

"Home Away from Home": Migration, Home, and the Experience of Home-Making in the Host-place. The Case of Tuvaluan Migrants in New Zealand¹

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ABSTRACT

Post-migration, migrants go through the reconfiguration of place meaning and the reconstruction of home in the host-place. This article explores migrants' experiences of home-making, focusing on Tuvaluan migrants in New Zealand. Through interviews with Tuvaluan migrants, following a *Talanoa* approach, it is inferred that New Zealand becomes the vessel of the Tuvaluan community in which the journey of home-making begins, from within the community cocoon to gradual independence and expansion of self and roots in the host-place. Adaptation, connection to roots, hard work to thrive, and intercultural interaction are pivotal to understanding and mastering the system and the socio-cultural geometry of the host-place, bolster the sense of home, and preserve its constancy. Home-making in the host-place, therefore, is a relational, translocal, and transnational experience to build connection, ontological security and continuity.

KEYWORDS

Home-making, Home, Tuvalu, New Zealand, Migration.

Introduction

Migration has become a typical trait and a global phenomenon of contemporary societies (O'Reilly 2013). People migrate for various reasons, such as searching for better life opportunities or escaping danger and life threats. Today, environmental pressures often create imperatives for migration (Constable 2017; Mortreux and Bennet 2009; Fisher 2011; Paton and Fairbarin-Dunlop 2010; Smith and McNamara 2015; Hayes 2008; Beyerl 2018; Oakes 2019; and Farbotko and McGregor 2010). Therefore, there is an increasing focus on the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Petzold and Magnan 2019), due to their environmental and geographic vulnerabilities to climate change pressures. Examples include small islands in the Caribbean region (Cashman and Nagdee 2017; McField 2017; Thomas et al. 2020), African coasts and islands (Chan et al. 2020; Ingram and Dawson 2005) the Pacific island nations. Climate change, primarily sea-level rise, has become an existential threat to their territories and thus could force their inhabitants to migrate (Yamamoto and Esteban 2017). In this regard,

¹ This article is part of a broad PhD project on migration, place attachment, and climate change in the case of Tuvaluan migrants in New Zealand. The project aims to understand the effect of migration that is fuelled by environmental and socio-economic pressures on Tuvaluan migrants' identity, attachment to Tuvalu and New Zealand. This article focuses on a specific aspect which is Tuvaluans' home-making experiences; namely, the reconstruction of the host-place as the home away from home.

Willcox (2016) supports the importance of recognising climate change inundation as a grave external threat to the islands' self-determination.

A pioneering example is the Polynesian island nation of Tuvalu (Farbotko et al. 2017; Corlew 2012; Murphy 2017; Macdonald 2001). Tuvalu is a small low-lying island nation in Oceania that consists of nine coral atolls (Faanui and Laracy 1983; Hunter 2002; Mimura et al. 2007; Yang et al. 2020). It has become the emblematic figure of climate change. It has been described through tropes and metaphors such as 'the canary in the coalmine' (Farbotko and Lazrus 2012) and 'the sinking nation' (Halstead 2017) as an Atlantis-style prediction of a state on the verge of disappearance (McAdam 2012). Although migration from Tuvalu is not always strictly caused by climate change, Tuvalu has become a favourite topic to debate climate change migration, neglecting Tuvaluans' experiences in the host-place and their culture of home-making post-migration.

This article highlights the experiences of Tuvaluan migrants in New Zealand, focusing on processes of building a home away from home and drawing on belonging and home-making. It presents data from interviews, inspired by the *Talanoa* approach – a traditional Pacific conversation and storytelling method (Gossai 2018) – with forty Tuvaluans. The findings suggest that New Zealand becomes not only a material host body but also a platform of connection, openness, and expansion of self and roots. The process of home-making for Tuvaluans, therefore, is a relational, personalised, translocal and transnational experience which is crucial to achieving continuity and ontological security.

Migration, home and home-making

Home is an elusive term to define; it carries different meanings. Home is an amalgamation of feelings, possessions, and stories. It is a physical structure, a social realm, a cultural practice (Bahun and Petric 2020), and a space of 'being with becoming' (Mitzen 2018, 1373). Home can function as a place that anchors belonging and identity, but it can also be a space of hierarchy or repression (Lenhard and Samanani 2020). The meaning of home cannot be static; be it the place of origin, destination, or any place where people exist (Gomez and Vannini 2017). In the current era of globalisation, and although there is a growing tension of defining home between its mobile and sedentary aspects (Ralph and Staeheli 2011), migration creates diasporic communities and transmigrants who reside in 'home away from the homeland' (Markowitz and Stefansson 2004). That is to say, the homeland remains the anchor of attachment and connection to culture and identity. Therefore, the migration destinations become the home of a new life post-migration.

The process of home-making is building a physical structure, making a socio-cultural, emotional, and relational space. In the context of transnational migration, journeys of movement do not entail a simple loss of home. Instead, the home search comprises a specific relationship with the place, which entails 'a tentative attribution' of a sense of security, familiarity, and control to a particular place (Bocagni 2016). Post-migration, the reconstitution of the feeling of home and belonging are embodied, situated and relational (Cain et al. 2015). This process comes either through isolation in the new milieu or embeddedness in both; the homeland through preserving transnational ties (Vertovec 2009; Ndukwe 2017) and the host-

place through translocal activities (McGarrigle and Ascensão 2018; Allard and Caidi 2018; Kuiper 2020; Daskalaki et al. 2016). The process of embeddedness in the host-place, as an essential step towards home-making, is closely related to the concept of translocalism.

Translocalism is a 'mode of multiple emplacements or situatedness' (Smith 2011 181). It moves without diluting the importance of and association with the place (Phillips and Robinson 2015). The idea of translocality seeks to understand the tension that arises between 'mobility and locality', precisely, the social production of places through assemblages of flows, movements, and local practices (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). Mobility can make a different place or the 'elsewhere' as a part of 'home' through the re-territorialisation of the locality. However, the translocal place-making does not necessarily mean de-territorialisation of culture (McKay 2006). Translocality situates the experiences of migrants within or across specific 'locales' without restricting them to the territorial boundedness of the nation-state (Brickell and Datta 2011). Translocalism serves as a definition of the relational connections that migrants build with the different localities. To feel at home, regular activities in public spaces are essential in developing a sense of belonging at the local scale (Rishbeth and Powell 2013). Therefore, migrants engage in 'cosmopolitan sociability' and invest in 'emotional labour' to construct novel relationships, generate a sense of comfort, sense of home (Wang 2016), learn the host/majority language, and socialisation (Paradiso 2019). For Tuvaluans in New Zealand, navigating and understanding the host-place are vital for continuity and home-making while simultaneously retaining relational and transnational ties with the homeland.

Tuvalu: migration and culture of connection facing climate change

Migration throughout the Pacific, to neighbouring islands or other countries, has been historical and cultural practice for Tuvaluans² and Pacific islanders (Simati 2009). Pacific islands are intertwined with the ocean and land, and this island-ocean duality constitutes the island identity (Havea 2010). For Tuvaluans, roaming the open oceans and exploring near and distant territories is a constituent element of the Tuvaluan and Oceanic island identity. Migration, identity, and cultural sustainability are manifested in a pattern of travelling and dwelling, which has always been part of the Pacific identity and lifestyle. The islands are, in this sense, the central point for the movement, return, identity, and nationhood (Carter 2014). Therefore, connection, openness to the broader world and embracement of different localities either within or outside the island's sphere are characteristics of the Tuvaluan culture of exploration, flexibility, and openness.

Nevertheless, in the current age of globalisation and the ever-changing geopolitical, economic, and environmental map of the world, Tuvaluans struggle to secure a sustainable and continuing life in Tuvalu. For Tuvaluan islanders today, environmental pressures place heavy burdens on the population. Likewise, the growth of the population increases the socio-economic and

² Although the island nation of Tuvalu is under climate change pressures such as sea level, there is no climate change/environmental migration scheme or category through which Tuvaluan islanders can migrate. Tuvaluans can migrate through other schemes such as overseas employment or family reunion (Malua 2012; Shen and Binns 2012). Likewise, in many cases, climate change is not the main migration imperative. Namely, it is often a contributing factor alongside other factors such as the search of better life opportunities, education, and employment prospects.

environmental pressure on the islands, such as the increasing demand for employment, access to land and resources, and the inevitable rise in the amount of waste. These pressures challenge Tuvalu's carrying capacity (Cocks and Foran 1995) to support the population growth, demand for vital resources and life opportunities. Furthermore, climate change poses a significant threat to the ontological security of Tuvaluans, such as sea-level rise, flooding, coastal erosion, and salt-water infiltration through the island (Farbotko 2010). These pressures disturb Tuvaluans' livelihood and coexistence with the environment. Thus, migration to economically advanced and environmentally stable countries has become a sustainable and adaptive strategy. For Tuvaluans, New Zealand is a preferable migration destination to seek environmental safety, better opportunities, and life prospects. Nevertheless, despite the proximity to New Zealand geographically, genealogically, and the existence of other Pacific groups in New Zealand, Tuvaluan migrants' journeys do not end by resettlement and establishing a Tuvaluan diasporic enclave. Specifically, they still need to go through different highs and lows to adapt to the new environment, reconfigure and reconstitute a new home to bolster a sense of belonging, security, and continuity.

Methodology and data analysis

The data used in this article come from forty conversations with Tuvaluan migrants in New Zealand. The *Talanoa* approach has inspired the style of the conversation. *Talanoa* is a traditional Pacific conversation and storytelling practice (Havea, 2018). It is used across different Pacific islands and native languages in Oceania, which refers to storytelling (memories, stories, and longings), and conversation (Havea 2010). *Talanoa* is an in-depth and interactive conversational practice and negotiation of meaning, self, identity, memories, emotions, and events. *Talanoa* approach is a valuable tool to interact with Tuvaluans to unravel and unpack their intricate stories of migration and home-making, emotions and thoughts. *Talanoa* is mostly a deep and long conversational interaction that takes the interlocutors to the deep layers of their stories and emotions. Tuvaluan migrants, unlike their relaxed island lifestyle in Tuvalu, need to adjust to the rapid pace of life in New Zealand, which reduces their time and availability. Therefore, due to the participants' time and availability constraints, the *Talanoa* conversations did not enjoy the full in-depth nature of the *Talanoa* approach. To respect the participants' time, guiding questions that addressed migration, home, and home-making themes have been designed to allow the participants to express their ideas and talk about their stories and emotions. Simultaneously, we have engaged in conversations, asking further questions, reflecting, and sharing similar and different experiences and perspectives, depending on the participants' time, availability and how much they wanted to share. The conversations have been analysed inductively, allowing new themes to emerge throughout the analysis process.

Reflective account on positionality and access to the Tuvaluan community in New Zealand

Before discussing the research themes, I must reflect on my positionality as a researcher and my relationship with the research participants. I have decided to research migration from Tuvalu due to an initial interest in climate change migration. Tuvalu appeared extensively in

the global media and academic research discourses, portrayed as the symbolic figure of climate change migration. Unfortunately, research on Tuvalu and climate change generally focuses on climate change migration and adaptation plans and the portrayal of Tuvalu under various tropes such as the sinking paradise and the canary in the coalmine. Nevertheless, minimal attention has been attended to Tuvaluans' perspectives, emotions, and experiences post-migration. These factors have shaped my academic and research interests in Tuvaluans' home-making experiences in the host-place post-migration, mainly where the chances of return migration are limited due to the environmental and socio-economic constraints in Tuvalu. This article focuses on Tuvaluan migrants in New Zealand due to two reasons. Firstly, it was not possible to focus on Tuvaluan migrants in other countries, such as the neighbouring Pacific island nations, due to time and resources constraints. Secondly, New Zealand hosts a big Tuvaluan community (around 4653 Tuvaluans) (2018 Census External Data Quality Panel, 2020), where most Tuvaluans reside in Auckland.

It has been challenging to initiate contact with Tuvaluans in New Zealand and gain their approval to participate in the research. I have looked for Pacific islanders and Tuvaluan groups and pages on social media and realised that Tuvaluans have a strong Facebook presence. I have posted my research topic, aims and my academic background on Pasifika and Tuvaluan Facebook pages and asked if Tuvaluans are willing to participate in my research. Although the response rate has been slow, I successfully managed to have a few Tuvaluans who accepted to participate in Skype conversations. These participants have been crucial to the study; they have helped me reach the wider Tuvaluan population in New Zealand. One of the early participants, who goes by the nickname Foa in this research, suggested hosting me in her house in Auckland to carry out the rest of the data collection. Thanks to Foa and her family, I have developed a close friendship with many Tuvaluans in New Zealand. I have felt a deep connection to the Tuvaluan culture and community despite being an ethnic outsider, thanks to their hospitality and eagerness to teach me about their culture and experiences of home-making post-migration.

Nevertheless, my research has not been immune to various challenges due to explicit socio-cultural differences, specifically, lacking sufficient language skills in Tuvaluan, questioning my personal and academic background's suitability to research such a topic. Furthermore, these differences have ethically and culturally burdened me; to be a good representative of my personal and academic background and respectful of the Tuvaluan culture, my host family, and the Tuvaluan community. Thus, I still need to learn more about Tuvaluans and their migration experiences, presenting the research findings with caution and further reflexivity.

Themes: home-making experience and connection to the host-place

Place acceptance and adaptation: Part of the home-making process post-migration involves place embracement and adaptation, meaning building familiarity with the new environment. This process develops through the need to accelerate an understanding of the system. *GB* is a fifty-year-old Tuvaluan man who obtained his BSc from New Zealand before returning to Tuvalu to work for the Tuvaluan government. After several years in Tuvalu, he decided to migrate to New Zealand, where he lived for two years. *GB* stressed the importance of understanding the people and the place. He states:

I live for two years and I studied here, so I know the place, as long you know the place and you know what to do, like you know how to go around and how to live, like familiarity with the place and people and we have to adapt to the system. I call it home as I call Tuvalu home. When you adapt to the system, everything is fine.³

According to *GB*, life becomes easier when Tuvaluans adapt to the new place and abide by its rules. *Queen of Tuvalu*, a fifty-five-year-old Tuvaluan woman, has been living in New Zealand for thirty years, said:

Adapting myself very quickly to different systems, surroundings, environments around you. And you just pick it up and just run with it and learn. You just have to adapt yourself very quickly to make sure that you understand the system, and not just for you and your family, but for the people around you as well who are new migrants, like new Tuvaluans, because we came here earlier than some of the people. So because we started to understand the system and things-- so we were able to help the newcomers too.

Place familiarity and adaptation illustrate how Tuvaluans move towards absorbing the environment and its socio-cultural geometry through observation, interaction and learning the necessary skills and information to survive. Intercultural openness with the various ethnic groups, especially the other *Pasifika*⁴ groups due to cultural proximity, is part of establishing a sense of home and mastery of the environment. Interestingly, sharing genealogical and cultural similarities with the *Maori* indigenous of New Zealand and other *Pasifika* groups is relatively similar to being in Tuvalu. *Dave*, a 43-year-old Tuvaluan man, has lived in New Zealand for ten years and finds sharing New Zealand with other Polynesian and *Pasifika* ethnicities not different from being in Tuvalu. He said:

In New Zealand, it is still Polynesian so no difference, compared to another places, we still part of Polynesian and the *Maori*, and the presence of the Europeans do not change the perception of the place. Moving here is foreign in a way; it is more westernised compared to where I am from but still does not change my perception. Belonging, even the language is similar and *Maori*, not feeling in a different place.

Likewise, intercultural interaction with non-*Pasifika* people is essential for Tuvaluans to internalise new knowledge and expand their socio-cultural schemata. Nevertheless, this process sometimes becomes overwhelming and challenging as it presents new worldviews. *Blue Sky*, a 48-year-old Tuvaluan woman who has been living in New Zealand for five years with her family, stated that adaptation was a necessary condition for continuity and survival. She said,

We needed to adapt with the food and also the multicultural environment.

³ Note: the quotes from the conversations have been kept as they have been transcribed from the recorded conversations. No changes or corrections of language mistakes have been made to keep the words of the participants as authentic as possible.

⁴ *Pasifika* as Henning et al. (2014) state is a term that refers to Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian heritage or people who have migrated to or have been born in New Zealand.

For *Blue Sky* adaption to unfamiliar food options and the variegated cultures in New Zealand equate with survival and continuity in the new home. This adaptability and coexistence with different cultures are inevitable and enriching simultaneously. She continues:

New Zealand, to be honest, is multicultural and it is good, especially for us [...] we don't have options, we live together, we share and we respect each other.

Generally, Tuvaluan communities that live in other places accept and embrace the host-place while maintaining a connection to the motherland. This connection results in hybrid or merging identities. As an example, Farbotko et al. (2017) state that Tuvaluan migrants in the Solomon Islands refer to themselves as *Solovalu*; a combination of Tuvalu and Solomon Islands identities. Thus, adapting to the new environment and absorbing its geometry and socio-cultural structures do not detach Tuvaluans from their identity and culture. On the contrary, they retain their values and at the same time, adapt to New Zealand. In other words, they live as Tuvaluans and think like a *Palagi* 'white man' or European (Havea 2018; Zalipour 2019) in a *Palagi* system, New Zealand. In this sense, *Queen of Tuvalu* added:

When I say *Palagi*, I mean white system here that you have to adapt to and everything. You have to think like one most of the time because the whole system is *Palagi*.

This process creates a space of hybridity and negotiation of different identities and values; the Tuvaluan identity and the identity of the host-place. In this regard, *Carol*, a 47-year-old woman who has been living in New Zealand for thirty years ascertained that:

So I am trying to let them [talking about her grandchildren] have part of the Tuvaluan activities, which is good because I can then teach them their identity and who they are, but at the same time, I also teach them to get adjusted to the lifestyle that we have adopted in our second home.

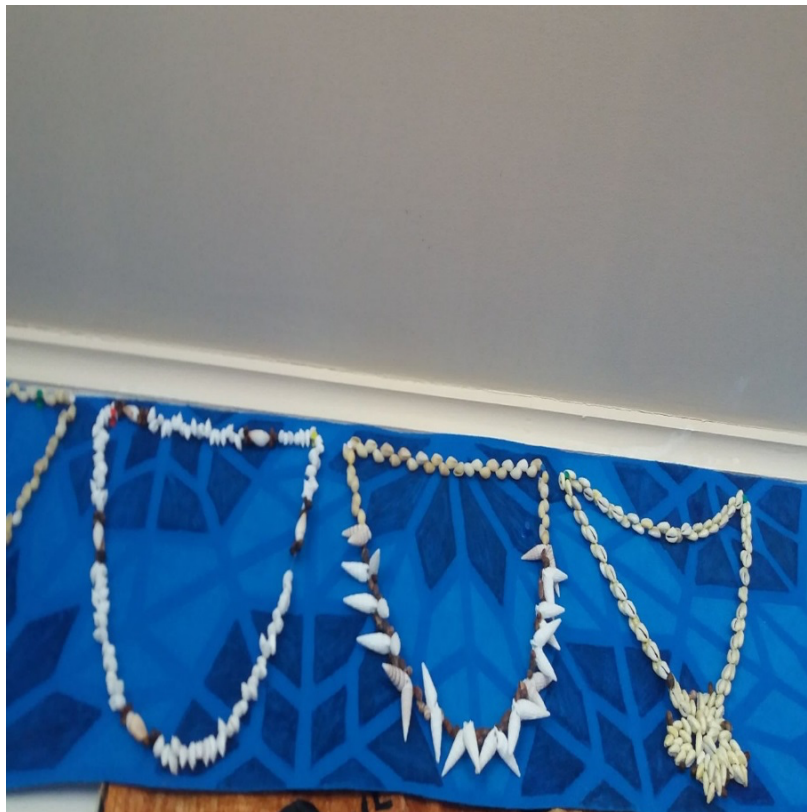
Place acceptance and adaptation, therefore, optimise the sense of stability, security and understanding of the socio-cultural milieu, leading to a gradual sense of belonging and home reconfiguration in the host-place.

Home-making and defining home: Many Tuvaluans settle with immediate or extended families post-migration due to the difficulty of finding a house after their arrival. They also do this to receive further guidance and help from their Tuvaluan families and community. As Tuvaluans become accustomed to their new environment, finding a house becomes a priority for many to achieve independence and experience the new environment in its socio-cultural entirety. By far, most Tuvaluans look for homes to settle based on various criteria to allow easy navigation of the place. Such criteria include proximity to family and the Tuvaluan community, safety of the neighbourhood, proximity to the workplace and schools, and, most importantly, cheap and affordable rent. *Cat*, a twenty-year-old Tuvaluan woman, has been living in New Zealand with her family for ten years. *Cat* stressed the importance of place centrality, which made it easier for her and her family to move around:

This is the only place that is closer to where we all work (referring to where she lives). So it is easier for my parents and my brothers to go daily to work, it is closer to the motorway to go straight to uni and I

used to go to college just a few blocks down the road, so it is easier for me to go to school and closer to hospital for grandma and my mom chose this house coz it is closer to where we need to go to and the places that we need for emergency and everything. And it is also closer to the rest of the Tuvaluan community in West Auckland.

Thus, the house's location is as essential as the house itself. The home-making experience is additionally a process of imbuing the new home with meanings and items from the Tuvaluan culture and personal experiences. This process entails an ongoing attachment to the homeland and a close communal and familial attachment through the preservation of cultural practices and items to reduce the feelings of estrangement and create personalised meanings of home. *Brenda*, a 29-year-old Tuvaluan woman, who has been living in New Zealand for three years, still keeps several traditional Tuvaluan ornaments all around her house. She decorated the living room walls with various Tuvaluan shell necklaces and a small wooden canoe, an essential element in Tuvaluan culture. *Brenda* is also still connected to the Tuvaluan food flavours 'I cook Tuvaluan food,' she said, which connects her to her origins while away. Tuvaluan cultural items and activities add a distinguishable Tuvaluan vibe to their houses in New Zealand.



Traditional Tuvaluan necklaces made of seashells, which Brenda used to decorate the walls of her house in New Zealand.



A small wooden canoe that Brenda keeps in her house in New Zealand.

Additionally, the Tuvaluan community in New Zealand is lively, tight-knit, and active in community events and commemorating important Tuvaluan traditions. *Soma*, a fifty-year-old Tuvaluan man, involves himself with community events at the organisational level to facilitate Tuvaluan community functions and celebrations. He said:

Here I am secretary of small community trust and we are doing all kinds of activities. [...] Wherever you live, you practice your Tuvaluan life over there.

The 'wherever you live' reflects Tuvaluans' proclivity to infuse the new host-place with elements of their culture and retain important cultural practices as a diaspora. However, this process cannot be generalised to all Tuvaluans in New Zealand. Interestingly, a few participants preferred living far from the community due to various reasons, including the preference for a quieter life. *Bankz* is a 28-year-old Tuvaluan woman who has spent her life between Tuvalu and New Zealand but primarily lived in New Zealand for over ten years. She explained:

I am not really into the community stuff. I just do my own. But I reckon I prefer staying on my own and stuff and not like emm going through Tuvalu community stuff, they do a lot of stuff like all about money stuff, the community things they always want money, 'give us that [...] that I don't wanna join them hey. Because I will go bankrupt [laughs]. Coz every community stuff, oh you know you bring stuff, you know to

buy food and stuff or otherwise you have to give money, living over here it is all about money.

Home for *Bankz* and Tuvaluans who think similarly is the preference to stay within the confined realm of the personal space and better management of resources given the high costs of living in New Zealand.

Work hard and thrive: Tuvaluans aspire through migration to chase the greener pastures, work hard to thrive and secure a living in the challenging socio-economic environment of New Zealand. Unlike the lifestyle in Tuvalu, which is relaxed and simple where the land is sufficient to provide a living, New Zealand has a far more challenging environment, especially economically. Therefore, hard work and education are essential for Tuvaluans to prosper and create meaningful existence in New Zealand. This process includes gaining higher qualifications and good jobs to earn a good position in New Zealand. *Ese*, a 26-year-old Tuvaluan woman who works as a lab technician, enjoys being a Tuvaluan and a successful young migrant. She said,

I work as a lab technician in Auckland hospital. I am the first Tuvaluan.

Ese's words reflect pride in her achievement and honouring her origins with her achievement. In this regard, job security is a constituent step towards independence, financial security, and the continuity in their new places; to afford rent and utility bills. *Foa*, a fifty-year-old Tuvaluan woman who has been living in New Zealand for ten years, reveals the degree of struggle and difficulty of maintaining a living in New Zealand where sacrifices and hard work are crucial to survive and continue in the host-place. *Foa* said,

So we have to get our driving license, and everything is all money, you know?

Tuvaluan migrants who go through similar experiences realise the emotional, personal, and material costs of home-making and the highs and lows they have to incur to preserve their continuity in New Zealand. Therefore, hard work is the key to survival and continuity. *Sea child*, a 55-year-old Tuvaluan man, who has been living in New Zealand for twenty years, added,

So we must prioritise our job and education. These are our land now in New Zealand.

The term 'land' here equates with independence, empowerment and security, a pattern similar to life in Tuvalu, where Tuvaluans live on their pieces of land, work them and build houses. Thus, education and job security are the equivalents of 'land' or 'home', an independent haven that is a physical structure imbued with emotional, relational, interpersonal meanings.

Discussion

Post-migration, the host-place turns into a new home or a home-away-from-home. New Zealand hosts Tuvaluans and their cultural and social capital, where building a sense of home is necessary for attaining ontological security and progress. Home, in this sense, transcends beyond fixation within a single location (Ahmed et. 2003). It becomes a condition that nurtures

personal self-fulfilment (Tucker 1994) and a site of freedom and control around which identities are constructed (Dupuis and Thorns 1998). Home-making in the new host-place is a subjective and emotional experience that constitutes relational, transnational ties through the preservation of the Tuvaluan culture and translocal ties through the connection to the host-place, daily routines, and openness to its socio-cultural texture.

Translocally, Tuvaluans in New Zealand interact and engage with the host-place as part of the process of home-making. New Zealand becomes, in this regard, a platform, a new home where Tuvaluans acquire cultural, emotional, and interpersonal connections and consequently a sense of belonging. Place familiarity and adaptation are crucial to understand and absorb the system of the new place to feel part of its socio-cultural texture while retaining their individuality and identity particularities; live as a Tuvaluan and think like a Palagi in a Palagi system. This dual identity adopted by Tuvaluan migrants reflects a culturally intelligent behaviour or cultural intelligence, which is the skill of adaptation to new cultural settings (Earley 2002) and the capacity to function effectively in culturally diverse settings (Ang and Dyne 2015). Cultural intelligence is a social learning process that helps to disable the 'cultural cruise control'; the effect of a person's built-in cultural assumptions on perceptions and judgment and teaches careful, mindful, and creative thinking about cues in cross-cultural situations (Thomas 2010). In Addition, openness to the new milieu and the intercultural interaction with the varying ethnic groups in New Zealand build an understanding of the system, which is crucial to mastering the socio-cultural geometry of the host-place. Nevertheless, adaptation and openness come often as inevitable processes of coexisting with a system that embeds ethnically and culturally different groups, different laws, and different worldviews.

Adaptation and intercultural interaction come at the macro level of home-making and translocal connection to the outside setting of the host-place. Tuvaluans strive to attribute a sense of security, familiarity, and control to a specific locus at the micro and individual levels. For Tuvaluans, home-making post-migration begins with living within the community cocoon to the gradual independence when place familiarity is achieved. This living arrangement is a pivotal step in alleviating the apprehension of being in a new environment and building familiarity with and immersion in the new place. This immersion is consolidated further by choosing one's home, depending on criteria and preferences that serve their needs and capacities. In a similar vein, preservation of cultural and communal ties and being in a chosen house that is personalised with cultural and personal items consolidates the sense of independence, empowerment, and security and builds a sense of domesticity. Possessing cherished items stimulates positive emotions and increases a sense of home and domesticity (Falk et al. 2012; Klaassens and Meijering 2015). They incite feelings of spatial proximity that reflect family ties (Rose 2004), belonging, and closeness (Walsh 2006). Migration, in this sense, is a process of home reproduction, in which home-making is a process of attributing meanings and emotional connection to a particular place; to be domesticised'. This process is emotionally and morally laden, based both on interpersonal relationships to be negotiated and places and material items to which migrants attribute specific meanings (Bocagni 2014). Equally, job security and hard work are critical success factors in the new host-place. Success is not a mere luxury to enjoy the fruitful outcome of being in a developed country such as New Zealand. For Tuvaluans, success is pivotal to their existence, constancy, and embeddedness in

the host society. The ultimate goal of Tuvaluans' migration journeys is to chase greener pastures and environmental security. Life in a foreign country could be full of challenges and novelties that require sacrifices, robust resilience and hard work to master the spatial and socio-cultural geometry of the new place. The high costs of living and the rapid pace of life in New Zealand require that Tuvaluans challenge their comfort zone and leave their island relaxed lifestyle to adopt a lifestyle of hard work and aspiration for higher achievements.

In sum, a designated place, home, and roots are a fundamental human need (Cresswell 2006) and being a human is knowing one's place in the world (Relph 1976). The journey of home-making post-migration is seeking and making a special place to call home post-migration. For Tuvaluans, home-making in New Zealand is a journey of connection, independence, reconstruction of personal and spatial meanings of home, and new identities and life goals. The new home does not substitute the emotional and unique value of the homeland, but it becomes the host cocoon of hopes, culture, and future. Thus, home is not a static physical and material locus for migrants' post-migration; it is an interactive entity imbued with emotional, relational, and interpersonal meanings.

Conclusion

This article focuses on Tuvaluans' home-making experiences. Forty Tuvaluan migrants in New Zealand have participated in conversations following the *Talanoa* approach, the Pacific island practice of conversation and storytelling. Participants narrated varying emotionally, personally, and culturally intricate stories and experiences of migration and home-making. Tuvaluans, as *Pasifika* islanders, are people of the sea. They inhabit their islands, their canoes, and the sea. These entities constitute their island identity. However, given the socio-economic and environmental pressures in Tuvalu, Tuvaluans and their cultural practices as sea people are under threat of discontinuity. Migration, therefore, to metropolitan and developed countries has become a sustainable strategy for adaptation and continuity. As migrants in New Zealand, they strive to expand their roots and reconfigure the sense and meaning of home in an environmentally and culturally different place. For Tuvaluan migrants, the journey of home-making and reconstitution of the meaning of home is unique as it reflects the importance of establishing home and safeguarding its constancy. The return to the homeland, Tuvalu, may not be possible for many Tuvaluans because of the varying environmental and socio-economic pressures. Tuvalu may not withstand the rising sea for future Tuvaluan generations in the worst-case scenario. In sum, the experience of home-making is an amalgamation of translocal and transnational activities in which the meaning of home extends beyond its material structure to a structure of connection, empowerment, and security.

Biography:

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