seems to be a preference for skilled individuals unless entering under the stipulation of family reunification; this is also true of entry to the United States and Australia. Among the various requirements to enter New Zealand applicants have to obtain an acceptable job offer that meets a minimum income requirement and have to meet a minimum level of English; the English requirement is fulfilled by the ability to read English, understanding and answering questions in English and holding a conversation about yourself, your family or your background ("Immigration Inquiries").

The aforementioned requirements have different implications. The English requirement entails that applicants have some amount of schooling but not necessarily a tertiary education; therefore many unskilled applicants can still qualify. Moreover job offers are many times controlled by Samoans already established in New Zealand (Shankman 1988: 160). New Zealand Samoans are essential to providing the job offers that make qualified applicants. Furthermore, New Zealand Samoans are the basis on which applicants apply for visas under family reunification. The Samoans based in New Zealand have a major impact on which Samoans go abroad.

Consequently, those who migrate are not randomly selected but have certain characteristics that make them viable candidates for migration. The differences that make some Samoans eligible migrants and others ineligible migrants may exacerbate the gap between the rich and the poor. Income differences among households are largely impacted by the number of family members who are engaged in wage labor and the amount of remittances received (Muagututi'a 2006: 60). Under these circumstances, skilled Samoans play an interesting role in the migration process.

The Migration Process and Brain Drain

To understand the migration of skilled workers and the makeup of the 1100 migrants that leave under the Samoan Quota it is necessary to understand the stratification of the Samoan workforce. The majority of the Samoan laborers consist of individuals with a primary and secondary education and they are considered unskilled (Sialoa 10/11/06: Interview). It is in this section that migration is the heaviest because competition for jobs and job shortages are the most prevalent (Sialoa 10/11/06: Interview; Liki 24/11/06: Interview; Muagututi'a 15/11/06: Interview; Taefu 22/11/06: Interview). The majority of these migrants note that they go overseas to earn more money than possible in Samoa and to educate their children (Liki 24/11/06: Interview; Muagututi'a 15/11/06: Interview).

The migrant population that constitutes the brain drain of Samoa exists at a much smaller proportion than unskilled migrants; skilled Samoans make up somewhere between 10% and 20% of migrants (Liki 24/11/06: Interview; Taefu 22/11/06: Interview). Compared to unskilled migrants they leave at a slower rate and for differing reasons. The primary reason why skilled professionals leave Samoa is due to the feelings of injustice or dissatisfaction with their jobs; this is especially true of those working within the public sector who feel they are afflicted with poor

salaries and constant political interference (Sialaoa 10/11/06: Interview; Muagututi'a 15/11/06: Interview; Liki 1994: 100). This situation was made readily apparent with the mass exodus of medical doctors both overseas and to the private sector following the strike of 2005 (Liki 24/11/06: Interview; Taefu 22/11/06: Interview). Otherwise, skilled Samoans leave based on the opportunities available abroad that provide greater economical attainment (Liki 1994: 99). However on some occasions, skilled migrants find themselves employed in jobs below their qualifications but with greater earning power than their employment in Samoa (Sialaoa 10/11/06: Interview). Other reasons for migrating include providing security for the family (land, house and education) and pursuing personal desires of career advancement (Liki 1994: 99). And, in general, there is the sentiment among Samoan professionals that their qualifications are worth more, in terms of money, abroad than in Samoa (Liki 1994: 101).

Looking more closely, the migration of skilled professionals or the brain drain of Samoa is a beneficial movement. Samoa is a small island with an expanding population and a decreasing job market (Sialaoa 10/11/06: Interview). The 2006 Samoan Human Development Report notes that the public sector has been growing but the new government reform plan is to reduce the public sector and encourage the expansion of the private sector mainly via the tourism industry (Muagututi'a 15/11/06: Interview; Muagututi'a 2006: 50, 53). However analysts expect that the job growth will not be able to keep up with either the population growth or the increasing number of university graduates (Muagututi'a 15/11/06: Interview; Muagututi'a 2006: 50; Sialaoa 10/11/06: Interview). Although there are certain fields that do have a serious shortage of skilled professionals (i.e health sector) for the most part interviewees predict a shortage of jobs. What is more, University of the South Pacific Alafua campus students felt there were not enough jobs in Samoa to support them once they graduated (Gordlina 21/11/06: Interview; Komiti 21/11/06:

Interview; Sanerivi 21/11/06: Interview; Falefata 21/11/06: Interview; Etamani 21/11/06: Interview). Therefore, migration allows for a cycle of job vacancies (Sialaoa 10/11/06: Interview). As skilled Samoans migrate positions are vacated and filled by new graduates and/or other available skilled professionals. Meanwhile, the skilled migrants send remittances that are more than desired by the national government and individual households. This cycle is also beneficial in that the influx of new people brings new ideas, skills, and knowledge that help the national government further develop (Sialaoa 10/11/06: Interview; Muagututi'a 15/11/06: Interview). Alternately, there is a current trend of returning professionals who seek careers as politicians or set up businesses (Sialaoa 10/11/06: Interview; Liki 24/11/06: Interview); seemingly going abroad provides skilled Samoans with the motivation to return and work for the Samoan people.

Education

The high returns of education, whether in Samoa or abroad, is a widespread idea. This is apparent in the fact that one of the primary uses of remittances is to pay school fees. Qualifications or education are seen as the most efficient way of acquiring a well paying job (Gordlina 21/11/06: Interview). The importance of growth and investment in human capital is made evermore evident when the Samoan government is likewise investing in education to create qualified individuals who can work abroad. The Samoan government has established the Samoan Qualifications Authority who supervises post secondary educational institutions and formal and non-formal training schools to ensure that they are providing Samoans with the skills necessary to work overseas (Muagututi'a 2006: 54). In this way, the Samoans who decide to migrate will have the qualifications required to attain a desirable income. Interestingly, many students also see education as a means to go abroad (Gordlina 21/11/06: Interview; Taefu

22/11/06: Interview). Many scholarships to study abroad are handed out with the help of New Zealand and Australia (Liki 24/11/06: Interview). Students feel that if they get good grades they can go abroad and work while they get a good education (Gordlina 21/11/06: Interview). In turn, their education will help them go abroad later. Moreover, the government profits by having students sign bonds. The bonds state that at the end of their education the student will come back to work for the government of Samoa until they have paid a certain amount of their scholarship (Iosia 29/11/06: Interview). In the end, the students benefit by getting the qualifications necessary to procure high paying jobs both in Samoa and abroad. The government can expect to reap the benefits of the students' knowledge while they work within the country and/or their remittances if they work abroad.

Survey Findings

A survey was conducted at the University of the South Pacific Alafua campus and given to Samoan students to get a general overview of their sentiments about education and future plans to work. The results are based on the 20 surveys that were returned.

Results showed that Samoan students believed that their education was important to their attaining a well paying job. Most attended USP because it was an internationally recognized institution. The majority of students, 70%, were on government scholarship; 30% of individuals were paying school fees with wages earned by other family members in Samoa and/or remittances sent from abroad. As for working overseas, 35% of students surveyed wished to work solely abroad and 25% wanted to work both abroad and in Samoa; 35% wished to work only in Samoa and 5% were unsure of where they wanted to work. Interestingly, 95% of students have family members with college degrees. Most students cited their desire to remit money to their families as a reason for wanting to go abroad and/or work in Samoa (Gordlina

21/11/06: Interview; Sanerivi 21/11/06: Interview). Interviews suggested that better pay, more competition and room for advancement within their career fields, ability to network with new people and the opportunity to gain more skills and knowledge were motivations for going abroad (Gordlina 21/11/06: Interview; Komiti 21/11/06: Interview; Sanerivi 21/11/06: Interview; Falefata 21/11/06: Interview; Memea 27/11/06: Interview).

Analysis

To become part of the global community's economy Samoa has to work with both its available resources and the stipulations set forth by the leaders of the global community (i.e. First World). With limited natural resources to trade in the international market, Samoa has found a way to prosper through migrating. In this context, brain drain has become an extension of Samoa's success.

Interviewees unanimously agreed that migration was beneficial for Samoa. It is a method to better the individual's and the family's economic standing. Without remittances Samoa would not be able to sustain its current standard of living (Alburg 1991: 31). The migration of individuals whether skilled or unskilled becomes the most viable economic option and the soundest of exports in terms of available resources and selling power. As the most eligible and profitable of migrants, skilled Samoans are ideal for the international labor market. This is apparent in the University of the South Pacific students' beliefs that their education will be helpful in getting them high wages both in Samoa and abroad. The motivations for the government's investment in post secondary education also shows the nation's expectation of receiving benefits by providing individuals with the qualifications necessary to succeed in the international labor market as well as the skilled positions in Samoa.

Contrary to the literature that suggests that the government's investment in education equates a loss when skilled professionals migrate (Docquier and Marfouk 2006: 151) Samoa is benefiting by the cycle of skilled migration. The importance of remittances to the economy is outstanding. Interviewed students are aware that remittances and wage labor make up a major portion of household incomes; indeed, all surveyed students had plans to work to support their family, whether in Samoa or abroad, once they graduated. The split in the responses of the surveyed students concerning where they wished to work (either Samoa, abroad or both) is also representative of the skilled workforce already in place. While some skilled professionals are working abroad and remitting, others are working in Samoa and providing their skills and knowledge. The migration of skilled Samoans also decreases pressure on the amount of employment the government has to provide to support all university graduates.

There is concern, however, that the migration of skilled professionals may be causing inequalities within Samoa. Literature suggests that those who migrate may not be the ones in most need but rather those who have the resources to travel (Alburg 1991: 40). If only those who already have resources migrate then they will continue to accumulate resources at the expense of those in greater need and thus, further the inequalities between the rich and the poor. This may be even truer for skilled professionals whose education suggests that they may have above than average resources. Interestingly, the overwhelming 95% of University of the South Pacific students who had one or more family members with post secondary education may be representative of this situation; the fact that there are skilled professionals within their households suggests that they may have above than average incomes. Nevertheless, inequality is hard to measure in Samoan society for two reasons. One, cash (acquired by wage labor and/or remittances) is only one of the indices that measure a household's income since subsistence

farming plays a vital role in many homes; and two, traditional economic practices distribute wealth throughout the extended family or *aiga* (Muagututi'a 2006; 60-61). It is expected that one way or another remittances from skilled migrants will reach a wide base of people.

Aside from the economic impact, the migration of skilled Samoans maximizes their performance potential. Skilled professionals' decision to migrate is not unsound but a sure method to advance. In Samoa there is limited room to advance in any one career (Taefu 22/11/06: Interview). Many of the students interviewed noted that a motivating factor for going abroad was to be challenged by more competition and available opportunities (Sanerivi 21/11/06: Interview; Gordlina 21/11/06: Interview; Memea 27/11/06: Interview). Skilled Samoans abroad have the highest earning potential and the most opportunities to be upwardly mobile. In the end, skilled Samoans who are abroad are making the most of their education; careers are being fully realized and money is being remitted. Taking this into consideration it is hard to see why the movement of skilled professionals out of the country is portrayed as detrimental and irrational.

Conclusion

Samoan migration and brain drain do not easily fall into the definitions ascribed to them by Western literature. The negative connotation of brain drain implies that Samoa is being drained and therefore, held back by its most valuable asset. The term brain drain also implies that skilled migrants have no responsibility to their country or people. The migration of skilled individuals is not holding the progress of Samoa. In many ways it is helping it move forward. The revenue provided through remittances, the skills and knowledge provided to the workforce and the alleviation of providing employment to all skilled professionals have helped the Samoan government function. In such a context the term brain drain is erroneous. By reviewing the

available data on the migration of skilled Samoans, the suggestion of a new term that better reflects their situation is needed.

The new term proposed is *folauga ia tautua*. The term roughly translates to traveling to serve. This term embodies the Samoanization of the migration process. *Folauga* is a sailing voyage that refers to the sea traveling that has taken place throughout the history of Samoa; it honors a skill (of traveling or migrating across large distances) that even today is helping Samoans expand their boundaries and succeed in the capitalist global economy. *Tautua* is a term that means to serve and originally refers to the service that untitled men provided to the *matai* (chief) in order to prove his worth as a candidate for a *matai* title. As part of *folauga ia tautua*, *tautua* refers to the service that skilled migrants provide to the family and nation that proves how invaluable they are to their survival. *Folauga ia tautua* more than redefines brain drain, it defines skilled migration in a Samoan context that reveals its success and importance.

Bibliography

Interviews:

Anonymous #1. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. October 16, 2006.

Central Bank of Samoa. Research Department. Central Bank of Samoa. September 12, 2006.

Etamani, Letisia. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. November 22, 2006.

Falefata, Semeane. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. November 21, 2006.

Gordlina, Ota. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. October 14, 2006.

Gordlina, Ota. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. November 21, 2006.

Iosia, Eteuafi. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. November 29, 2006.

Komiti, Saipele. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. November 21, 2006.

Liki, Asenati. Professor. University of the South Pacific – Alafua Campus. November 24, 2006.

Malaki, Teresa. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. November 22, 2006.

Memea, Feagaiga. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. November 27, 2006.

Migration Statistics. Statistics Division. Government Building. November 24, 2006.

Muagututi'a, Sefuiva Reupena. CEO Officer for Statistical Services – Ministry of Finance. November 15, 2006.

Peau, Papa. University of the South Pacific Security Guard. Alafua Campus. November 21, 2006.

Perez, Filipino. University of the South Pacific Student. Alafua Campus. November 22, 2006.

Sanerivi, Ietitaia. University of the South Pacific Resident. Alafua Campus. November 21, 2006.

Sialaoa, Fa'aiu. Senior Immigration Officer. Samoan Immigration Office. November 10, 2006.

Taefu, Lemalu Lemi. Business Manager. University of the South Pacific – Alafua Campus. November 22, 2006.

Written Survey. 20 Informants on University of the South Pacific – Alafua Campus. October 14,

2006 – October 17, 2006.

Secondary Sources:

Alburg, Dennis A. *Remittances and their Impact: A Study of Tonga and Western Samoa*. The Australian National University: Australia, 1991.

Connell, John. “Modernity and its Discontents: Migration and Change in the South Pacific.” Migration and Development in the South Pacific. 1990: 1-28.

Connell, John. *Remittances and Rural Development: Migration, Dependency and Inequality in the South Pacific*. The Australian National University: Australia, 1990.

Connell, John and Brown, Richard P.C. eds. *Remittances in the Pacific: An Overview*. Asian Development Bank: Philippines, 2005.

Docquier, Frederic and Marfouk, Abdeslam. “International Migration by Educational Attainment.” International Migration, Remittances and the Brain Drain. 2006: 159-199.

Hezel, Francis and Levin, Michael. “Micronesian emigration: Beyond the Brain Drain.” Migration and Development in the South Pacific. 1990: 42-60.

“Immigration Inquiries.” 2006. Immigration. 24 November 2006.

<http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/general/generalinformation/qanda/sq2.htm>

Jones, Richard. “Introduction: The renewed role of remittances in the New World Order.” Economic Geography. 1998: 1-8.

Liki, Asenati. *E Tele A’A O Le Tagata: Career Choices of Samoan Professionals Within and Beyond Their Nu’u Moni*. University of Hawaii: Hawaii, 1994.

MacPherson, Cluny. “Stolen Dreams: Some Consequences of Dependency for Western Samoan Youth.” Migration and Development in the South Pacific. 1990: 105-119.

Maimbo, Samuel and Ratha, Dilip. “Remittances: An Overview.” Remittances: Development Impact and Future Prospects. World Bank: Washington D.C., 2005.

Mora, Jorge and Taylor, Edward. “Determinants of Migration, Destination, and Sector Choice: Disentangling Individual Household and Community Effects.” International Migration, Remittances and the Brain Drain. 2006: 21-51.

Muagututi’a, Sefuiva Reupena. “The Human Development Indices.” Samoa National Human Development Report 2006. 2006: 49-67.

Ozden, Caglar. “Educated Migrants: Is There Brain Waste?.” International Migration, Remittances and the Brain Drain. 2006: 227-244.

Schiff, Maurice. "Brain Gain: Claims About Its Size and Impact of Welfare and Growth Are Greatly Exaggerated." International Migration, Remittances and the Brain Drain. 2006: 201-255.

Shankman, Paul. "Samoa Exodus." Contemporary Pacific Societies Studies. 1988: 156-170.

Wood, Dr. Salele. "Economic Development – Draft." Samoa National Human Development Report 2006. 2006: 93-103

Glossary

1. 'aiga – family (nuclear and extended)
2. faalavelave – an important occasion such as a wedding, birth or death
3. folauga – sea voyage
4. matai – titled head of a Samoan extended family; commonly translated as chief
5. palagi – like a European; according to the customs of a European; a European person
6. tautua – service provided to a matai by an untitled male

Appendix Survey Sample

1. Name *Suafa* _____

2. Age *Tausaga* _____

3. Why did you choose to attend USP? Aisea e te fia agoa a ai i USP?

4. How are you paying for your education? Fa'afefea ona totogi lau aoga?

_____ totogi e lou aiga / Personal funds

- Fa'amatala po'o fa'afefea ona maua le tupe e lou aiga
Fa'ataitaiga :
- faigaluega ou matua / parents work
- tupe lafo mai i ni ou aiga mai fafo / family overseas
- ma isi / etc.

_____ sikolasipi / Scholarship

5. What are you currently studying at USP? O'a au mataupu o lo'o ave?

6. What influences what classes you take? E fa'afefea ona filifili au mataupu?

- Fa'ataitaiga
- Pe e te tosina i au uo / your friends
 - Fuafua i le tupe e te mauaina / money
 - Ni mana'oga o lou aiga, tama ma tina / parents
 - ma isi / etc.

7. Are you currently studying for your first degree? O lou tausaga muamua lenei ua ave ai sau tikeri?

_____ Ioe / Yes _____ Leai / No

- A leai, fa'amatala, pe iai foi sau tikeli na ave muamua
- A io, o lea le tikeli
- If no, how many other degrees do you have?
Please list them.

8. Do any of your family members have degrees? E iai se isi a tou aiga samaua sana tikeri?

_____ Ioe/ Yes _____ Leai / No

-O ai ? / Who?

- O le a le tikeri? / What degree?

9. When you finish your education what do you plan to do? A uma le aoga, o'a ni au fuafuaga mole lumanai?

10. What profession will you seek in the future? O lea sau galuega mole lumanai?

11. Do you plan on working in Samoa or overseas? O'e mafaufau e te faigaluega i Samoa po'o fafo atu o Samoa?

