

- 104 *Canberra Times*, 20 January 1933.  
 105 *Argus*, 16 September 1932.  
 106 Takaishi, *Swimming in Japan*; T. Saito, 'How we coach swimmers in Japan', *The Filipino Athlete*, 1 February 1941, p. 7.

## Pasifika in Australian Rugby:

### EMANANT CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

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A socio-cultural phenomenon is occurring in both codes of Rugby football in Australia; indeed it is taking place in all the major Rugby-playing countries around the world. It is expanding in such an irresistible way and at such speed that it has generated a set of accompanying social, cultural and economic issues in host countries. This phenomenon is the ever growing presence and impact of migrant Rugby players from Pacific Island nations and/or those with a Pacific Island heritage. Pasifika Rugby players are globally renowned for their ability, flair and power, as are the national teams of Fiji, Tonga and Manu Samoa. The Australian national side the Wallabies, New Zealand's All Blacks, the Super 14 teams in Australia and New Zealand (NZ), the National Rugby League (NRL)<sup>1</sup> and numerous other elite level teams around the world are replete with players of Pasifika heritage.

Pasifika players are migrating to core Rugby-playing nations that have large developed economies and are markets for highly paid sporting talent. In the post-1995 professional era of Union and the concomitant 'Super

League' war, Pasifika players have become central to the financial success of the game. Pasifika players have become key units of production in this specific dimension of the global sports labour market.<sup>2</sup> This trend has seen immutable changes to Rugby football in both of the key host nations — Australia and New Zealand — and within the various Pacific Island nations<sup>3</sup> that supply the emigrant players. This paper describes and analyses theoretically (using existing models of sport and general migration) a number of the emanant social, cultural and economic issues that have emerged from the uptake of Pasifika sporting migrants, mainly in the context of Australian Rugby union. Data is drawn from the literature and interviews with managers of Rugby organisations.<sup>4</sup>

Given the focus of this study it ought to be openly acknowledged that the authors are themselves ex-Rugby-playing migrants to Australia. Both came for work opportunities. One author played for New South Wales and Queensland at the state level and for the Australian national Rugby union team the Wallabies; the other was retired as a Rugby union player when he arrived. Thus, both authors have migrant experiences based on economic opportunities and have Rugby union football as their sport of interest.

This is, however, where the similarity ends. Both authors are white, Caucasian, university-educated academics. Both migrated from developed countries (England and Canada), which normally have viable economic conditions. When the authors arrived in Australia we were each able to develop wide social networks through work and sport. Neither author felt compelled to seek out compatriots from our country of origin in order to feel settled in a new country. The authors' respective cultural backgrounds were highly amenable to Australian life, although not directly similar. Neither author conceived of themselves as an 'Other'; in fact both soon identified with and subscribed to the social and sporting culture and ethos of their new home. There were, naturally enough, points of departure, particularly with respect to technical aspects of both the play and coaching methods in Australian rugby, and of structural elements of club rugby in this country. However, both of the authors immediately became immersed in the Australian Rugby sub-culture. This is, we argue, a different scenario for the vast majority of Rugby-playing émigrés from Pacific Island countries, for which the relocation process is in many ways much different.

The purpose here is to identify the phenomenon of Rugby-playing migration to Australia (mentioning some global influences in this regard) and the attendant issues faced by these émigrés, though without speaking of or identifying them as 'Other'.<sup>5</sup> The authors are cognisant of their racial, cultural and institutional location in this study but wish to conduct an investigation without being seen, in neo-colonial terms, as encumbered by paternalistic assumptions.

The Pasifika sport migrant process in the Australian context includes direct migration from the Pacific Islands as well Pasifika who initially settled in NZ and then moved to Australia as NZ citizens. Many who have moved to Australia look to professional Rugby as being a very lucrative and, for some, their only way of social and financial advancement. The process now extends to established Pasifika Rugby union and League players based in the semi-peripheral centres in Australia and New Zealand migrating (re-locating may be a more appropriate description) to British, Irish and European Rugby union and League and to Japanese Rugby union clubs. These relocations are encouraged by contracts that far-outstrip those on offer in either Rugby code in Australia or New Zealand. A French newspaper report noted this difference:

Here again they typically receive far more lucrative salary and ex-Rugby employment packages than they ever would receive 'down under'. As French rugby coach Franck Boivert, a long-time Fiji resident, reflected: For them, also the advantages are real: they are quite well paid, especially those playing in the top divisions. It can range between five to twenty thousand euros (10 to 40,000 Fiji dollars) per month'. It's much better than what they would get in Australia or in New Zealand. And even in Britain, where salaries are also quite high, the difference is that in France, insurance and other costs are taken care of by the club.<sup>6</sup>

Much is made of the switch of established Pasifika internationals who take up professional rugby contracts in Europe or Japan. Examples are many, but the post-international retirement move to the Kubota Club in Japan by former Wallabies No. 8 and vice-captain Toutai Kefu, as well as the much publicised move to the Toulon Rugby Union Club in France of the Sydney-based, New Zealand international Rugby league representative Sonny Bill Williams, are significant and indicative examples. Many other lesser known and unheralded Union and League players have migrated from Australia to European Rugby clubs and plied their 'trade' in the lower divisions in Britain, France and Italy.

One of the first references to the emergence of a growing Pasifika presence in Australasian Rugby came from sport journalist Spiro Zavos in the 1980s when he wrote an article called 'The Browning of the All-Blacks'. In 2007 he wrote a cloned article on this topic:

In 1987 I wrote an article called 'The Browning Of The All Blacks' in which I predicted that by the Year 2000 Polynesian players would dominate the selections in the Aotearoa/New Zealand national side. The All Blacks run-on side against France on Saturday has 9 players with a Polynesian background, 6 backs and 3 forwards. The Wallaby side against Wales has four players with a Polynesian background.

By the time of the 2015 Rugby World Cup, the fearless prediction can be made that the Wallabies will be dominated by players of Polynesian background, as the All Blacks are now. Digby Ioane's selection, therefore, represents a decisive moment in the Browning of the Wallabies.<sup>7</sup>

Though both codes of Australian Rugby football have through their history had players of both Pasifika and Aboriginal heritage in their ranks, it is now the norm for clubs and provinces to have several Pasifika players in their teams. For example: in 2008 the Australian Wallabies had eight, in 2009 the Queensland Reds had 12, the Western Force eight, NSW Waratahs seven and the ACT Brumbies 12 Pasifika players in their respective squads (approximately 33 per cent).<sup>8</sup> Cadigan suggests that in 2008, of the 15 Australian NRL clubs, 22.5 per cent had a Pasifika heritage, of which just over half (46 of the 86) were born in the New Zealand or the Pacific Islands.<sup>9</sup> In 2008 an official ARL survey of 1434 NRL registered players showed that 35 per cent had Maori and/or Pasifika heritages.<sup>10 11</sup> An even more significant statistic is that 75 per cent of the players in New South Wales (NSW) 2008 junior Rugby league representative teams had Pasifika backgrounds, while 52 per cent of the NSWRL under-18 academy squad were Pasifikas.<sup>12</sup>

While press commentary points to problematic social and legal issues<sup>13</sup> surrounding the Pasifika presence in Australian Rugby, little discussion exists in the academic literature.<sup>14</sup> Paul Bergin's discussion of Australian Maori, their cultural integrity, and the tensions that emerge from their involvement in sport was a welcome anthropological consideration of Pasifika and sport in Australia.<sup>15</sup> The authors would like to recognize Sean Brawley, who wrote a chapter entitled 'The Pacific Islander Community' that briefly describes some of the themes explored here in terms of Rugby.<sup>16</sup> Brawley's chapter is an important addition to that literature, but has a narrower theoretical and empirical focus than this article. The growing presence and impact of Pasifika in Australian Rugby and the associated emanant socio-cultural and economic issue warrants further academic interest.

### The Phenomenon of Sport Migration

To date much of the published research looking at sport migration has focussed on the 'push-pull' structural factors that precipitate it. A debate is currently emerging on the way in which sport migration is studied, with researchers such as Joe Maguire, John Bale and John Sugden predominantly adopting a structuralist argument that has been critiqued by emergent scholars such as Thomas Carter.<sup>17</sup> Carter's argument is that the 'push-pull' structural factors of global sport migration miss many factors of agency, especially family. Nonetheless, the major theoretical model of sport migration and globalisation used by many authors is that of Arun Appadurai, which requires

brief comment. Appadurai identified five dimensions of cultural flows that permit us to view the same phenomenon from different perspectives within a particular context. He labelled these flows as: *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes* and *ideoscapes*. These perspectives allow researchers to speak of the 'fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics' through these dimensions of global cultural flows.<sup>18</sup> As Appadurai notes:

these terms with the common suffix 'scape' also indicate that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather, they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political structuredness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as subnational groupings and movements ... and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighbourhoods, and families. Indeed, the individual actor is the last locus of this perspectival set of landscapes, for these landscapes are eventually navigated by agents who both experience and constitute larger formations, in part from their own sense of what these landscapes offer.<sup>19</sup>

Here the ability to see different socio-cultural, economic, diasporic, transnational and global outcomes from the neo-liberalist agenda and migration patterns is important.

According to Bird, 'an essential mediating factor in the speed and development of these flows within the scapes is their ability to move through time, place and space. Geography, or "landscapes", has a vital mediating influence on the global cultural flows described by Appadurai'.<sup>20</sup> In his analysis of the AFL in Queensland, Bird added that 'the theory of Bale (1989) assists in the addition of landscapes to the other scapes and a theoretical model to encompass the social totality of the sport's history'.<sup>21</sup> As the nations of Manu Samoa, Tonga and Fiji are islands with limited resources, space (especially with their land under threat from rising seas attributed to global warming) and opportunities, they are prime examples. Therefore, these countries of origin, by their very landscapes, encourage migration; that is, strong structural 'push' factors exist.

In the present paper, however, there is a prime focus on *ethnoscapes*, *financescapes* and *ideoscapes* as being most pertinent for the purposes of the study; although *technoscapes* and *mediascapes* are acknowledged as precursors of the phenomenon under scrutiny.

### Ethnoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes

The topic of migration relates to the first and base 'scape' of Appadurai's work; that is, *ethnoscapes*. It is fundamental to this work as we seek to understand Pasifika Rugby migration. Appadurai defines *ethnoscapes* as the

'landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live' and that migration can 'warp the stabilities [of] relatively stable communities and networks of kinship, friendship, work, and leisure'.<sup>22</sup> Some of the components of ethnoscapes are population sizes, shifts in population, race, class and gender; all of which are salient to Pasifika Rugby players in Australia and elsewhere in the world and which are strong structural 'pull' factors common to all migrant groups. Thus migration involves both a 'push and pull' factor, which include those noted above in Carter's critique.

The push and pull thesis argues that metropolises or centres draw upon their various hinterlands/peripheries for capitalist activities, especially for land, labour and financial elements necessary for capitalism to operate and expand. While features of the out-bound country add to push factors, the economic strength, lifestyles and culture of the in-bound countries add to the pull factors. In this case, the semi-periphery of Australia is both an in-bound and a 'weigh station' for countries higher up the economic food chain. Tonga, Fiji and Manu Samoa are dependent, third world countries with minor economic activity, small markets, large amounts of national debt and large out migration. In other words, there are huge push factors. Generally speaking, the semi-peripheries of Australia and New Zealand provide attractive places to live and better lifestyles, but more so markets for skilled and professional labour; even if they are weigh stations for the larger economies of the core, northern hemisphere markets.<sup>23</sup> Again, these countries have immensely strong pull factors for talented Pasifika players.

Carter's argument, on the other hand, points to the general lack of agency within the structural analyses noted above. This gap in understanding of migrants is important in the present analysis.<sup>24</sup> This discussion largely takes place in terms of the social and cultural factors particular to Pasifika peoples. Importantly, Carter notes the need for an ethnographic study of who athletes are as persons, what comprises their life circumstances, and what the nature of their direct social relations are. He especially notes the athletes' families: 'the concern for family welfare hints at the complexity of transnational migration' and 'the roles family plays in transnational migration'.<sup>25</sup> All involve personal ideological structures of Pasifika.

### Migration patterns

In the 1980s several thousand Samoans, who had to leave New Zealand when the national government revoked its open door policy retrospectively, migrated to Australia. More recently, as ballots and quotas have been imposed, they look to migrate directly to Australia. Many Maori, Cooks, Nueians, as well as Samoan, Tongan and Fijians (both native and Indo-Fijians) who had previously migrated (or were born in New Zealand) have been able to freely migrate to Australia by virtue of the open-door policy

between the two countries. It was through this conduit that a significant proportion of Pasifika originally migrated to Australia. In terms of actual in-bound migration from the Pacific Islands to Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in its census data, only show Fiji as a separate line item.<sup>26</sup> Neither Manu Samoa nor Tonga contributes enough migrants on their own to be separated out. In some cases migrants from these countries pass through New Zealand, but overall the population scales do not exist. In terms of out-bound migration Fiji's rate is -2.62/1,000 of population (2008 — 931,714 est.). Tonga's rate was not available (population 2008 — 119,009 est.) and Manu Samoa's was -9.14/1,000 of population (2008 — 271,083).<sup>27</sup>

The discussion to this point lays a base for the way in which the research for this study was pursued. While the structural basis of Pasifika migration is multifaceted, the agency of these peoples cannot be ignored in understanding their movement to semi-periphery countries and to core countries. The following arguments and data provide a political economy perspective into this migration.

### The Key: 'Push or Pull' Factor — Economics?

What has been the impact of the Rugby-playing Diaspora and of course all migrants on the game in the Islands themselves? This is a larger social and economic issue that surrounds all discussions of migration—the brain or 'brawn' drain from peripheral countries to the centre. Because Rugby is so significant in and for the lives of Pasifika males and because a professional Rugby pathway has huge economic implications, both the out-bound and in-bound Rugby sport structures rely on this connection.

Victoria Lockwood made this point in two salient ways. She noted that transnationalism among Pasifikas, notably Tongans and Samoans, often differs from the transnationalism of other migrants around the world in several key ways. First, the extensive and tightly held kin relationships of Pasifikas appear to foster tenacious and long-enduring transnational kin networks and ties to home to an extent not found among other transnational groups.<sup>28</sup>

The second concerns remittances; that is, the sending of money home to support not only one's own direct family, but also extended transnational kin networks. For the countries under discussion here these remittances are an important element of their GNP. The structural/cultural dialectic operating here has been a feature of Pasifika migrants with Tonga and Samoa's economies being particularly heavily dependent on remittances. As shown in Table 1 below, the amounts of the remittances are considerable, with the host country often highly dependent for this financial flow, not only from athletes and their direct family members who also 'work' in their new homes but from all migrating professionals (NB: the top number is US dollars [millions], the parenthetical one being the percentage of that country's total GNP).<sup>29</sup>

Table One: Pacific Island Countries: Indicators of Remittances, 1997–2005<sup>30</sup>

Country	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Fiji	41.4 (2.0)	32.3 (2.0)	25.3 (1.4)	43.9 (2.7)	82.5 (5.0)	97.2 (5.4)	122.6 (5.5)	171.6 (6.6)	183.9 (6.6)
Samoa	39.4 (16.8)	37.3 (16.9)	42.6 (18.5)	43.2 (18.5)	50.6 (20.4)	57.7 (20.2)	74.1 (21.3)	97.7 (24.5)	106.2 (25.5)
Tonga	38.8 (23.2)	33.9 (21.9)	40.4 (25.5)	45.9 (32.4)	52.9 (37.1)	58.7 (36.9)	79.6 (43.7)	91.6 (42.7)	89.9 (39.3)

Source: Christopher Browne and Aiko Mineshima, *IMF Working Paper — Remittances in the Pacific Region*, IMF, 2007, p. 12.

The direct economic contribution that Pasifika Rugby migration makes to these countries is not known. Nor, again, is it only to Australia and New Zealand that Pasifika Rugby players migrate. More and more squads of Japanese, European and United Kingdom clubs are becoming replete with Pasifika Rugby players (and with the much larger salaries, the greater the remittances made). As Carter noted, globalisation has many meanings but the key underlying feature is the 'highly specific processes of capitalist penetration into the few remaining spaces it had yet to reach'<sup>31</sup>; or reach more deeply, which is behind the increased level of the migration of Pasifika Rugby players as they enter global labour markets.

Aihwa Ong in her book *Flexible Citizenship: the Cultural Logics of Transnationality* expounds on Appadurai's scapes. In one of her ruminations Ong wrote:

In their quest to accumulate capital and social prestige in the global arena, subjects emphasize, and are regulated by, practices favouring flexibility, mobility, and repositioning in relation to markets, governments, and cultural regimes. These logics and practices are produced within particular structures of meaning about family, gender, nationality, class mobility, and social power.<sup>32</sup>

The topic of transnationality has long been an issue in Rugby. Many countries, such as New Zealand and Australia, are keen to have Pasifika players tied to the national programs by playing a single game for one of the several national or age-group national teams.<sup>33</sup> This restricts a Pasifika player from being able to return to his home country's team should he not make the Wallabies, All-Blacks or some other national team under the International Rugby Board's (IRB) dictates. Along with the ignoring of the IRB's Regulation 9,<sup>34</sup> where clubs have to make players available for international competitions and preparations, Pacific Island countries see their representative playing ranks reduced and the generational development of their playing stock retarded with so many top players moving overseas. A major question not

asked in this situation, one that concerns the individual players involved, is what does this do to or for their sense of national identity? Who are they? Have they moved to some indeterminate or hybrid nationality?

The concept of transnationality is a widely discussed element of globalisation. William Robinson, in his treatise *A Theory of Global Capitalism: Production, Class, and State in a Transnational World*, has asked whether or not 'the changes associated with globalization [are] helpful for most people in the world or are they harmful?'<sup>35</sup> From the above, and echoed in Darby and others' work it can be posited as yes at the collective level, but perhaps not at the individual level. Regardless, it seems pertinent to recall Marx's notion of political economy, in that out of particular economic configurations arise cultural superstructures. Here it needs to be asked how current globalised conditions affect the cultures of Pasifika, especially under global migration. Ong has argued that this flexible citizenship unfolds in terms of the logics of family, class, gender as well in this question. It is, however, at the collective level that many issues arise around sport migration. The paper now turns to these.

### Other Key 'Push or Pull' Factors — Social, Cultural, Sporting?

Horsley and Walker have made the point that 'Pasifika Australians (Tongans and Samoans) carry, conserve and reproduce the cultural constructs of the traditional society, albeit with modifications necessitated by the Australian context'.<sup>36</sup> Thus, it is imperative to first identify key social elements of the lives of Pasifika. First, they are highly religious — most often Christian. Second, these nations have firmly structured and fundamentally strong family orientations, identified and based on the extended family, which is known as *aiga*<sup>37</sup> (and used here). Finally, these societies are highly patriarchal. To interpret the Pasifika and Rugby migrants demands an understanding of these elements and how they enhance or detract from their Australian experience.<sup>38</sup> That is, what are the strengths these key social elements reproduce and what are the major issues arising from their basic social premises?

While a person's religion is an individual proclivity, in Pasifika nations it is a fundamental focus for community life. Western religious proselytising remains a strong feature of life in these nations. In Australia the power of the church over émigré Pasifikas remains. This is fundamental to the formation of Pasifika Diasporas; that is, in communities formed around nationality, a historical form of community formation common to many émigré groups. This community formation also points to issues that stem from Pasifika life in Australia and the topic of religion, linked obviously with family, and which emerged regularly in our interviews conducted with major administrative and coaching figures in Rugby. Pasifika are, in general, very likely to be closely engaged in church life and the actual religions range from Roman

Catholicism to Seventh Day Adventist. Each has its own constraints and impacts on the Rugby activity of all: players, supporters, family and would-be officials or coaches.

When asked if he thought that representative coaches were aware how entrenched in the lives of Pasifika players, BG, a senior Australian Rugby union manager, said, 'Doubt it! Australia is not a terribly religious country anyway. Church is very high on their list, not one coaching "problem" looks at the spiritual side'.<sup>39</sup> The complexity of the interface between religious practices embedded in the cultural milieu of the various communities that make up Australian Pasifika was further enunciated in a discussion with TD, Director of Rugby at the Greenfields Rugby Club in Brisbane.<sup>40</sup> TD's comments about his players and, particularly those striving for 'a contract' or that are professional players, implicitly reflect upon the growing levels of intergenerational tensions and social dissonance,<sup>41</sup> and religious observance is central to this. 'Religion' as he said, 'is an issue, though current generations are not seven day a week involved ... it's very much a Sabbath issue'.<sup>42</sup>

As a person involved in developing elite Rugby players TD expressed concern over players not being available to play because of Sabbath-day adherence: 'It's still very important, issues with Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists, some will never play Grade (top level of club Rugby) Rugby ... you just cannot put in the effort'.<sup>43</sup> This point was further emphasized by his club not doing any outreach coaching work in the local Adventist schools: 'they play in juniors but they will never play grade going forward. So unless you break them from their religion, I know it's very callous....but why should we put in the effort? *There's no return*'.<sup>44</sup> Sabbath day competitions therefore still raise dilemmas for Pasifika players. A further concern for young Pasifikas who are seeking or have professional football contracts is that they are not only expected to support their wider extended family, locally and in the Islands, they are also required to contribute to their family's tithe at their church — often at significant levels.

If a young Pasifika male has set his sights on becoming a professional Rugby player, with its lure of social status and economic independence, there are several pathways, including participation in school Rugby programs; on a scholarship at a private school; in a development club program (such as the Greenfields Rugby club's in Brisbane); in school or club representative squads or teams; or by being identified by state, region or national programs; and a 'scholarship' in either a State or the National academy (such as the Queensland Academy of Sport, the NSW Institute of Sport, or the Australian Institute of Sport.) Recognition by a State premiership club and ultimately a contract with a Super 14 franchise in Australia is highly desired and sought after. This cycle is not exclusive to Rugby Union, of course, and even if a player starts on the Union path it does not mean he will continue on it; many switch to League if

they do not make it in Rugby union and some start on a League pathway in the first instance. TD considers that the NRL development program is much more suitable for most of the young Pasifika rugby players who find themselves in professional Rugby squads or Academy programs, especially in regard to the vocational training aspects that are part of the NRL U/20 competition.<sup>45</sup> For aspirational working class, and particularly migrant footballers, there is also often parental and family pressure to obtain a contract to be able to help support their family financially. The expectations placed upon young Pasifika aspirants can therefore be very intense as they are striving not just personally, but for the economic welfare of an extended family.

Since the professionalisation of Rugby union football in 1995 the code has acquired the potential for being a pathway for appropriately talented young Pasifika men to gain the future security and prosperity of their *agia*. Prior to its professionalisation, Rugby union football had long been a means by which individuals could advance socially, particularly in regard to employment and educationally through favoured entry and scholarships to schools and universities and colleges of Advanced Education.

Pasifika *agia* social capital gained by via International or State representative Rugby union representation remains significant. And it is not new: even in the amateur era it was a means of gaining employment with a 'supporter' or sponsor. It is, however, in today's professional era that such 'stars' are now highly marketable. For talented, working class Pasifika youth, if they are able to optimise the potential opportunities their Rugby ability and physical prowess, then they may be able to advance *and* also contribute to their 'entire' family. Thus, as the talented young player progresses along the pathway to a 'contract', so the wider hopes and expectations of their families grow. Upon gaining, in the first instance, school sporting scholarships, then possibly a place in a club or state Rugby academy and finally a professional football contract, the level and intensity of expectation and the pressure to succeed all increase. Many young players try to break through to the professional ranks, but failure to do so is a blow for the whole family despite the logical reality that, in statistical terms, the chances of failing are very high.

As TD remarked, 'they have got to be making their life outside of Rugby, its worse than a 50 per cent, maybe 10 per cent. They have got to have some life-goals, no life-goals then what about their Rugby'.<sup>46</sup> According to both TD and BG, such life-cycle training is not currently being provided by the various levels of elite Rugby union. BG concluded:

Scholarships, I don't know if their education is a real concern though. They (Pasifika) play First XV, are given so much gear but the on-going support is not there. They find themselves in an environment where they have a lot of support but whether the schools give them much as far as an education ... I presume they do. Once they leave

school they find they have no idea what to do ... Since the advent of professionalism some efforts been made. Not sure if there is enough personal development. Plenty of time's spent developing the skills of the game. Whether 'we' (ARU staff) have the professional competencies to do this development ... years ago we had the LEAP program from the AIS. (Life Skills for Elite Athletes Program — now called ACES) ... Don't know what the academic system is at the Queensland Academy to mentor those kids in skills external to the game.<sup>47</sup>

These comments were made at the time BG was a senior administrator in the ARU and, by virtue of his senior management role, a major contributor to policy development for the game's future. He contended that the Pasifika players were becoming an ever-increasingly important influence in the game at the elite level. Ironically, though, the development of these athletes was becoming a problem because 'they literally develop earlier and do well going through the system but when other people catch up with them they do not have the mental skills to handle that'.<sup>48</sup> He did not attribute this to any inherent weakness in Pasifika intellect, but rather that Rugby programs did not 'prepare them well enough' for the next phase of their development.<sup>49</sup>

BG made the astute observation that Pasifika youth coming through the talent identification system and the junior ranks, particularly the 15/16 year groups, tend to do well because at the same age as non-Pasifika boys they typically have a more developed physique. They are 'bigger, faster but, not saying they are not intelligent, but they just do not have to adapt [at junior levels] to succeed'.<sup>50</sup> He implied that their coaching was deficient, with coaches merely relying on the Pasifikas' size and power at the junior level, where they are well 'ahead' in physical development terms. Skill-sets, tactical strategies and the subtleties of planning were not addressed in these formative years. TD also remarked that at Greenfields he would have to up-skill many of the star Pasifika juniors when they came into the senior ranks. He linked this with the physical maturation issue: 'they have to be careful about the size thing, a downside is obesity. They don't learn the skills, (coaches) have a preoccupation with mass, it's not the way to go'.<sup>51</sup> He also noted that he felt some of the top contracted Queensland Pasifika players, including internationals, 'do not have a tactical appreciation and any idea about territorial Rugby'.<sup>52</sup> BG also commented on an over-reliance on the size of Pasifika players: the biggest management problem he had in his specific role in the ARU he recalled (and remember he was at the time a senior ARU administrator) was 'the size and weight and precocious development of 'Polynesian' kids'.<sup>53</sup>

TD is a Premiership Rugby union club executive, 1st grade coach and Director of Rugby at Greenfields Rugby Football Club. He is an ex-Queensland Rugby Academy (QRA) staff member, a State representative player and coach of State junior representative teams and, in Rugby parlance;

he is a 'serious heavy.' He is also totally immersed in the Pasifika communities in his area and uses his club as a medium 'to integrate the Islanders in [to] the wider local community'.<sup>54</sup> In regard to Pasifika Rugby players, he is one of the most informed and personally involved, if not *the* most engaged, non-Pasifika Rugby Union officials in Australia, but also probably one of the most under-utilised in that context.

One of many insightful and well-informed observations TD made during a series of interviews at Greenfields RFC in October 2008 was that the Queensland Rugby Academy (QRA) is not structured or staffed appropriately for the majority of Pasifika youth who have scholarships there:

The Queensland Academy program is falling down because there is too much emphasis on them just being there. It significantly denies these guys [Pasifika, who make up 40 per cent of the squad] in this section of their lives when they are coming from the back-marker. HJ [a current Wallaby forward] does not need to make it with the Reds; his back-out was that the family are rich. So he can sit around playing 'Play-Station' for two hours, its no big threat to him whilst JA [Pasifika player who did make it] had no back-out he's got nothing else in life.<sup>55</sup>

By contrast, TD believes that the NRL has done an excellent job with their Toyota Cup competition (under 20s) by banning training during normal work hours (7.30am–5pm), and insisting that players are either studying at university or TAFE, training on the job or working full-time so that they do 'have a back-up' if they do not progress to full NRL contracts and options in their post Rugby league lives. He believed it was imperative that the QRA follow suit:

I think if you set up an Academy its structure first of all, that you are training in the gym from 5.30am til 7.30 and then ... back at 5pm. Between that time you've got to work, study and earn this much [a certain amount], you can do community work and you have to this to [be able to] complete your scholarship at the Academy.

I would like to reinforce that having worked in there [the QRA] I know the reason why ... [They do not train early and late], that would require the Staff to work on an hourly roster-type basis and not come in for a 9-5 job ... The performance people [exercise physiologists] would have to work by the hour ... There's no way they would do that. ... It's [the QRA] highly built up around the convenience of the staff themselves.<sup>56</sup>

New South Wales and Queensland have Rugby Academies, which feed into the Super 14 franchise teams: the Waratahs and the Reds and the ARU have their own extensive elite programmes for professional players. At all levels,

the interviewees for this study expressed concern that the various 'training' programmes, or their underlying operational principles are deficient in some way, if not flawed. Questions should be asked of these agencies as to whether the development programmes and the training regimes are culturally attuned to the various Pasifika cultures; whether young professional Rugby players are holistically developed — educationally and professionally (including for their post-Rugby lives), as well as socially and spiritually nurtured in their various Rugby environments, and whether their underlying cultural interests are being looked after?

## Conclusions

The global financial crisis raises questions about the future of neo-liberal based globalisation. Migration of all sorts of labour has occurred across long historical periods and in different epochs of capitalism. The need for people to survive economically in a market driven economic system demands that flows of labour result; that is, to locations where markets for their skills and abilities exist. All of this relates to the structural 'push and pull' factors of economic possibility in the destination countries. A cynical view, however, of these migrants is that they are merely commodities in such markets; that issues of transnationality are not acknowledged or properly and fully dealt with by the host country, nor with the local multiculturalism policies espoused. Their labour therefore contributes to the extraction of extra value for sport businesses, leagues, global media, and other owners of sport products sold in the marketplace.

Discussion of issues that emanate from this feature of the global sports labour market in this paper has been by definition limited. The origins of this phenomenon in Australia are located in a historical-sociological framework that is highly complex and convoluted, embracing the cultures and histories of the various island nations as well as, anthropologically, the ethnos that the term Pasifika embraces. The underlying social, cultural and sporting determinants stem from: colonisation, imperialism and neo-imperialism; religion; education and globalisation. This suite of forces are the basis of the story of Western sport, and the set of circumstances that conspired to draw Pacific Islanders to the sport of Rugby football in the first instance were in action throughout the entire process of the diffusion of the British games ethos, the spread of the cult of athleticism and the religious proselytising that attended the cultural imperialism of the British Empire.<sup>57</sup> The circumstances of this process as it impacted in the Pacific Islands were contextually constructed and the outcome in the Pacific Islands was as intrusive, culturally speaking, to the indigenous people of the Island communities as it was in the larger territories that the British settled, such as, India, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.

In Australia, what this phenomenon represents in terms of global sports labour migration in Rugby is the creation of a clearly ethnically (Pasifika) based labour force who sell their labour globally. The Australian and NZ dimension is still fundamentally part of the diasporas of athletes leaving directly from the Island nations; in recent years, however, Pasifika who were born in Australia or New Zealand are now forming a significant percentage of the ranks of professional Rugby players based in Australia; some of whom are now subsequently being attracted to pursue careers in Europe and Japan. Though originating from disparate locations, Pasifika Rugby players can reasonably be considered as a new wave of migrant athletes who can be likened to specific 'racial'/ethnic groups such as East African distance runners, African-American basketball players, South American and African football players and Hispanic Central American baseball players who all ply their trade globally. Many of these athletes are exploited on their journey, both individually and systemically as Raffaele Poli, Paul Darby and others have both demonstrated occurs to African football players in the football leagues in Europe.<sup>58</sup>

We have argued in this article that Pasifika Rugby players are also 'exploited' and/or marginalised in various ways, and that this occurs as consequence of the wider socio-historical circumstances that, as Andrew Grainger has reflected upon when discussing the negotiated identity of Samoan Rugby players in New Zealand, emanates as a consequence of their 'colonial legacy, notions of "homeland", and the economic demands of global capitalism'.<sup>59</sup> An issue that has emerged from this developing study concerns the quality and appropriateness of the various development programs that Pasifika Rugby players are enveloped in at all levels/stages of their Rugby careers, and how these programs interact with the push factors of family, religion, culture. At all levels and in the Australian States where Rugby is played widely Pasifikas are massive presences – both numerically and physically. The game evidently is more pervasive in Pasifika communities than probably all others in Australia. An initial consideration of the topic of the growing numbers of Pasifikas in Australian Rugby football, in both codes, led the researchers to wonder to what extent were they being prevailed upon, 'used' or even exploited by the schools, clubs, academies, franchises and even the state or national governing bodies of the sports that have recruited, 'developed' and 'hired' them for their labour and what they can literally produce.

At this stage it is not felt that the situation is as contentious as that which Sepp Blatter, the current President of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association [FIFA], described when talking about the mistreatment of African soccer players by European clubs. He maintained that they exploit African players and in doing so acted like 'neo-colonialists who don't give a damn about



heritage and culture, but engage in social and economic rape by robbing the developing world of its best players'.<sup>60</sup> Some reflection towards the recruitment and development of Pasifika Rugby players may well be in order for, as Blatter remarked, the recruitment of the young African footballers is at best 'unhealthy if not despicable'.<sup>61</sup> Are the various development programs that embrace the Pasifika players, such as the elite squads of professional teams/franchises; State and National (AIS) academies; the AIS talent ID programs; club academies; schools of sport excellence; scholarships from private schools and State school Rugby football programmes holistically and appropriately structured? Are they physically and emotionally safe, culturally relevant, developmentally and educationally sound and do they offer sound pathways for both athletic and personal development as well as for post-sport careers?

While there is much to this claim we feel it is too narrow. In terms of Pasifika Rugby players, the factors of their success relate to how the social and cultural elements of their specific ontological agency is handled by sport organisations in destination countries; that is, how family, religion, social interaction, etc. are dealt with (or otherwise) by Australian or other destination societies. For sport clubs and leagues there is a huge human resource management challenge in these elements that currently many do not seem to deal with well. Many of the basic social and cultural elements of Pasifika life are under duress from migration. Rather than being an unquestioned support for life of all family members there is evidence that the basic fabric of family life is disintegrating in many ways. Negative social aspects of western family life appear to be entering into Pasifika life. Pasifika peoples also consider it necessary to find their own people, thus forming Diasporas in many Australian communities which can further add to the negative stereotyping, social issues, institutional involvements, inequities, and simply being seen as 'Other'.<sup>62</sup> In the end, the 'push and pull' factors are many and operate both ways. It is up to the host country to work to accommodate these factors when welcoming these new immigrants.

In the end an idiographic ethnographic study is required to delve further and completely into the issues emanating from Pasifika migration to Australia, which is the authors' aim. The lives of Australian Pasifika need to be better understood so that all aspects of their development and advancement can be facilitated. For those engaged in Rugby football, at whatever level, a fuller appreciation of the scope and intensity of the issues that beset the lives of young Pasifika will not only help them maximise their sporting potential, and concomitantly their contribution to Australian Rugby, but it could also ensure their holistic social, cultural and spiritual advancement, with wider benefits to Australian society. This paper has pinpointed the nature of these phenomena and identified some pressing emanate issues in the lives of Pasifika Rugby footballers in Australia.

## Notes

- 1 In the NRL it is estimated that 25–40 per cent of the players in the 25-man squads at the 15 clubs are Pacific Islanders. See, D. Lakisa, 'The Pacific Revolution: The Pacific & Maori Players in Australian Rugby League', *Sport, Race and Ethnicity: Building a Global Understanding Conference*, 30 Nov–2 Dec 2008, University of Technology Sydney.
- 2 Dwight H. Zakus and Peter Horton, 2007, 'A Professional Games for Gentlemen: Rugby Union's Transformation', in B. Stewart (ed.), *The Games Are Not the Same: The Political Economy of Football in Australia*, Melbourne University Publications, Melbourne, 2007 pp. 142–97.
- 3 While there is Rugby player migration from a wide number of Pacific island countries, this paper focuses on those from Tonga, Manu Samoa, and Fiji.
- 4 The interview schedules used are available from the authors. The study was conducted with the support of the Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Science, James Cook University under the required Human Research protocol (Ethics approval number H 3090).
- 5 See Gayatri Spivak, in Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean (eds), *The Spivak Reader*, Routledge, New York and London, 1996.
- 6 'Pacific players set to dominate 2006-2007 French rugby season', [http://www.ambafrance-org/article.php3?id\\_article=399](http://www.ambafrance-org/article.php3?id_article=399), accessed 20 July 2009.
- 7 Zavos, Spiro, 'The Browning of the Wallabies', *The Roar*, 1 June 2007, <http://www.theroar.com.au/2007/06/01/the-browning-of-the-wallabies/>, accessed 20 July 2007. We acknowledge that the notion of 'browning' is simplistic and may be construed as pejorative, though this was not Zavos's intention.
- 8 These numbers were taken from the Australian Rugby Union website ([aru.com.au](http://aru.com.au)) on 13 February 2009.
- 9 Neil Cadigan, 'NRL's island talent', *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 March 2008, <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/sport/nrl/story/0,27074,23441010-5016542,00.html>, accessed 12 February 2009.
- 10 Lakisa, 'The Pacific Revolution'.
- 11 'Heritage' was defined as the player's birthplace or that of one or both of their parents or grandparents, however not all answered this question.
- 12 Cadigan, 'NRL's island talent'.
- 13 For example see Natasha Bitu, 'Angry Aboriginal protest outside "murder" hearing' *Australian*, October 29, 2008, <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24568408-5006786,00.html>, accessed 13 August 2009.
- 14 As R. Dewey Jr. has done for New Zealand, although in a less rigorous analysis, in his chapter 'Pacific Islands Rugby: Navigating the Global Professional Era', in Greg Ryan (ed.) *The Changing Face of Rugby: The Union Game and Professionalism Since 1995*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, UK, 2008, pp. 82–108.

- 15 P. Bergin, 'Maori Sport and Cultural Identity in Australia', *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 13, (2002), pp. 257–69.
- 16 Sean Brawley, 'The Pacific Islander Community', in Phillip Mosley et al (eds.) *Sporting Immigrants: Sport and Ethnicity in Australia*, Walla Walla Press, Sydney, 1997, pp. 116–25.
- 17 T. F. Carter, 'Family Networks, State Interventions and the Experience of Cuban Transnational Sport Migration', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 42, 2007, pp. 371–89.
- 18 Murray Bird, 'The conceptual development of "Managementscapes" and its application to the history of Australian Rules football in Queensland between 1866 to 1890', Unpublished Masters thesis, Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management, Griffith University, Gold Coast, 2004, p. 24.
- 19 Arun Appadurai, 'Difference and Disjuncture in the Global Cultural Economy', in J.A. Braziel and A. Mannur (eds), *Theorizing Diaspora*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003, p. 31.
- 20 Bird, 'The conceptual development', p. 23.
- 21 Bird, 'The conceptual development', p. 24.
- 22 Arun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1996, pp. 33–34.
- 23 Compare with Paul Darby, Gerard Akindes and Matthew Kirwin, 'Football Academies and the Migration of African Football Labor to Europe', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, vol. 31, 2007, pp. 143–61.
- 24 See S. Agergaard, 'Elite Athletes and Migrants in Danish Women's Handball', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 43, 2008, pp. 5–19.
- 25 Carter, 'Family Networks', p. 371.
- 26 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2006 Census of Population and Housing, Country of Birth by Person(s) of Arrival in Australia*, Cat. No. 2068.0, 2007.
- 27 These numbers were gleaned from the respective country fact-book developed by the CIA. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/tn.html>.
- 28 Victoria Lockwood, *Globalisation and Culture Change in the Pacific Islands*, Pearson/Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle Rock, 2004.
- 29 Christopher Browne and Aiko Mineshima, *IMF Working Paper — Remittances in the Pacific Region*. IMF, 2007, p. 12.
- 30 Browne and Mineshima, *IMF Working Paper*; CIA factbooks (see Note 26).
- 31 Carter, 'Family Networks', p. 372.
- 32 A. Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: the Cultural Logics of Transnationality*, Duke University Press, Durham & London, 1999, p. 6.
- 33 See comments by former New Zealand All-Black and Samoan coach Michael Jones in Grainger, 'From Immigrant to Overstayer' pp. 49–53.
- 34 International Rugby Board, [http://www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/0/regulation9090603\\_8284.pdf](http://www.irb.com/mm/document/lawsregs/0/regulation9090603_8284.pdf).
- 35 William Robinson, *A Theory of Global Capitalism: Production, Class, and State in a Transnational World*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2004, pp. 1–2.
- 36 M. Horsley and R. Walker, 'Pasifika Australia: Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Teaching', in D. M. McInerney and S. Van Etten (eds.), *Focus on Curriculum*, Information Age Publishing, Greenwich, ACT, 2005, p. 328.
- 37 The 'extended family' is equally important in all Pacific Island nations. In Samoan language the long form of the word used is, *aiga potopototo*, which is shortened to *aiga*. In Tonga, they use *Kainga*, but *aiga* is also more widely used, in Fijian the term *matavuvale* is used, which stems from the I'iiiau language, whilst the Maori word is *whanau*, which literally means, 'to be born'.
- 38 K. Teaiwa, 'Ignorance rife about Islander Australians', <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/opinion/editorial/general/ignorance-rife-about-Islander-Australians.html>, accessed 7 January 2010.
- 39 BG, name withheld, in interview, Ballymore, Headquarters, Queensland Rugby Union, 3 October 2008.
- 40 TD's name has also been withheld and the name of his Rugby affiliation has been altered.
- 41 For a consideration of such conflicts in Samoan families in Australia see, L. F. Va'a, *Saili Matagi — Samoan migrants in Australia*, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Fiji, cited in Horsley & Walker, 'Pasifika Australia', p. 330.
- 42 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008.
- 43 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008.
- 44 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008. Emphasis added.
- 45 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008.
- 46 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008.
- 47 BG, in interview, Ballymore, Headquarters, Queensland Rugby Union, 3 Oct 2008.
- 48 BG, in interview, Ballymore, Headquarters, Queensland Rugby Union, 3 Oct 2008.
- 49 BG, in interview, Ballymore, Headquarters, Queensland Rugby Union, 3 Oct 2008.
- 50 BG, in interview, Ballymore, Headquarters, Queensland Rugby Union, 3 Oct 2008.
- 51 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008.
- 52 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008.
- 53 BG, in interview, Ballymore, Headquarters, Queensland Rugby Union, 3 Oct 2008.
- 54 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008.

- 55 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008.
- 56 TD, in interview, Greenfields Rugby Football Club, 4 October 2008.
- 57 See J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public Schools: the Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981; *The Games Ethics and Imperialism*, Viking Press, Harmondsworth, 1986; (ed.) *Pleasure, Profit and Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700–1914*, Frank Cass, London, 1988.
- 58 See Raffaele Poli, 'Africans' Status in the European Football Players' Labour Market', *Soccer & Society*, vol. 7, 2006, pp. 278–91; Paul Darby, Gerard Akindes and Matthew Kirwin, 'Football Academies and the Migration of African Football Labor to Europe', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, vol. 31, 2007, p. 143, <http://jss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/31/2/143>, accessed 16 July 2009.
- 59 A. Grainger, 'From Immigrant to Overstayer: Samoan Identity, Rugby, and Cultural Politics of Race and Nation in Aotearoa/New Zealand', *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, vol. 30, 2006, p. 46, <http://jss.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/30/1/45>, accessed 6 November 2007.
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- 61 Sepp Blatter, cited in Darby et al, 'Football Academies', p. 147.
- 62 For example, see 'South Bank Police target Pacific Island youth', <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,20797,25457023-952,00.html>, accessed 7 January 2010; 'PM — Youth of Pacific Island background work to break down stereotypes', <http://www.abc.net.au/cgi-bin/common/printfriendly.pl?>, accessed 7 January 2010.