

**Circumstances of a Pacific atoll people in diaspora: A retrospective analysis
of *I-Nikunau***

Keith Dixon

University of Canterbury

Contact details:

Keith Dixon
Department of Accounting and Information Systems
Te Kura Umanga o Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha (UCBS)
University of Canterbury (*Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha*)
Private Bag 4800
Christchurch 8040
New Zealand

Tel: +64 (0)3 3693844

Email: Keith.Dixon@canterbury.ac.nz

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Abstract

Life for people on many atolls is undoubtedly hard, frequently affected by droughts, rough seas and other adverse climatic conditions to name a few. It is little wonder then that kinship is the foundation of many atoll societies, traditional and even modern. This study is a retrospective analysis of a Pacific people living in several countries but held together as a diaspora through notions of kinship. The people concerned have indigenous, ancestral, cultural, social and continuing residential connections with Nikunau Atoll (coordinates 1.3475°S 176.4512°E). The analysis incorporates the present diasporic circumstances of this people, including how these circumstances arose historically. The core idea of the paper is that such an analysis provides a basis for surfacing and explaining the circumstances of the people in question, and so a basis for improving their circumstances from a critical, better-informed standpoint. The method of conducting the analysis relies heavily on the partisan stance of me, the author, whose kinship ties with *I-Nikunau* (= people who identify with Nikunau) are affinal. I identify, grapple with, articulate and interpret situations and events, including those I observed or experienced, or was told about, and those at least referred to or, in many cases, delved into by other researchers. The circumstances are analysed under 14 themes, including geographical, demographical, economic, environmental, cultural and societal circumstances. As well as appealing to *I-Nikunau*, the analysis may be relevant to the growing number of studies about Nikunau and Kiribati, most of them concerned with prospects of climate change making Nikunau, Tarawa and other atolls where *I-Nikunau* reside uninhabitable. That the authors of many of these studies published recently make so many references to the matters covered in this analysis would seem to indicate how relevant and important the matters in question are to the future of *I-Nikunau* and *I-Kiribati*. Furthermore, this relevance and importance may apply to the future of other peoples still inhabiting the world's atolls and facing whatever challenges this future may bring, climate-related and otherwise.

Keywords History matters!, Nikunau Atoll, *I-Nikunau* (= people who identify with Nikunau), Gilbert Islands, Kiribati, Diaspora, Circular labour migration, Colonialism, Imperialism, Climate change

1 Introduction

The broad scholarly value of this study lies in illuminating and stimulating interest in the demographical, economic, social and political dynamics of peoples associated with atolls, particularly in the Pacific. The study is about *I-Nikunau*, a people so-called because of their indigenous, ancestral, and continuing connections with Nikunau, a closed-lagoon atoll almost at the centre of the Pacific Ocean (coordinates 1.3475°S, 176.4512°E) (Goldberg, 2016). The study comprises a retrospective analysis of *I-Nikunau*: I have surveyed their present circumstances and analysed how and why they have arisen. The analysis was performed using a series of 14 themes, namely, geography, demography, economy, etc., hence “themes of analysis”, and is reported accordingly, that is as a series of “thematic circumstances” under the headings “geographical circumstances”, “demographical circumstances”, “economic circumstances”, etc. Much of the study’s importance stems from perceived inadequacies in these circumstances, individually and collectively, and a consequent desire to improve them.

Nikunau (which otherwise has been spelt Nukunau and been charted as Byron’s Island¹) is the life world of at least 85% of its 2,000 inhabitants; they self-identify as *I-Nikunau*, being descended from, or married to, persons of various origins associated with the atoll for up to a millenary or two, as supported by anthropological, archaeological, ecological, ethnographic, sociological and other studies and indigenous accounts (Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010; Alaima et al., 1979; Autio, 2010; Di Piazza, 1999; Dickinson, 2003; Geddes, 1977; Goodenough, 1955; Grimble, 1921, 1933, 1989; Hockings, 1984; Kambati, 1992; King & Sigrah, 2004; Lambert, 1966; Latouche, 1983; Lewis, 1988; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a; Maude & Maude, 1994; Maude, 1963, 1977, 1991; Sabatier, 1939/1977; Takasaka et al. 2006; Teweiariki, n.d.; Thomas, 2003; Willmott, 2007).

Furthermore, the atoll has continuing significance for at least another 4,000 persons who, if not born on Nikunau themselves, are descended from someone in the last three generations or so who was. These 4,000 comprise a diaspora,² which, over the past few decades, has steadily extended to other Pacific places and further afield (e.g., to Great Britain, because of Nikunau’s colonial links thereto between 1892 and 1979).

In the global scheme of things, Nikunau and *I-Nikunau* are largely anonymous, let alone significant, and so it might be easy to dismiss this study as trivial. However, they do have a present claim to world fame: Nikunau, or their “home island” and other atolls on which many *I-Nikunau* presently reside, by virtue of being part of the sovereign state of the Republic of Kiribati,³ are enmeshed in the issues, and potentially devastating consequences of, climate

change, rising sea levels and the compromise of water resources, sustainability and environmental concerns of that ilk (see Corcoran, 2016; Kuruppu & Liverman, 2011; McIver, Woodward, Davies, Tebikau & Iddings, 2014; Mimura et al., 2007; Oakes, Milan & Campbell, 2016; Storey & Hunter, 2010; White et al., 2007). Remarkably, these issues are not mentioned in national plans compiled in the colonial or immediate post-colonial period (see Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, 1970; Government of Kiribati, 1983) and only sparked international attention as recently as 1985 (see Pernetta & Hughes, 1990). Thus, not least among the aforementioned inadequacies of their present circumstances is living with the prospect having to move to higher ground along with the rest of *I-Kiribati*,⁴ abandoning the islands just referred to (see Donner & Webber, 2014; Nei Tabera Ni Kai Video Unit, 2009, 2010; Nunn, 2013; Oakes et al., 2016; Smith, 2013; Tatoa & Hogan, 2008; Thomas, 2001; White et al., 2007; Wyett, 2014).

This prospect for them and many other atoll dwellers is prompting global speculation about all manner of things connected with emigration from the atolls, being labelled “refugees”, and immigration to and resettlement in other countries, including where there are already diasporic communities of *I-Nikunau*, such as New Zealand (or *Nutiran*) (e.g., see AJ+, 2014; Bedford & Bedford, 2010; Edwards, 2014; Fedor, 2012; Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016; Williams, 2008). These matters are incorporated into this study, and so should probably broaden its appeal to its subjects and to scholars examining other peoples in similar circumstances. Besides, it is anticipated that other aspects of the study are valuable, including as an illustration of method and bringing out the interconnections among the various themes and the often separate, academic disciplines with which they are associated.

For *I-Nikunau* in particular, the insights arising from this study are relevant in various ways. They can assist in evaluating how adequate their circumstances are, including by recognising and delving into inadequacies of the present. They can prompt discussion about likely future circumstances, and inform actions intended to address inadequacies and otherwise make these future circumstances better than they might be without having these insights. In other words, the insights should be valuable to *I-Nikunau* in addressing the future, including taking action to meet their needs and aspirations.

The rest of this report is separated into five sections (S2, S3, etc.). In S2, I explain, discuss and evaluate the study method, including the approach taken, my own standing in relation to *I-Nikunau*, the validity of the study identity and the processes for gathering and analysing empirical materials. S3 and S4 comprise narratives of, respectively, *I-Nikunau* in the Present,

both on their atoll and in diaspora, *I-Nikunau*'s present in Retrospect. S3 is separated into three subsections (i.e., S3.1, S3.2, etc.), each covering *I-Nikunau*'s Present in particular places. S4 is separated into 14 subsections each relating one of the aforementioned thematic circumstances. In S5, I finish the paper, reflecting again on its value, giving some synthesis to the retrospective analysis and advancing a few conclusions.

2 Method

Concerned as I am to improve understanding of the demographical, economic, social, political and similar dynamics of *I-Nikunau* as a people, including in diaspora, I have made a detailed analysis and taken a long view. To effect this in practice, I analysed the present-day circumstances of *I-Nikunau* descriptively, as presented in S3. Then, I analysed the circumstances by themes and retrospectively, as presented in S4, in order to explain these circumstances and understand their dynamics. I wove the empirical materials at my disposal into a rich, chronological, socio-historical, analytic description of the physical and social conditions of *I-Nikunau*, spatially and temporally (cf. Carnegie & Napier, 2002; Pentland, 1999). This rich narrative covers changes in *I-Nikunau*'s circumstances of as far back as the empirical materials allowed, and demonstrates connections between these circumstances and not only emigration and immigration (see Thompson, Howden-Chapman & Fougere, 2017) but also diaspora.

The approach I have taken is predicated on the popular, if inexact, assertion that *History matters*: that is on the idea that “Placing [behaviours and events of consequence] in time—systematically situating particular moments (including the present) in a temporal sequence of events and processes—can greatly enrich our understanding of complex social dynamics” (Pierson, 2000, p. 72), not to mention “that it is only in retrospect, after observing the structure and its transformations, that it is possible to know the nature of the structure [in a social, anthropological sense]” (Cohn, 1980, p. 219). Concomitantly, it resonates with contentions by several authors (e.g., Burnett, 1998; Haller, Portes & Lynch, 2011; Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016) that immigration and settlement are complex processes involving perhaps several generations at least, not just the persons who relocated geographically.

I mention in S1 using 14 themes of analysis in carrying out retrospective analysis. I leave the details of these until the introduction of the presentation of the retrospective analysis in S4. What is important here is how the theses arose and whether they are valid. The themes were induced, or emerged, as I went through several iterations of working through the empirical materials, comparing and contrasting these materials with scholarly literature, sense making,

revision and interpretation, all in the name of undertaking the analysis. Figure 1 shows four themes I had in mind early on; it was through applying these that the others arose, through division in some cases and extension in others. The figure is deliberate in picturing the four themes as overlapping.

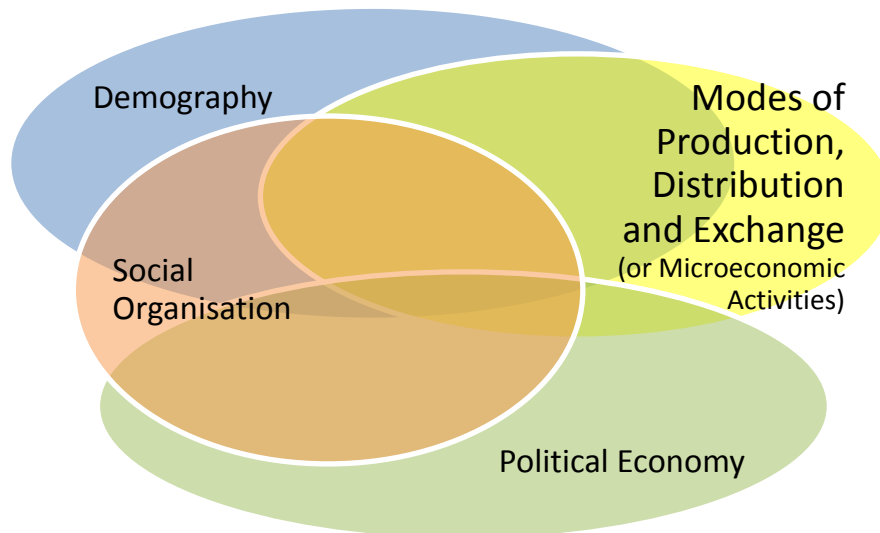


Figure 1. Initial Themes of Analysis

I appreciate that even these four themes, and certainly, the 14 into which I expanded them, are subjective; another researcher approaching the same challenge would probably have devised a different list and an alternative arrangement. Besides, the themes reflect my predominantly *I-Matang* (i.e., indigenous persons of Europe, in particular being fair-skinned)⁵ culture and thinking, informed by literature mostly written by people of that ilk. Indeed, among *I-Nikunau*, traditionally at least, not only are the themes questionable but also the idea of division and classification is alien, just as in *te mwaneaba*, for example, thinking and activities are wholistic, rather than separated into religion, politics, business, etc.

Nevertheless, such divisions and classifications have been common for some time in official documents of a development planning, island profiling and reporting nature about *I-Nikunau*, but not necessarily for or addressed to *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* (e.g., see Government of Kiribati, 1983, 2016; Office of Te Beretitenti and T’Makei Services, 2012b). However, there is much to suggest that this perspective is external, fostered by colonial and aid organisation officials and consultants (e.g., see Asian Development Bank, 2009a, 2009b; Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, 1957, 1970; Macdonald, 1998). Even so, an interesting variant is evident in Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs (2007),⁶ which in departing from the traditional, wholistic thinking has at least a suggestion of being more *I-Kiribati* than *I-*

Matang. The variant in question is based on the motto appearing on the coat of arms of the Republic of Kiribati, which reads “*te mauri, te raoi, ao te tabomoa*” (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Coat of Arms of the Republic of Kiribati (Source: Republic of Kiribati, 2016)

This motto seems to have been used to close speeches in *mwaneaba*, etc. for decades.

Although I was not able to find it recorded as such, say in Grimble’s writings from the early 20th Century (Grimble, 1989; Maude & Maude, 1994), Grimble does report it as part of a prospective magic ritual on Marakei Atoll (see Grimble, 1989, p. 175). The motto has been translated variously into English, including words and terms such as health, welfare, being alive and well, being safe and sound, prosperity, peace, justness, stability, civility, calmness, togetherness, conciliation, honour and respect (Grimble 1989; Trussel & Groves, 2003). In Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs (2007), *te mauri* was aligned with people, demography, natural resources, water, environment, health, education, housing, social welfare and social infrastructure. Similarly, *te raoi* was aligned with social capital, community life, local institutions, crime and the justice system, religion, political authority and governance. And *te tabomoa* was aligned with economic activities and economies, modes of production, transport and communications infrastructure. As detailed in S5, I try to use this arrangement in attempting to synthesise the analysis.

A further, even more important issue of validity concerns my choice of *I-Nikunau* as the study identity, compared, that is, with obvious alternatives of a larger population, such as *I-Kiribati*, or a geographical identity, such as Nikunau Atoll or the Kiribati Archipelago, or a national identity, such as the Republic of Kiribati (pop. 110,000 – National Statistics Office, 2016). Choosing *I-Nikunau* or Nikunau is consistent with a trend in the Pacific literature away from studying island groups with European names or countries that have arisen out of colonies—Nikunau was part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony (hereafter, the Colony

or, in citing references, GEIC)—and towards studying local or sub-national identities, events and circumstances, including those representing the boundaries of pre-colonial polities (Davidson, 1966; Grimshaw, 1999; Howe, 1979)—up to the 1880s, not only was Nikunau politically autonomous from neighbouring islands but also it comprised six, largely autonomous, territorial polities that were governed as gerontocracies (Macdonald, 1982a; Maude, 1960, 1963).

As for choosing *I-Nikunau* over Nikunau, this is consistent with engaging in the history of “ordinary people in their local setting” (Burke, 1991, p. 238), otherwise referred to as history from below (Grimshaw, 1999, p. 715), and in keeping with an argument proffered by Morrell (1960) in relation to the writing of history in the Pacific, that “the proper subject of history is not an area but a community” (p. 1). In respect of individual Kiribati islands, choosing the people of a single island is consistent with arguments of Macdonald (1996b) that:

the primary identity was with the extended family household [\cong *mwenga*] and its landholdings [\cong *aba*], then with a larger district grouping, still linked through the male line by common descent [a reference to *utu*, *kainga* and *boti*], and then with the island. Intermarriage might have established linkages to other adjacent islands to which descent might also be traced but this was usually beyond the horizon in a political as well as geographic sense. (p. 39)

Moreover, following over half a century of emigration, studying only Nikunau Atoll would lead to losing sight of significant demographical, economic and other circumstances around *I-Nikunau* who now reside elsewhere, whether temporarily or permanently. In other words, it would mean omitting two significant phenomena. First, the pattern produced by *I-Nikunau* going away temporarily is circular, and so akin to a concept referred to sometimes as “circular labour migration” (see Bedford & Bedford, 2013; Shlomowitz & Munro, 1992). Second, the effect of *I-Nikunau* emigrating permanently and mainly to particular places likely gives rise to communities whose members continue to identify with Nikunau as their place of origin, alongside identifying with their place of settlement; in aggregate these communities make up an *I-Nikunau* diaspora (cf. Bedford & Bedford, 2013).

Studying *I-Nikunau* in the context(s) of circular labour migration and diaspora opens up possibilities of obtaining a macrocosmic view of the Pacific, past and present (cf. Howe, 1979). It thus aligns with Macdonald’s suggestion for studies to examine broader “‘imperial’ or hegemonic relationships affecting the world more generally than just the Pacific, and the underlying forces that drive them” (1996b, p. 30) (see also Hezel, 1988). Taking such a view

enables consideration of reciprocity effects arising on Nikunau through *I-Nikunau* participating in circular labour migration and diaspora (cf. Bedford & Bedford, 2013), or, as Page and Mercer (2012) framed it, diaspora being agents of change in their place of origin. Besides, studying *I-Kiribati* as a whole, including its diaspora, would open up too many possibilities because, while there are similarities among the peoples of the different islands (Morrell, 1960; Rennie, 1981), there are also differences. In turn, these differences have given rise to different ways in which these peoples have responded to similar influences (Geddes, Chambers, Sewell, Lawrence & Watters, 1982; King, 1996; Lawrence, 1983; Macdonald, 1982a), and so to different human circumstances and consequences. Indeed, studying *I-Kiribati* as a whole would overlook the interesting phenomena of *I-Nikunau* forming an urban island diasporic community on Tarawa Atoll, which is the Republic's seat of government and its only large urbanised settlement, and being part of *I-Kiribati* diasporic communities in places (e.g., New Zealand's *Te Waipounamu* (or South Island)), where this is more practical than having a separate *I-Nikunau* diasporic community.

The empirical materials derive from a mix of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources have involved participant-observation, akin to immersion. For 30+ years, I have been a member by affinity of a bilateral kinship category, group and network, which *I-Nikunau* might refer to as *ana utu* [*Name of person*] *ni kaan*. The generic word in this term, namely *utu*, refers to persons who have “a behavioural relationship of enduring, diffuse solidarity” (Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972, p. 98 – this definition seems inspired by Burrige, 1957, and Eisenstadt, 1956) through either consanguinity or affinity, and so essentially embracing birth, *tibutibu* (\cong adoption) and marriage.⁷ *Utus* are a vital and longstanding institution of *I-Nikunau* society and that of neighbouring islands, and have equivalents in other Pacific societies (see Geddes, 1977; Goodenough, 1955; Grimble, 1952; Macdonald, 1971; Maude, 1963, 1977; Maude & Maude, 1931; Morrell, 1960; Ratuva, 2014).

Being permitted to capitalise on my affinal ties to *I-Nikunau* and using this insider knowledge and experience to gather together empirical materials myself—by identifying, grappling with, interpreting and articulating situations and events I experienced, observed and was told about—and analysing and interpreting these materials in the grey space between participant insider and outside observer has been vital to achieve the richness of narrative I referred to earlier. During the 30 years referred to, I have stayed on Nikunau, lived within diasporic communities of *I-Nikunau* on Tarawa, New Zealand's two main islands and Great Britain, and I have visited communities on the Solomon Islands and Nauru (Pleasant Island)—the

latter was defunct by 2005 because its *raison d'être*, that is phosphate mining, had ceased. My experiences have been further enriched by countless stories and anecdotes from *utu ni kaan*, *koraki*, expatriate *I-Nikunau* and *I-Kiribati* in diasporic communities, and *I-Matang* who had resided in Kiribati temporarily at various times between the 1960s and 2000s, some of whom are part of other *utu* affinity.

The secondary sources are empirical materials collected and processed by others and which I made efforts to verify, re-interpret, question in terms of perspective—see Cohn (1980) on the varied approaches among anthropologists and historians, to name but a few—and apply; some only made slight mention of Nikunau, *I-Nikunau* or the situations and events I observed or heard and read about elsewhere. These materials range in time and attitude since the earliest recorded glimpse, according to Maude (1961), of *I-Nikunau* by *I-Matang*, namely by Officer on Board the *Said Ship* (1767, pp.135–138), who recollects his vessel being greeted, in July 1765, by over a hundred naked, male (and one scantily dressed female) “Indians”, of an “olive colour” with “fine long black hair” and “remarkably white” teeth, in a multitude of “outrigger” boats. Strangely, I can find no *I-Nikunau* account, oral or written, referring to this seemingly momentous event.

Since, much has been written about *I-Kiribati* (or Gilbertese, as they were once referred to), and so covering some 10 generations,⁸ with much of it applicable in one way or another to Nikunau and *I-Nikunau*, although the atoll and its people have not always been singled out by name. Most of these materials have also been written by *I-Matang*, so bringing into play the issue of *I-Matang* writing about Pacific peoples but being largely concerned with *I-Matang* issues (see Alaima et al., 1979), despite whatever attempts the writers may have made to downplay their backgrounds and perspectives (see Hezel, 1988; Lal, 2007). Thus, there is a preponderance of literature about exploring, extracting natural resources (e.g., whale oil, whalebone, spermaceti, ambergris, phosphate, tuna), trading for commodities (e.g., coconut oil and copra), blackbirding, indenturing, conscripting and recruiting labourers and transporting them to various places, evangelizing, colonial governing, civilising, warring, economic and social developing, commercing, aiding, nation strengthening, preventing, treating and curing disease, illness and infirmity, conserving, protecting and reinstating the environment, and addressing climate change and its consequences (cf. Macdonald, 1982a; Routledge, 1985). This issue of being *I-Matang*, and being regarded and treated as such by *I-Kiribati*, applies to me also, and to my writing, despite 30 years of observation and participation. As Sabatier (1939/1977) indicates, citing an anonymous source, “after ten years

in the islands you think you know the local people; after twenty-five years you doubt it and after forty years you are firmly convinced that you do not know them” (p. 341).

From an *I-Nikunau* perspective, these matters seem to be a misunderstood mishmash of things that *I-Matang* and others (e.g., Chinese, Samoans, other *I-Kiribati*) did, and about which *I-Nikunau* received little by way of explanation, even when said *I-Matang* and others actually resided on or visited Nikunau (e.g., as beachcombers and castaways, traders, missionaries, officials of the Great Powers, aid organisation workers)—most influential foreigners have not visited Nikunau (or even Kiribati for that matter), having plied their authority, expertise, etc., from a distance (e.g., Banaba (or Ocean) Island, Beru Atoll, Butaritari Atoll, Honiara, London, Malua, Manila, Melbourne, New York, Rome, Suva, Sydney, Tarawa, Washington DC).

A further issue about the efficacy of secondary sources stems from some historians arguing that primary sources are imperative, traditionally privileging them based on what Merino (1998) criticises as “putative objectivity” (p. 607) (see also Hezel, 1988). Concerned as I am to reflect *I-Nikunau*, a society in which writings of any sort have been considered unnecessary, and so are obviously rare, to privilege primary over secondary sources would be to silence past secondary records of *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* voices and materials (e.g., Kambati, 1992; Koch, 1965/1986; Latouche, 1983) compared with official colonial records (e.g., GEIC, 1976; *Land (Copra) Tax Register 1910–1916*).

Finally, on method, I referred at the beginning of S1 to illumination and stimulating interest, with the implication of there being things to be concerned about. This concern comes from me, as the researcher, and underpins an intention for this study to have beneficial outcomes, including improving *I-Nikunau*’s future circumstances from a critical, better-informed and comprehensive standpoint (cf. Smith, 2012). Having produced the study, however, there is some doubt in my mind as to whether it will empower *I-Nikunau*, in particular whether it addresses the sorts of questions that interest them or they see as relevant and important.

3 *I-Nikunau* in the Present

Of roughly 6,500 people presently identifying as *I-Nikunau* worldwide, barely half were born on Nikunau and no more than 1,800 normally reside there. Indeed, even though they adhere to the *I-Nikunau* identity, probably over 35% of the $\approx 6,500$ have never actually set foot on Nikunau, a number and proportion that are increasing quickly. Furthermore, the largest population of *I-Nikunau* in one place comprises the approximately 2,600 now normally

resident on Tarawa Atoll, where there are possibly upwards of a further 800 persons with at least tentative consanguinal or affinal links to Nikunau. The rest of the diaspora, made up of at least another 1,900 persons, live elsewhere, either in the Republic (i.e., on either the other Kiribati islands (≈ 500) or the Line Islands (≈ 700)), or on other Pacific Islands (including the Solomon Islands (≈ 400), New Zealand (≈ 150), Australia (≈ 20), Fiji, Vanuatu, the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea), or further afield (including on Great Britain (≈ 16) and elsewhere in Europe, and North America) (see Figure 3) (cf. Bedford & Bedford, 2010; National Statistics Office, 2013, 2016; Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012b; Teaiwa, 2014; Thompson, 2016).

Except as is indicated in S1, where the number of members who may identify as *I-Nikunau* is not great, in practical social terms the diasporic community they are part of is more accurately described as one of *I-Kiribati* than of *I-Nikunau*. This applies in the community in Great Britain and in the now half dozen communities in New Zealand (cf. Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016), and is reflected in pan-Kiribati names adopted by the formal bodies established in these communities to organise events and perform other functions (e.g., Kiribati Tungaru Association, Christchurch Kiribati Community). It may also apply in the diasporic communities in the Solomon Islands because of how these came about (see Tammy, 2011)—these communities arose through successive migrations of peoples from Nikunau and other Kiribati islands, first, to different islands in the Phoenix Islands, and then, barely a generation later, from there to different islands in the Solomon Islands.

As outlined in S2, the material presented in this section is intended to provide descriptive foundations for the circumstances I analyse retrospectively under different themes of analysis in S4. In order to do this pragmatically, I contend that the $\approx 6,500$ may be thought of as comprising three categories: those living traditionally, including on Nikunau and other Outer Islands⁹ in the Kiribati Archipelago and Line Islands, and on Ghizo, Alu and Wagina Islands in the Solomon Islands; those living in an urban island settlement, particularly Tarawa but also Honiara and Gizo, and perhaps Suva, Nadi and Majuro; and those in metropolitan countries. Furthermore, given that to describe all instances of each category was beyond my experience, I have used those on Nikunau to illustrate the first, those on Tarawa to illustrate the second, and beyond Kiribati, those in Great Britain and New Zealand to illustrate the third. The descriptions are in three subsections, S3.1, S3.2 and S3.3.

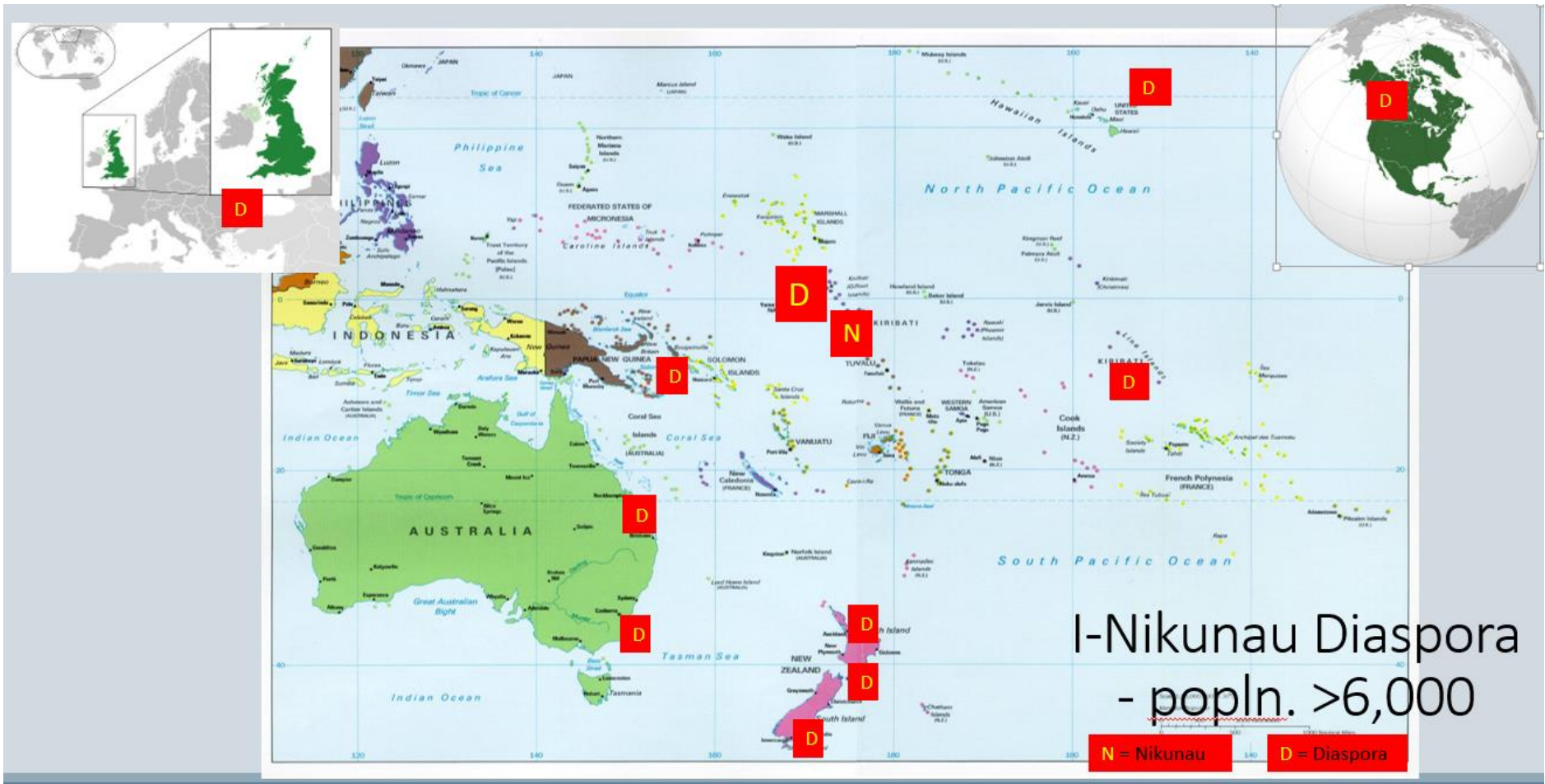


Figure 3. Nikunau and the I-Nikunau Diaspora

The description of Nikunau in S3.1 is based on various written and oral secondary sources and my participant-observations during five visits between 1985 and 2009, which totalled four months. Where the written secondary sources are based on studies of neighbouring islands, I have used Nikunau informants and my participant-observations to satisfy myself of their relevance and validity. As my first and, to most intents and purposes, only language is English, and the language of Nikunau is a version of *te taetae ni Kiribati*—to clarify, most *I-Nikunau* I met on Nikunau spoke only a few words of English—I relied on my spouse to interpret conversations, as well as explain many aspects of life the two of us observed and participated in during my visits—she was born and brought up on Nikunau before moving to Tarawa to complete primary school, followed by secondary and tertiary education there and, later, elsewhere, and working on Nikunau as a teacher for a year or so in between.

The description of Tarawa in S3.2 is also based on various written and oral secondary sources and participant-observations. The latter occurred for six periods between 1985 and 2009. These included a two-year residence spent in a family house typically rented to a temporary *non-I-Kiribati* resident involved in an aid project or a senior government official, and, indeed, originally built for colonial officials, and five shorter visits, totalling six months and spent in several *I-Nikunau mwenga*. Again, I have satisfied myself of the relevance and validity of the written secondary sources using my participant-observations. The comments above about English and *te taetae ni Kiribati* also apply to participant-observations on Tarawa; although more *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* I met there had more English, their lack of practice in speaking it meant there was reluctance to do so, particularly in other than one-on-one conversations. Roman (2013) and Thompson (2016) note this shyness among *I-Kiribati* in New Zealand; Thompson associates the word *maama* (or *mama*) with this reluctance, which she also perceived as applying to other situations in which shyness is accompanied by seemingly inappropriate smiling or laughing. In fact, the word *mama* makes up part of the word *kamama* which is used later in this paper as the equivalent of shame, a way of demeaning oneself and suffering public embarrassment, including becoming *te bai n rang* (\cong a laughing stock) (see Trussel & Groves, 2003). However, *kamama* not only applies in the context of answering questions that have a correct answer by giving an incorrect answer, and so displaying ignorance, but it also applies to showing off by giving the correct answer (McCreary & Boardman, 1968).

The descriptions of Great Britain and New Zealand in S3.3 are also based on written and oral secondary sources and participant-observations. The latter were from inside *I-Kiribati*

metropolitan diasporic communities on *Te Ika-a-Maui* (New Zealand’s North Island) (1987–1997), Great Britain (1999–2006) and *Te Waipounamu* (2007–). Again, I used my participant-observations to satisfy myself of the relevance and validity of the written secondary sources. The comments above about English and *te taetae ni Kiribati* again apply, particularly in New Zealand.

3.1 On Nikunau Atoll

Nikunau (area 19 km², pop. 1,789 – National Statistics Office, 2016) is shaped like an elongated figure of eight (see Figure 4) and comprised of coral. None of the land is more than 5m above the vast Pacific Ocean around it. Although there are obvious signs of soils being poor and rainfall intermittent (see Di Piazza, 2001; Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007), the atoll is mostly covered in trees, bushes and other flora (for a list, see Fosberg & Sachet, 1987). Except that is for the two small lakes, one of which is an ephemeral or hypersaline lagoon (Goldberg, 2016; Wester, Juvik & Holthus, 1992), and various fabricated objects reflecting human settlement and activities. The distribution of much of the flora also reflects this human existence, vital to which are *I-Nikunau*’s activities not only on the land but also on the ocean, including the fringing reef that runs the length of the atoll’s western shore—the eastern shore lacks such a feature, the beach there falling much more steeply into the ocean. A satellite view is available from EarthStreetView.com (2014) and a tour video from Teuea (2010).

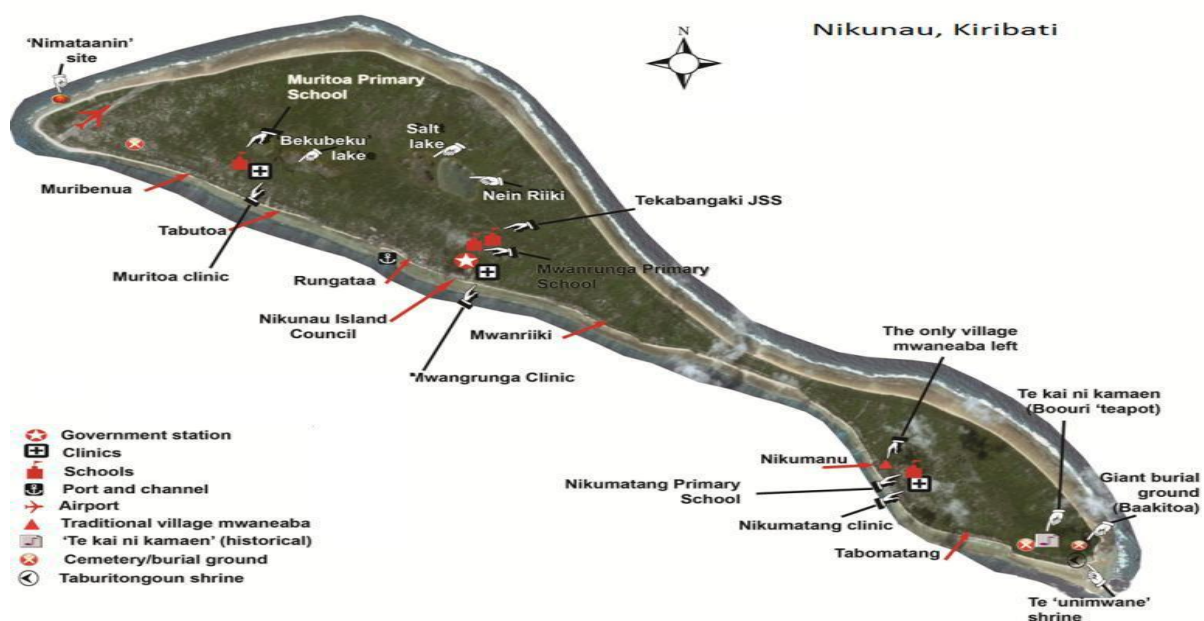


Figure 4. Nikunau Atoll (Source: Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007, p. 15)

The various fabricated objects referred to above, and mostly shown as settlements, etc. on Figure 4, reflect past and present activities of *I-Nikunau* and various other types of transient residents and visitors. *I-Nikunau* mostly reside in the six *kawa* (\cong a clustered settlement or converged village) positioned intermittently along the south-west facing shore, and so adjacent to the fringing reef there. From north-west to south-east, their names and populations are Muribenua (pop. 250), Tabutoa (pop. 146), Rungata (pop. 847), Mwanriiki (pop. 184), Nikumanu (pop. 293) and Tabomatang (pop. 69) (National Statistics Office, 2016).

A dirt road runs through each *te kawa* connects them. This is the only road on the atoll, apart from a few narrow tracks running to the eastern side through *buakonikai* (\cong bush lands). Beyond Tabomatang, the road runs past that *kawa*'s cemetery to the atoll's southern-most tip; here Taburitongoun, a highly esteemed *te bakatibu* (\approx an ancestor beyond the seventh generation), is alleged to maintain a spiritual presence (Kambati, 1992; Latouche, 1983; Maude, 1963), and this is symbolised by *te boua-n-anti* (\cong a spirit stone or shrine) dedicated to him.¹⁰ In contrast, the road to the north-west of Muribenua terminates at one of the atoll's most modern features, the airport, which a group of British Royal Engineers constructed in the late 1960s.

Each *te kawa* mostly comprises areas on which *I-Nikunau* dwell as households. Known as *te mwenga*, each is formed of several separate *buatarawa*, *kiakia*, *okai*, *bareaka* and other *bata*.¹¹ These are all types of small and medium-sized huts and other shelter-like structures, some on stilts, built of local materials (i.e., thatch, poles, coconut binding, etc.), and having different functions, including sitting/eating, cooking, sleeping and storage, and canoe sheds. Where appropriate, these structures contain traditional furniture, which mostly takes the form of foot, sitting, sleeping and other mats (cf. Koch 1965/1986), although a few imported drawers, cabinets, etc. have come to supplement them. The spaces between these structures are used to dry copra, fish, pandanus pulp, etc., to wash clothes, and to accommodate an open fire area, sometimes a well (communal wells with solar-powered pumps are also available) and even a grave (cf. Hockings, 1984). Positioning graves here is a recent return to tradition, as each *te kawa* still has a cemetery, usually on its fringe, away from residential areas, as originally mandated under now defunct Colony Government regulations (e.g., Regulations for the Good, 1933).

These regulations also account for *mwenga* comprising each *te kawa* to be arranged still in two very orderly rows running parallel to the shoreline and either side of the aforementioned road. The regulations also applied to matters of water and sewerage, specifically the provision of wells and latrines in *te mwenga* and the actions of bathing and defecating. However, with little concern for maintaining latrines for various reasons (e.g., lack of concern about privacy and pollution, lack of technical knowledge, cultural repugnance, higher priority of other subsistence work), these actions are now completed on the seashore, by and large (cf. Hockings, 1984).

Regarding other modern conveniences, electricity generation on the atoll is limited and localised, with small petrol/diesel generators, solar cells and batteries in use but only on a severely restricted basis because of scarcity, unreliability and cost (cf. Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007). This limits the use of much equipment and impairs the performing of many activities that on Tarawa and beyond may be taken for granted. Examples include lighting—pressure lamps and battery torches are common—cooling and refrigeration, machinery and equipment—battery-powered radios are common—(see Mala, Schläpfer & Pryor, 2009, about similar matters on Abemama).

The word *mwenga* also translates as households, the one word having two meanings indicating synonymy between geographical place and social residency (Hockings, 1984). Thus, *te mwenga* comprise members of *te utu* (see S2) residing together, the average number being 5–6 persons on those that are still occupied (National Statistics Office, 2013). However, I say “still” because evident from even casual observation are significant numbers of dwelling areas in five *kawa* are unoccupied—Rungata is the exception. This state of affairs is attributable to entire *mwenga* emigrating from Nikunau to Tarawa, usually in a few stages over several years rather than all at once, for reasons discussed as the paper unfolds.

The two or three most striking buildings in each *te kawa*, and indeed on the whole atoll, are cultural and spiritual, reflecting still what Hockings (1984) describes on neighbouring Onotoa Atoll as “an intense investment in cultural symbolism” (p. 458). Nikumanu is peculiar in still having *te mwaneaba* (\cong traditional meetinghouse);¹² such *mwaneaba* dated from well before 1820 and were once “masterpiece(s) of Gilbertese culture” (Sabatier, 1939/1977, p. 99); they served as social, political and religious centres of a “*mwaneaba* district” and as inns for visitors. While many of the Nikumanu district *mwaneaba*’s formal uses have ceased, that is more than can be said for *mwaneaba* in the other *kawa*. A few standing stones on overgrown sites are all that remain of them, their place having been usurped by churches. Thus, each *te*

kawa, including Nikumanu, has a church associated with the Kiribati Protestant (or Uniting) Church (KPC/KUC)¹³ and four—Tabomatang and Tabutoa are the two exceptions—have a Roman Catholic (RC) church. Associated with each church is a dwelling for the pastor or cleric, including their companions, families, etc., which are more like *I-Matang* house types than traditional ones, and a structure, almost as noticeable as the church itself, referred to, for obvious reasons of appearance, as the church *mwaneaba*, or simply *te mwaneaba*.¹⁴ Indeed, these church *mwaneaba* are seemingly in more frequent use than the churches themselves, for various administrative, social and recreational activities (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007). *Kawa*, or parts of them, also usually have *uma* (\cong small meetinghouses) where community groups (e.g., *kawa* welfare groups, young men's groups, women's groups) meet and hold functions.

Each *kawa* also boasts either a small trade store, or, failing that, a kiosk, all selling basic provisions, and, in the case of stores, purchasing copra from copra cutters. The concept of stores is of long standing, dating in at least two cases from the 1870s, and all this time they have represented the extremis of successive maritime trading networks, the present network involving trading and, mostly container, shipping companies based around the western Pacific Rim and Fiji. Their legal forms now vary between being branches of *Te Bobotin Nikunau* (or The Nikunau Cooperative Society) and *mronron*, which comprise members drawn from kinship groups, *kawa* or churches.¹⁵ The items available from these outlets include white rice, white flour, white sugar, oil/fat/dripping, stick tobacco, cigarettes, black tea, instant coffee, evaporated milk, powdered milk, corned beef, chewing gum, tomato ketchup, tinned vegetables and fruit, soap, toothpaste, matches, lamps, fishing lines, hooks and nets, bicycle parts, pots and pans, knives and spoons, tools and other metal goods, cloth, radio and torch batteries, kerosene and petrol, timber, cement. I observed these in 1987 and 2009, and the extent of this list had changed little over that time, any changes because of more goods being manufactured worldwide being countered by incomes of *I-Nikunau* not being able to support the import of more goods (cf. Catala, 1957; Couper, 1967; Lewis, 1981).

Most *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau make their living, etc. in traditional ways, to which the goods available from trade stores are incidental, relatively speaking. In and around their *mwenga* and *kawa*, their days are perceived not in hours but in the daylight from dawn to dusk and the darkness of the evening. Mostly according to gender and age (see Lawrence, 1983; Rose, 2014), they spend this six days a week performing domestic chores (e.g., fetching water,

cleaning, cooking, feeding the pigs), going to school, socialising, and engaging in *kawa* and church activities, fishing on the reef or the ocean and cultivating, harvesting and performing other work on their *aba* (\cong plots of land, some near *te kawa* and the rest in *buakonikai* nearby or at a distance)—McCreary and Boardman (1968) note their focus on the here and now, and their behaviour having a rhythm and being diurnal. Subsisting from the reef and ocean involves using fish traps, canoes and an array of traditional and imported equipment, to acquire a wide variety of fish and shellfish. On land, many of the bushes, trees, etc. have been propagated and cultivated to yield victuals (e.g., coconut, *kamwaimwai* (= coconut molasses), *karewe* or toddy,¹⁶ pandanus fruit, pawpaw, breadfruit, pumpkin, *bwabwai* (\cong swamp taro), pig meat, fowl, cabbage, banana, sweet potato, fig), medicines, ornaments, building materials, tools, fuel and fertiliser (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007) (cf. Lawrence, 1983; Lewis, 1981). The resulting domestic produce is part of a subsistence and victuals distribution and exchange process, which is largely undercounted, or even neglected, in official statistics and the like, despite its importance to *I-Kiribati* standards of living (cf. Gibson & Nero, 2008). Furthermore, the coconut palms also yield the coconuts used to produce almost the only the cash crop, copra.¹⁷

Daily routine life on Nikunau is punctuated each week by observance of *Te Tabati* (= the Sabbath). As well as church going, some activities are encouraged by religious (and secular) laws and legal decisions, and other activities are prohibited, including work, play, pastimes, games and sports. The prohibitions apply more so among the near half of the islanders who adhere to the Reformed Protestantism of the KPC/KUC—this Church grew out of the London Missionary Society (LMS)—rather than the similar proportion who are now RCs.

Life is also punctuated less frequently by various other observances. These are to celebrate or commemorate various critical life passages (e.g., births (particularly of the first-born child), first birthdays, *katekateka* (= first menstruations (see Kutimeni Tenten, 2003) (now celebrated intermittently), marriages, deaths and burials) and festivals (e.g., Easter, Christmas, National Day); and to welcome to the atoll and to each or all *te kawa* various people (e.g., temporary *non-I-Nikunau* residents and short-term *non-I-Nikunau* visitors, *I-Nikunau* who have been absent for a limited period, visiting *I-Nikunau* diaspora), and departures of same. These observances usually involve *botaki* (\cong festive or other large social gathering), some lasting up to several days and invariably involving a feast of victuals and programme of entertainment, prominent in which are *batere*, *ruoia*, *kabuti*, *mwaie*, *kabure* and other various forms of dance, along with music, songs and poems (Autio, 2010;

Dambiec, 2005; Grimble, 1989; Sabatier, 1939/1977; Whincup, 2005). They are held in church *mwaneaba*, or in Nikumanu's case, its traditional *mwaneaba*, or in the lesser community buildings, or on *mwenga*. Participation is a matter of course, although the roles in which someone might be cast can vary, both according to age and gender, and according to being an *utu* member, through *te kawa* resident or member of a church congregation, to island resident (cf. Autio, 2010, pp.155–176).

Arrangements for these events, along with oversight of *kawa* affairs generally, are mostly in the charge of *kabowi* (\cong (council) meetings) in *mwaneaba* of *unimane* (\cong wise, respected and ascendant old men), hence what I term “*mwaneaba* councils”. As well as being part of tradition, these councils are important for tradition continuing. This tradition, often referred to as *te katei ni Nikunau* (\cong the Nikunau Way), or just *te katei*, has equivalents on the other Kiribati islands and is oral (or unwritten) and ever-developing (cf. Rennie, 1981). It comprises beliefs, rules, regulations, ceremonial rituals, precedents and other practices to which *I-Nikunau* are subject, thus forming a code of customary kinship, social and governancial relationships. The councils are custodians of *te katei*, updating it and enforcing it, and thereby regulating conduct in *te kawa*. Just as tradition is dynamic and becomes modernised, so is the form of these *bowi* and how they are conducted (cf. Autio, 2010; Geddes, 1977; Kazama, 2001; Lawrence, 1983; Macdonald, 1971, 1972; Maude, 1963; Thomas, 2001).

Nikunau has other prominent fabricated objects that, while associated with *kawa* and their residents, are outside them and may be labelled “non-traditional”. The atoll has three clinics and three primary schools, each positioned about midway between the two *kawa* they serve (see Figure 4). The clinics have sleeping areas for in-patients, and so are sometimes referred to as island hospitals, although they are staffed by a nurse or two, not by doctors, and have only a limited supply of medicines and dressings and the most basic amenities. The schools comprise classrooms, a school *mwaneaba* and lesser buildings, and shaded areas for outdoor activities. Together, the three primary schools cater for 360 pupils (Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012b; Republic of Kiribati, Ministry of Education, 2011).

The primary schools feed the atoll's junior secondary school, established only in 2001 and located on the southern outskirts of Rungata. Its roll is almost 200 students. Students finish junior secondary school at about 15 years of age, afterwards either going away to senior secondary schools, which are mainly on Tarawa (including North Tarawa) but also on Beru, Tabiteuea, Nonouti, Abemama and Abaiang Atolls, or ending their formal schooling and

probably becoming full-time members of their subsistence-based *mwenga* or spending time, or even making a life, elsewhere. For example, they may join *utu* on Tarawa, including in the hope of finding work there, or, they may obtain places on work schemes outside Kiribati (e.g., the Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme in New Zealand).

The formal administration of the atoll is vested in the Nikunau Island Council, sometimes known as *Te Kabowi n Abamakoro* (≡ The Council of the Island). Its principal premises, also on the southern outskirts of Rungata and at one time referred to as the “government station”, includes a flagstaff, a relatively new administration building (the previous one, and the records it contained, were consumed by fire in the 1990s), courthouse, community development centre, prison, post office and guesthouse for visitors (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007). Adjacent to these are several recently built, traditional-looking *mwenga* for employees of the council and of the Republic Government, or *Te Tautaeaka*, as it and its predecessor, the Colony Government, is, or was, known. These *mwenga* and the staff and students of the junior secondary school account in part for the relatively recent phenomenon of the population of Rungata being almost equal to the populations of the other *kawa* put together. They include a disproportionate number of the atoll’s 200+ *non-I-Nikunau* residents, nearly all of whom, however, are *I-Kiribati*; their primary reason for being on Nikunau is their work with the Island Council, the Republic Government (e.g., as primary and junior secondary school teachers, nurses at the clinics, or financial or legal administrators) or churches. They also account for a proprietary trade store having been established nearby only within the past decade or so, and for this store seeming more prosperous than the stores situated in *kawa*. Nevertheless, besides the paid employees of the council, it also attracts custom from copra cutters, buying their copra just like the stores in nearby *kawa*; these customers probably find it just as convenient and probably better stocked than the other stores.

Nikunau’s formal links and connections with the outside world include transport and communications. To reach the atoll for my five visits I flew onto the atoll’s airstrip, taking the usually weekly air service between Nikunau and Tarawa, a 600-kilometre flight of four hours’ duration, involving stops on Tabiteuea and Beru—at various times the service was twice weekly but only if sufficient aircraft were in service. The alternative would have been a voyage lasting several days on the passenger-cargo ship(s) that ply the central and southern islands commencing from and returning to Tarawa. These ships call intermittently, rather than working to a fixed schedule, and their frequency, while never having been great, is in

long-term decline. The ships stand off Nikunau, near a passage through the reef leading to the wharf at Rungata, which has operated since at least the 1880s (Sabatier, 1939/1977). The main store and copra shed of the once prosperous *Te Bobotin Nikunau* are a stone's throw from this wharf.

With aeroplane passenger and freight capacity limited and fares high (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007), *I-Nikunau* depend on these ships, including if they need or want to travel to Tarawa or elsewhere. Although travel by canoe to neighbouring Beru Island is possible logistically, few attempt it nowadays (cf. Bedford, Macdonald & Munro, 1980). Most *I-Nikunau* resident on Nikunau visit other islands only sporadically, usually for family reasons or to participate in religious body events, governmental meetings and organised sports tournaments. Some may travel to visit the southern Kiribati Islands district hospital on Tabiteuea or the central hospital on Tarawa, but the reality is that *I-Nikunau* usually go without health treatment if it is not available at the rudimentary clinics on Nikunau. Longer absences may be for school education or relate to employment elsewhere; however, these longer absences have increasingly given way to the aforementioned phenomenon of *I-Nikunau* leaving permanently.

Regarding communications, some services of longstanding are available at the Island Council main premises, including postal and money transfer services from and to Tarawa, the other islands and beyond. Radio broadcasts have reached Nikunau from Tarawa since the 1960s, and my experience in the 1980s was for Nikunau to receive broadcasts in *te taetae ni Kiribati* for a few hours each day from Radio Kiribati, a Republic Government-owned organisation—Radio Kiribati also relayed the English-language news from either Radio Australia or the BBC World Service, but this was usually turned off to conserve the precious battery power. However, since then the reliability of the broadcasts has been impaired by deterioration of the transmission equipment on Tarawa. Since 2010, Nikunau has had satellite telephones, making it possible technologically if not financially, to dial direct to and from the rest of the world; up until then, the telephone service was limited to a radiotelephone at the Island Council main premises for only a few hours each week. Since the new telephone service became available, access to the Internet has been possible but this is severely restricted by the aforementioned lack of electricity and by price. Broadcast television has never been available.

As the above indicates, Nikunau various formal public services are provided on the atoll. However, these are fewer in number, much less resourced and of limited volume compared to those on Tarawa. The services are under the auspices of the Island Council and the Republic

Government. The number of Island Council employees varies but around 30 non-casuals comprise the core (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007), and they are the biggest line item of expenditure—more than the other line items combined in fact (confidential personal communication, 2009).

The Island Council is dependent on the Republic Government for funds, with, formally, 80% of its budgeted revenue coming from the Republic Government's appropriations to its local government ministry. In practice, however, this percentage is even higher, because local tax collection is not very effective. *I-Nikunau* either have difficulty in paying taxes, etc., especially in times of drought, or are reluctant to pay them (cf. Ortega, 2008)—the salaries and wages of Island Council employees is sometimes in arrears for lack of cash, and that means they cannot pay their local taxes either. The Republic Government also employs over 30 persons on Nikunau (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007), most of them posted there, sometimes reluctantly. They are paid out of appropriations to that government's various ministries (e.g., of education, health), in the same way as such employees on Tarawa are.

In contrast to the paid employees living at Rungata or adjacent to primary schools and clinics, and to pastors and others with private cash incomes, etc., the rest of *I-Nikunau* are much less dependent on cash as a means of acquiring their daily needs; however, they do need cash for certain things. I estimate it as unlikely that the mean fortnightly cash incomes of a traditional *I-Nikunau te mwenga* exceeds AU\$70 (or < AU\$1 per day per person). There are only a few sources of cash incomes. *I-Nikunau* over 70 years of age¹⁸ receive a monthly non-contributory pension of AU\$40 from the Republic Government. Some *I-Nikunau* obtain a little casual paid work from the Island Council or otherwise (e.g., stevedoring when a cargo ship arrives – see Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007), but work done for other *I-Nikunau* or for the church, including repairs and maintenance, rarely results in cash income. Some *mwenga* receive cash remittances from those *utu* either working away temporarily or absent permanently, in an urban island or metropolitan country diasporic community (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007). However, given the lack of *kaako* (literally, cargo, and meaning stock or inventory) for sale in stores on Nikunau, remittances in kind can be more useful than those in cash are. For many *mwenga*, the main source of cash is from cutting copra. However, although they can sell all the copra they can produce at a guaranteed price to their local trade store—the stores act as purchasing agents for the Republic Government,¹⁹ which presently buys all the copra and ships it to Tarawa, for onward sale—

income from this source is not great, especially given increasing vagaries in rainfall (cf. Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007).

Regarding spending, its results and related matters, purchases from a trade stores are limited to the foreign victuals and manufactures listed above as available in those stores; these items have become as an accustomed part of *I-Nikunau* life as traditional subsistence produce from land and sea. The aforementioned remittances in kind might include tools and other hardware, fishing equipment, radios, video and audio equipment, DVDs and similar, and push-bicycles and mopeds/scooters—the handful or so of other motor vehicles on the atoll are pickups and light trucks, which are owned by the Island Council or a church. *I-Nikunau* also use cash to pay school fees, church contributions and Island Council tax—nowadays, no Republic Government taxes are levied on subsistence incomes. The contributions *I-Nikunau* make in cash to their churches are used to buy materials to repair and maintain buildings, and to meet local and national expenses. Contributions in kind (e.g., labour, materials) are also made, including that *mwenga* take it in turns to feed KPC/KUC pastors and women produce handicrafts, which the churches send to Tarawa and sell there to raise funds.

In the above and later sections, there may be places in which life on Nikunau sounds simple, noble, idyllic even. Such a romantic view comes easier to the observer than the participant, I suspect. In the cold light of day, life on Nikunau, now and in the past, was undoubtedly hard, frequently affected by droughts, rough seas and other adverse climatic conditions to name a few. Even so, *I-Nikunau* more than survived: they developed practices to utilise their environment in its totality and, of necessity, they learnt how to maintain a delicate balance between human and nature, as reflected in the way their culture evolved in harmony with the environment. Although many changes have occurred to their traditional way of living and making a living, some basic elements, temporal as well as spiritual, of traditional practices are still recognisable today in and around *kawa*.

3.2 *On (South) Tarawa*

Tarawa Atoll (area 31 km², pop. 63,000 – National Statistics Office, 2016) comprises several coral islets around a substantial tidal lagoon (see Figure 5); nowhere are the islets more than 5m above sea level. The atoll is less drought prone than Nikunau is, and so has more freshwater—the source on both islands is a subterranean freshwater lens, fed by rainwater, floating over seawater (see Corcoran, 2016; Storey & Hunter, 2010; White et al., 2007).

Although this means the vegetation is potentially lusher and more productive than on Nikunau, this potential is compromised by the pattern of settlement, with a division,

demographic and administrative, between North Tarawa (pop. 6,600)—distinguished on Figure 5 by yellow islets—and South Tarawa (pop. 56,400)—distinguished on the inset to Figure 5 by red islets and in addition shown separately—and the high population density on South Tarawa (National Statistics Office, 2016). This density means South Tarawa is the only significant urbanised settlement in Kiribati.



Figure 5. Map of entire Tarawa Atoll (Source: Tarawa, 2016) and a larger scale map of South Tarawa (Source: Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012c, p. 3)

To put the population of South Tarawa—or just Tarawa, as it is widely referred to, including in this paper already and henceforth, except where it is necessary to distinguish South from North—in perspective, it is 25 times that of Nikunau and lives on an area of 16 km², which is less than 85% of the area of Nikunau. Thus, land on Tarawa is at a premium, as are its freshwater reserves during the frequent short droughts. Except for shade trees and shrubs, Tarawa has been largely cleared of vegetation. This has occurred over the past six decades to make way for an almost continuous ribbon development running either side of the atoll's only sealed road, which stretches some 30 km from the south-west tip of Betio to Buota in the east. The ribbon development comprises the road, several thousand constructions, including residences and premises of community, governmental, religious and commercial bodies²⁰ (Castalia Strategic Advisors, 2005; Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012c; Roman, 2013; White et al., 2007).

Tarawa's urbanised circumstances coincide with its present status as the Republic's seat of government and, before the Republic was inaugurated, the headquarters of the Colony Government following colonial rule being restored after 1943.²¹ Some of its developed areas

are occupied by *I-Tarawa*, but most are long-leased or have been purchased from them, the Colony Government having legislated for and entered into many such still-standing agreements. Consequently, the Republic Government is probably the largest single landholder (Corcoran, 2016) but there are many other *non-I-Tarawa* with this status, many of them the commercial, community, religious and governmental bodies referred to above.

Alongside land areas being cleared and developed, Tarawa's economy and society have become increasingly monetised, market-based and urban; this is most obvious in the governmental bureaucracies, government or state-owned and private businesses, church and other community organisations, and in some modern residential settlements that have emerged, although significant numbers of more traditional *mwenga* are still very evident, and are still being erected. Tarawa's many residents have been increasingly drawn into this economy and its "non-traditional modes of production, distribution and exchange,"²² as workers, consumers, householders, worshippers, users of public amenities and services, taxpayers and members of commercial and other organisations (Asian Development Bank, 2002; Government of Kiribati, 2005; Doran, 1960; Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012c; Roman, 2013; cf. Wickramasinghe & Hopper, 2005).

South Tarawa is also where 95% of the 2,600 strong *I-Nikunau* diasporic community lives, many of the other 5% making up the increasing overspill of people and *mwenga* northwards, across the as yet uncausewayed lagoon-ocean channel at Buota, onto lower North Tarawa. In contrast to Nikunau, their *mwenga* are dispersed along Tarawa, and interspersed between them are *mwenga* of *I-Kiribati* from other islands and the aforementioned multiplicity of premises of various bodies. In these circumstances, *I-Nikunau* are less likely to have any historical kinship ties with neighbouring *mwenga*, and so their interactions are often less substantial and may be insubstantial, varying with other factors, such as children playing together and young adults being freer to socialise and even inter-marry.

Some *mwenga* (in the sense of dwelling areas) resemble those on Nikunau in terms of structures, wells, graves, spaces, etc. (see S3.1), although their layouts and amounts and uses of space reflect Tarawa's much denser population, its water issues—rainwater tanks are common, to compensate for the inadequacy of wells and the intermittency of the public water system—and other constrictions. The structures on *mwenga* also reflect their attempts to imitate modern single and double-storey dwellings of imported designs and materials; these are quite common on Tarawa and many *I-Nikunau* live in them, being entitled to a rental property, if available, under their employment contracts with the Republic Government.²³

This imitating arises from structures on *mwenga* incorporating timber, cement, bricks, corrugated metal, prefabricated items, fittings, electricity wiring and power points, and other imported building materials—how these are used in construction them may not be what their distant manufacturers intended. The use of imported materials is because traditional materials from Tarawa are in very short supply and from even those Outer Islands that are nearby is frustrated by transport and other difficulties. Besides, *I-Kiribati* sometimes perceive imported materials, and their outward appearance when constructed, as being superior, which because of the climate and lack of design knowledge is dubious. This perception extends to imitating the interiors of dwellings of imported designs occupied by *I-Matang*, or which were previously so,²⁴ and so acquiring many items of furniture that are rarely seen on Nikunau (e.g., beds, tables, chairs, chests of drawers, cabinets).²⁵

Compared with Nikunau, their *mwenga* (in the sense of households) are larger, typically comprising between 6 and 12 persons, usually of three generations, and sometimes even four. As more *I-Nikunau* have immigrated, or grown up and had children themselves, the area of land occupied and the number of *mwenga* have increased. However, these increases have not kept pace with the growth in persons, and so the numbers in each *te mwenga* have gradually increased, living conditions have become increasingly crowded and strains have been put on incomes, the amounts of victuals available, etc. (cf. Office of Te Beretitenti and T’Makei Services, 2012c). These are among reasons for members of the oldest generation(s) moving from one *te mwenga* to another at infrequent intervals, and indeed for others to do so, in contrast to practices on Nikunau. However, other reasons for this fluidity are at least as important, including their adult offspring taking it in turns to look after the older generation according to *te katei ni Nikunau*, the traditional role of grandparents in teaching grandchildren, the modern need for *unaine* (\cong wise and respected old women), in particular, minding grandchildren while parents attend places of paid employment, social tensions between the generations and the possibility of each *te mwenga* sharing in the pensions of these old people.

Te mwenga activities encompass choring, socialising, grand parenting, schooling, employment and, perhaps, storekeeping and producing victuals for sale, etc. The significance of these last three, which amount to generating cash to be able to purchase a high proportion of their needs, reflect conditions somewhat removed from the subsistence lifestyle of their counterparts on Nikunau; that is to say, satisfying their *mwenga*’s needs for victuals and similar is beyond what most can grow or gather/fish themselves.²⁶ Although the shade trees

and shrubs among these dwellings include coconuts, breadfruit and pawpaw, these now make only a minority contribution to *te mwenga* victuals, fuel and building materials, as does the restricted keeping of pigs, which are usually reserved for major *botaki*—the rights to take produce from any remaining traditional *aba* largely rest with *I-Tarawa*, although some *I-Nikunau* may share in these rights through marriage to or descent from *I-Tarawa*.

Furthermore, with so many people using the lagoon, reef and area just beyond the reef, the quantities of seafood these yield, though substantial in total, are insufficient per capita to satisfy the potential demand (Locke, 2009; Doran, 1960; Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012c; Roniti, 1988; Thomas, 2002). Concomitantly, there is little fishing or cultivating work to occupy the time of people willing to do such work.

To elaborate on *mwenga* obtaining cash from various sources, the main ones are as follows. Women, as well as men (see Rose, 2014), perform paid work locally of varying statuses (e.g., casual, part-time, full-time) and all levels of seniority, mainly with government ministries and departments, government businesses, public institutions and other governmental bodies, or with private businesses, religious organisations and non-government organisations.²⁷ They share in the running of *mronron* stores or kiosks²⁸ or operate more proprietorial, private family stores, kiosks or other micro businesses (e.g., baking bread and donuts, freezing ice blocks (or ice lollies), producing and vending lunchtime takeaways, catching and hawking fish, moneylending). *Utu* working and living overseas remit money and goods to them (Borovnik, 2006). Persons over 70 receive non-contributory monthly pensions and former government workers receive public service retirement benefits from the Kiribati Provident Fund. I estimate that fortnightly cash incomes from all sources of the substantial majority of *mwenga* on Tarawa do not yet surpass AU\$750, with many being barely half that;²⁹ nevertheless, these amounts are substantially more (5 to 10 times) than on Nikunau.

While notes and coins are still by far the main form of commercial transactions, formal income increasingly passes through bank accounts, from which it can be withdrawn either by visiting a bank branch or by using one of the automatic teller machines that have been introduced in the past decade. For those in official employment, the amount received is nett of deductions for income tax, and of rent in the frequent case of government and some other workers occupying houses tied to their employment. Much of the amount received is paid out quickly. Some is used to pay for items received on credit at *mronron* stores or is collected by moneylenders—the country's only bank does not issue credit cards and only a minority of customers have current accounts or overdraft facilities. Further amounts are then disbursed

daily on basic victuals, whether locally produced (e.g., bread, doughnuts, ice blocks, fish, eggs, vegetables, bananas³⁰) or imported (e.g., the list of victuals, etc. in S3.1, together with soft drinks, beer and other canned beverages, cordial, cereals, tinned fish, meat and dairy, frozen mutton flaps, boiling fowl and chicken) (cf. Catala, 1957). They are also disbursed on personal and domestic expenditures (e.g., bus fares, public utilities, school fees), and donations to various *utu*, Nikunau community bodies and churches (see Kuruppu, 2009, Ratuva, 2014).

Occasionally, some cash can be saved temporarily, with the prospect of financing *botaki* for such family events as weddings and first birthdays, or with a view to making purchases of clothes, household durables, television/video equipment, music players, computers and, perhaps, a motor vehicle, although the latter still seems beyond the means of many, despite how motor vehicle numbers have increased dramatically since the 1980s. However, many *mwenga* seem under increasing financial strain as the gap increases between the cash available and the number of persons and possibilities for spending they see around them. An increasing proportion of youths who have left school can only chore around *te mwenga* and do domestic or similar work for *utu*, rather than perform paid employment, because the supply of jobs has not kept pace with the numbers wanting work (Duncan, 2014; Government of Kiribati, 2005).

I-Nikunau social and community groups on Tarawa draw members from *mwenga* in various ways. In order of size, small to large, and perhaps importance (extremely to fairly), these groups are oriented around *utu*, religious denomination, *kawa* on Nikunau, and being *I-Nikunau* (rather than *I-Tarawa*, *I-Beru*, *I-Butaritari*, etc.) (Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012c). Most of these groups retain various social and cultural practices reminiscent of Nikunau, including holding *botaki* regularly. Indeed, such *botaki* and other commitments are among several settings where social mixing occurs, including work, school, church and neighbouring *mwenga*, and so possibilitate gradual integrative changes to identity (cf. Berry, 1997, 2005). However, *I-Nikunau* have adapted their social organisation to their new, more densely populated and constructed surroundings in significant ways, as exemplified in the form and content of these *botaki*. Thus, compared with Nikunau and tradition generally, *botaki* are shorter, lasting between a few hours and 36 hours, rather than up to several days. Except for births and funerals, they are held mainly on Saturdays, and, if longer than a day, start on Friday evenings, rather than on the other non-Sabbath days; this is because attending places of employment and school are a well-established part of *I-Nikunau*'s

daily programme, even if they might still have a lower priority than *te mwenga*, *utu* and religious obligations. The quantity and variety of victuals served are mostly greater than on Nikunau, reflecting what is available on Tarawa, but purchased food will often replace subsistence produce.

Botaki that *te I-Nikunau* and their *mwenga* are eligible or invited to attend on Tarawa are also more frequent than on Nikunau, including because groups to which *te I-Nikunau* has an affiliation are greater; for example, they may include groups from other islands to which the affiliation is through marriage or similar. However, whereas participating in such *botaki* would be mandatory on Nikunau, this is no longer practical on Tarawa, because they clash with each other and with other commitments. Another reason for not participating in *te botaki* is that *te mwenga* is unable to afford the contributions of victuals or cash donations expected from those who attend.

In adapting their social organisation to their surroundings on Tarawa, various phenomena are noteworthy. *I-Nikunau* are engaged in *te mwenga* activities and other economic, social, cultural, religious and political pursuits, more in keeping with *te katei ni Nikunau*, albeit a much modernised version of tradition, including seeming almost as oblivious as *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau are to time as measured in hours and minutes. *I-Nikunau* journey along Tarawa frequently to visit each other and help each other in many other ways socially and economically—this includes being loyal member-customers of *mronron*, and working in these and on other tasks (e.g., child-minding, house construction) without receiving wages. Within and among *mwenga*, they spend much time on storytelling, *maroro/winnanti* (\cong informal chatting/gossiping), playing games, etc. (cf. Sabatier, 1939/1977). However, in work situations, particularly among *I-Nikunau* in full-time public service or similar formal employment, where working hours are set (e.g., from 8 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays, with a one-hour lunch break), they are “government personnel” or similar, grappling with alien structures, processes, procedures and schedules, either left behind by the Colony Government or recently arising from aid organisation projects of mixed consequences, etc. During these periods, they can seem to be different persons, even giving rise to the impression that some are leading a double life.

Remarkable about continuing traditions are how *utu* and *koraki*, living and deceased, feature in stories *I-Nikunau* share repeatedly; these stories concern micro events and, parenthetically, life changes and matters of interest around them (see Gilkes, 2006). The various forms of dance, songs, etc., serve a similar function in passing on important matters of culture, etc.

inter-generationally. Performances, practices, etc. not only continue as a matter of cultural identity as much on Tarawa as on Nikunau (see S3.1) but they have become a matter of national pride (Teaiwa, 2014; Whincup, 2005). There is also an element of tradition in the extremely popular recent innovations of beauty pageants, such as take place during the four-day National Day event on Tarawa each July. These pageants lead to the choosing of Miss Kiribati and Mr Kiribati, and seem to be a meld of traditions around the maturing and coming out of young men and young women (see Grimble, 1921; Hockings, 1984; Luomala, 1978) and of celebrity culture from elsewhere, reflecting the increasing availability over recent decades of Hollywood and other films on contemporary media (e.g., reels of film, videotapes, DVDs).

Regarding contemporary media and culture on Tarawa, films, etc. on videotapes, DVDs, etc., whether produced legally or pirated, have been in abundant supply for over two decades—many are brought home by seafarers and others who have been away working. A broadcast television service also operated on Tarawa from 2004 to 2013 but is now in abeyance. The Internet arrived on Tarawa in the late 1990s and access to it has grown significantly in the past decade, including for recreational use. These developments have given rise to a slow but incessant trend towards individualistic and small group pastimes, ones that are somewhat passive and alien; in particular, many able, and mostly young, people often seem preoccupied by these pastimes, alongside their engagement with *mwenga* and community group activities.

Mention was made in S3.1 of the place of *te katei ni Nikunau* in providing for governance, order and control in *kawa* and over *kawa* affairs. *I-Nikunau* social and community groups on Tarawa have adopted these arrangements and adapted them to some extent; for example, serving in governance groups has been extended to include persons of both gender who exhibit knowledge and ability, rather than be restricted to men on the basis of age (i.e., to *unimane*). Similar has run right through to the top of formal institutions, with women and younger men occupying a significant proportion, if not the majority, of senior positions in the administration, control and governance of schools, hospitals, businesses, government ministries, etc. This includes the positions of *te beretitenti* (\equiv president) and members of *Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu* (i.e., parliament—its members are usually referred to as MPs), to which the Constitution of Kiribati 1979 permits *I-Nikunau* to seek election, as well positions on Tarawa's local governments—that is the equivalents of the Nikunau Island Council. Once elected, they may be appointed as ministers, as indeed has happened to a few over the past five decades (e.g., see Index of /sites/docs/hansard, 2014; Macdonald, 1982a). However, the

constituencies on Tarawa in which *I-Nikunau* cast their votes comprise a mix of island populations, and so other factors and associations are more important to winning elections than identifying as *I-Nikunau*. Similar applies on the Line Islands, although *I-Nikunau* there make up a greater proportion of the population than on Tarawa and have often provided their MPs, just as Nikunau has always elected *I-Nikunau* as its MPs, although this is not guaranteed constitutionally, only that the MPs from there must be elected by its resident population of registered voters.

This last is in accordance with provisions in the Constitution casting *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati*, regardless of gender and adult age, in the role of citizens of a single nation-state. These provisions also infer a right on *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* to use the apparatus for governing the Republic to hold people in authority accountable; formally, at least, this accountability covers matters of public finance, taxation and capital investment, among many others, in keeping with rights, checks and balances typical of a hybrid Westminster system of government. However, many citizens on Tarawa still seem at least a little flummoxed by the technologies of government in use around them, let alone their counterparts on distant Nikunau, etc. The technologies concerned include ones involving written records and documents generally, accounting documents and information, and similar things inherited from *I-Matang* officials who ran the Colony Government and those introduced or elaborated since by officials and consultants of a hotchpotch of supranational, multilateral, transnational, international, national and non-governmental organisations, and consulting firms (hereafter “aid organisations”)³¹ (see Dixon, 2004a; Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014; Hassall, Kaitani, Mae, Tipu & Wainikesa, 2011; Ieremia, 1993; Macdonald, 1970, 1982a, 1996a, 1998; Mackenzie, 2004; Smith, 2011).

Regarding the attraction that Tarawa currently holds for *I-Nikunau*, while there still seems a predominant net inflow from Nikunau, this flow is not entirely in one direction (National Statistics Office, 2013). Tarawa gradually became the centre of everything most modern about the Colony after the restoration of the Colony Government and its decision to embark on social, economic and political development policies founded on the principle of centralisation on Tarawa, the cessation of mining on Banaba and the establishment of the Republic. However, the growth of Tarawa’s population has led to scarcity and over-exploitation of the resources on which its inhabitants can subsist; this scarcity and over-exploitation applies not only to the habitable and cultivatable space on land and to freshwater, but also to the lagoon and reef of the atoll and the ocean surrounding it. Now Tarawa is the

centre of everything most “developed” and “affluent” about the Republic, including much that *I-Nikunau* feel is undesirable. Thus, *I-Nikunau*, among many others, are increasingly coming to see Tarawa as far less attractive in certain matters than it once was. This is evident in observations made about Tarawa by *I-Kiribati* who have emigrated from there to New Zealand or who are keen to do so. They see Tarawa as only offering cash employment for some, and being short on day-to-day and lengthier economic and social opportunities, and otherwise generally lacking in prospects (see Fedor, 2012; Thompson, 2016). These negative conceptions go hand-in-hand with how Tarawa is suffering increasingly from lack of urban planning, overcrowding, water, sanitation and public health issues, physical degradation and inadequate natural food resources (Corcoran, 2016; Mackenzie, 2008; Maunaa, 1987; McCreary & Boardman, 1968; Office of Te Beretitenti and T’Makei Services, 2012c); for those with an eye on longer-term issues, it has an insecure future because of rising sea levels.

3.3 *Beyond Kiribati*

This section covers diasporic communities in the metropolitan countries of Great Britain in the north-east Atlantic and New Zealand in the south-west Pacific. Despite being poles apart, both are predominantly English speaking and part of the Anglosphere in terms of the majority culture and largest ethnic group. As information available about these countries is commonplace, I have not felt it necessary to give as much detail about them as I supplied in previous sections about Nikunau and Tarawa; however, I have brought some matters to attention where relevant. I start with Great Britain because it is the older of the two communities I describe and because, in its first decade or so, the community in New Zealand followed a similar pattern to how the community in Great Britain had developed. Another matter to note is that I have included more analysis of how the diasporic communities arose than is the case in describing Tarawa in S3.2, whereas the equivalent analysis for Tarawa is in S4. The main reason for this choice is that, particularly in New Zealand, the process of diaspora is very much still part of the present circumstances of these communities (see Thompson et al., 2017).

3.3.1 *On Great Britain*

The older members of the diasporic community in Great Britain comprise about 20 couples who met while one partner, mostly British *I-Matang* and male, was residing temporarily in the Colony or Republic, usually on Tarawa and usually from being employed, before 1979, as a colonial administrator or a professional or technical staff member in a colonial institution (e.g., school, hospital), or, since 1979, as a professional, technical or other aid organisation

worker. The other partner, usually the female, was *I-Kiribati*, possibly *I-Nikunau*, usually living on Tarawa and probably working in situations in which they met *I-Matang*. Notwithstanding any vestiges of colonial policy to discourage *fraternising with the natives* (see GEIC, 1962; Hyam, 1986, re the Crewe Circular of 1909; Ministry of Overseas Development, 1977; (confidential personal communication, 2001, from source based in the Colony in 1970s), the couples formed relationships resulting in marriage. When the temporary resident's contract was completed, the couples, sometimes already with young children, chose to live in Britain. This movement of couples occurred in dribs and drabs between the 1960s and 1990s: after that, aid from Britain in the form of resident experts and volunteers on Tarawa has nearly stopped, and so recent new arrivals from Kiribati have been rare. Thus, while the present diasporic community on Great Britain still includes many of the original partners, they are outnumbered by their children, their children's spouses, their grandchildren, etc.

On the couples or families reaching Britain, their initial settlement and the normality aspects of their family's life were facilitated by the partner of British origin, who usually possessed some capital (often out of savings from well-paid contracts they had through working in Kiribati) with which to establish a home, etc. and who proved to be something of a go-between for the *I-Kiribati* partner in her (or his) entirely new environment (cf. Roman, 2013, re *I-Kiribati* immigration to the United States of America). However, although the couples arrived in Britain independently, and were based throughout much of England and Wales, and Scotland even, the *I-Kiribati* partner soon used her (or his) *I-Kiribati utu* and related networks to establish contacts with similar families who had preceded them, helping each other and engaging in *maroro/winnanti* and storytelling.

As the number of families in contact increased, so they began to organise (e.g., forming the Kiribati Tuvalu Association, the forerunner of today's Kiribati Tungaru Association), and so a diasporic community formed. The community meets frequently for various events, highlights of which are traditional victuals and traditional dance performances. These events include an annual National Day weekend, which also attracts people who have resided/worked in Kiribati, but have no blood or family ties there, and their offspring, etc. (see Kiribati Tungaru Association, 2015). Outside these events, members of the community of different age groups continue to maintain habitual contact face-to-face and via all manner of electronic and social media (e.g., see Kiribati Tungaru Association UK, n.d.).

Through the events, the storytelling and similar the children and grandchildren are conscious, by and large, of their links to Kiribati and its *te katei* (e.g., reciprocity around kinship, the ascendance of the various forms of dance, the insignificance attaching to time as measured by clocks), these being among the goals of the Kiribati Tungaru Association, reflecting a concern common among *I-Kiribati* diasporic communities, and *I-Kiribati* generally, to maintain, or not to lose, their culture and identity (cf. Burnett, 1999; Gheuens, 2017; Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016). Indeed, not only do the young know something of its culture and language, and maintain links with each other through identifying with Kiribati, but also many have visited Kiribati, usually as still young adults. These visits are facilitated through the regular verbal contact senior *I-Kiribati* in the community in particular have maintained with *utu*, etc., mostly on Tarawa but even on their home islands, including Nikunau, particularly since the coming about of low-cost or even free modern technology applications (e.g., Skype, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp Messenger). Otherwise, in many respects the lives of most members of the community, particularly those brought up in Britain are generally “normal” for the many places they have settled in and for the socio-economic class (mostly middle, professional or skilled working) with which they have most to do. Thus, members of the community exhibit quite strongly much of what Berry (1997, 2005) labels “integration”.

3.3.2 *On Te Ika-a-Maui and Te Waipounamu (New Zealand)*

The population of *I-Kiribati* in New Zealand—about 2,115, according to Statistics New Zealand (2014)—is now the largest outside of Kiribati (see Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016).³² The majority of this population lives in and around urban centres, although there are significant groups living in rural settings. The largest concentrations are on the northern and southern outskirts of Auckland (e.g., the Mahurangi area, Otahuhu, Pukekohe) (see Roman, 2013). However, numbers are also significant elsewhere on *Te Ika-a-Maui*, including around Hamilton and north of Wellington, both along the Kapiti Coast and up the Hutt Valley (Thompson, 2016), and on *Te Waipounamu*, including in Marlborough, Canterbury and Southland (Fedor, 2012) (see Figure 6 for a map).

Notwithstanding being widespread geographically, these *I-Kiribati* are in regular contact, even to the extent of holding *botaki* two or three times a year to which households from all the places on one island or the other are invited (e.g., see Macintosh, 2011; Ritatitautua, 2017). However, it is more accurate to say that, rather than only one, New Zealand now has several diasporic communities, as evidenced by the separate formal organisations they have established (e.g., Christchurch Kiribati Community, Kiribati Waipounamu Community,

Wellington Kiribati Community) and the frequent *botaki* and other gatherings for meetings, sports (e.g., volleyball), dance practices, pastimes, church activities, etc. they hold in each community (cf. Roman, 2013).

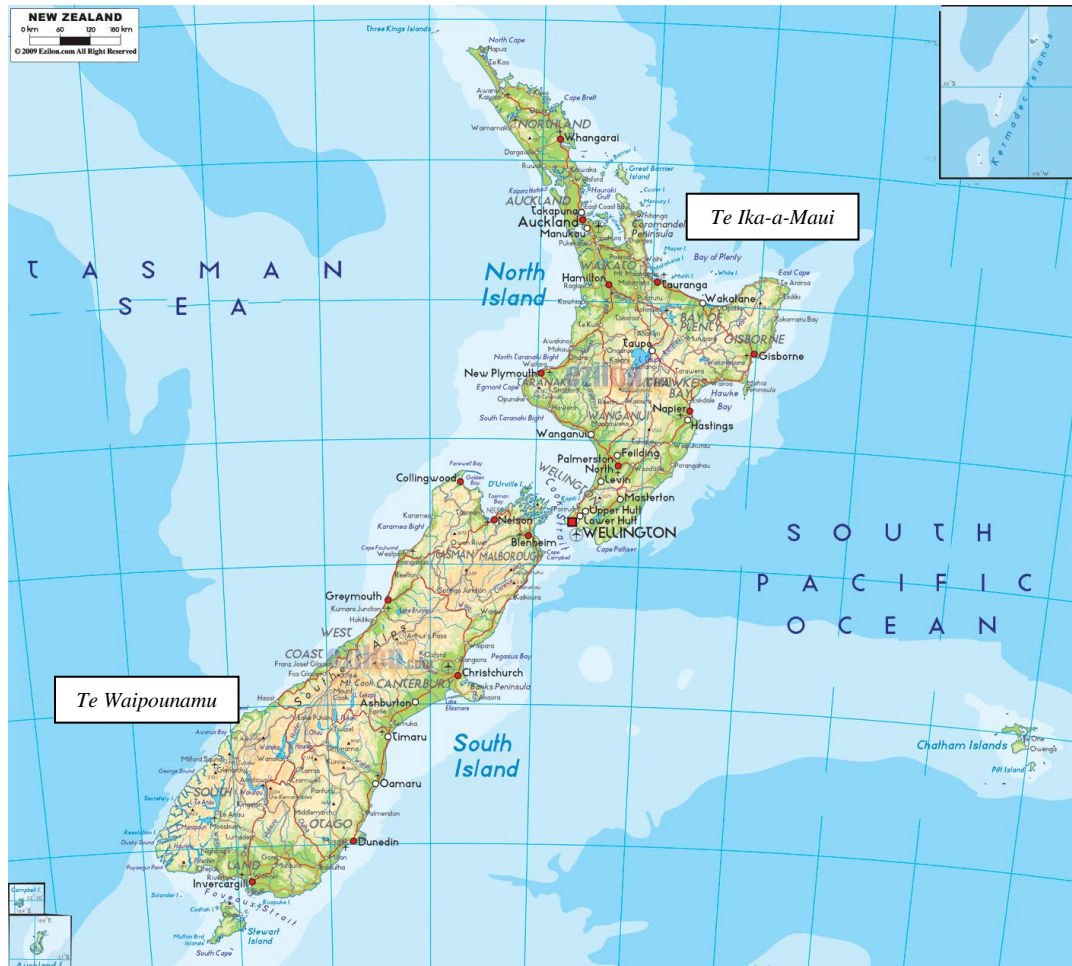


Figure 6. Map of New Zealand (Source: Ezilon Maps (2015) (adapted))

These diasporic communities differ from the one in Britain in three ways: in being mainly comprised of immigrants of more recent origin; in being predominantly of *I-Kiribati* blood; and in still being fuelled by continuing immigration, as well as natural growth—33% were born in New Zealand and the median age is 21 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). However, the second was not the case originally. A small diasporic community materialised in New Zealand between the mid-1970s and late-1990s. Its composition, origins and forms of interaction were mostly similar to that in Britain, involving mixed marriages in Kiribati between *I-Nikunau* or other *I-Kiribati* and *I-Matang*, some from New Zealand and some from Britain, and these families then settling in New Zealand (e.g., see Betuao, 2005; Dreaver, 2005). Except, the community also included a noticeable number of temporary residents in

the form of university or other tertiary scholarship students and members of ad hoc parties of labourers. The community was mostly spread around *Te Ika-a-Maui*, but with a handful of persons in Dunedin (i.e., on *Te Waipounamu*), largely because of its university medical school.

The present contrast between the diasporic community in Britain and the several in New Zealand arose from subsequent developments. Instead of the previous dribs and drabs of mixed race families and students, increasingly more of the immigrants were *I-Kiribati* singles, couples or families, intent on settlement and work, and the rate of immigration increased (see data for “years since arrival” in Statistics New Zealand, 2014). As Roman (2013) and Thompson (2016) find, these immigrants were incited to leave Tarawa by the negative circumstances they were enduring, as enumerated in S3.2. What is more, they were attracted by the economic, social and other opportunities they perceived as an offer in New Zealand, including paid employment and greater income, better victuals, housing and health and welfare facilities, a cleaner environment, and better prospects for their children.

Two factors combined to make most of their moves possible: the lawful possibility of immigrating to New Zealand, and kinship and similar relationships with members of extant diasporic communities. The lawful possibility arose through increased bi-lateral cooperation between, and encouragement by, the New Zealand and Kiribati Governments, and it paved the way of immigration administratively in three respects. First, it improved the immigration processes for *I-Kiribati* students who had graduated in New Zealand. Although most returned to Kiribati after completing their courses, some then returned to New Zealand to work (see Bedford, 2008), thus giving them higher incomes and other advantages from their education than would have been the case on Tarawa; some were motivated by other reasons too, such as to renew local relationships perhaps. They had little difficulty with immigrating and job finding because they sought work in professional areas in which skills were short (e.g., medicine) and their qualifications were recognised in New Zealand—this recognition contrasts significantly with the experience of other *I-Kiribati* trying to obtain work with New Zealand employers and finding that qualifications obtained in Kiribati are not accepted, often resulting in having to retrain and, in the meantime, to take jobs with lower levels of knowledge, skills and pay (see Gillard & Dyson, 2012; Thompson, 2016).

Second, this bi-lateral cooperation was helpful to various *I-Kiribati* temporary workers who had successfully visited New Zealand and wished to either formalise their de facto situations of already residing in New Zealand, within or outside the immigration regulations (cf. Stahl

& Appleyard, 2007), or return there from Kiribati. Concomitantly, and more significantly, visits by other *I-Kiribati* temporary labourers were formalised, mostly under Recognised Seasonal Employer schemes (Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2015). These schemes usually involve numerous groups of up to about 30 *I-Kiribati* labourers being supervised by an employer, who contracts the group to an agricultural producer. At first, many were contracted exclusively in the wine-producing provinces of Marlborough and Hawke Bay (see Figure 6) but increasingly they have been contracted for other agricultural work too (cf. Bailey, 2009). Each group works and lives together, often actually on vineyards, farms and similar settings or in remote, rural townships. Despite their remote locations, these groups are usually able to establish contact with the closest diasporic community to their base, and so join in some of its activities, including *botaki* to celebrate National Day, New Year, etc. Although, in keeping with their visas, these labourers nearly all return to Kiribati after nine months, increasingly they are returning to New Zealand a few months later, when the seasonal work they do resumes (see Maclellan, 2008), and a few may become residents (cf. Bedford, 2008). The returning and the contact tend towards developing connections to New Zealand, alongside maintaining connections to Kiribati (cf. Reilly, 2011).

Third, this bilateral cooperation gave rise to the Pacific Access Category (which is widely referred to among *I-Kiribati* by the acronym PAC) (New Zealand Immigration, 2017b, n.d.; Stahl & Appleyard, 2007; Thompson, 2016). Indeed, in terms of increase in the numbers of immigrants (see Bedford, 2008), this has been the most significant outcome of the cooperation. Immigration applications are permitted from *I-Kiribati* who are likely to settle in New Zealand successfully and make a positive contribution to the economy, but who are unlikely to satisfy New Zealand's two main immigration categories—these are constructed around skills, investors and entrepreneurship (about 60% of intending settlers), and re-uniting families with New Zealand and non-New Zealand citizenship (33%) (Thompson, 2016). Indeed, the Pacific Access Category accounts for only around 5% of all New Zealand permanent immigrants (see Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2016) but it accounts for the substantial majority of those who are now coming from Kiribati.

To be eligible for the Pacific Access Category, an *I-Kiribati* needs their name to be drawn in a lottery-like ballot, which is conducted annually by the New Zealand Government and for which they must register and pay an entry fee (e.g., see New Zealand Government, 2016). The selected individuals, together with persons who, under New Zealand's dominant *Pākehā* (white settlers, seen by *I-Kiribati* as *I-Matang*) culture, are classed as their immediate (or

“short” – see Black & Huygens, 2007) family, may obtain permanent residency, and eventually even citizenship. However, this long-term settlement is conditional on the adult members of the family achieving certain employment-related and income conditions within a specified period. These conditions result in a good many who succeed in the lottery never become permanent residents; these include many who change their minds about emigrating once they consider seriously what may be involved, or who turn out to be ineligible on medical or other grounds, and some who go through the trouble of travelling to New Zealand to try to meet the conditions but, after a few months or a few years, fail in the attempt, and so choose or are made to return to Kiribati.

Kinship and similar relationships were the foundations of today’s diasporic communities and have been the more enduring factor in the moves of *I-Kiribati* families to New Zealand being possible and successful. In recognising this factor, Thompson (2016, p. 67) characterises the relationships beyond kinship as “strong ties” and Roman (2013, p. 86) as “fictive kinship ties”; they resemble what Geddes (1977, p. 390) calls “as if kin” from his observations of the cooperative behaviour of neighbouring *mwenga* on Tabiteuea; they can be expressed in *te taetae ni Kiribati* as *baronga* (\cong to treat as one of the family or clan) (see Trussel & Groves, 2003; Maude & Maude, 1994). These relationships have been effected through habitual contacts, supplemented by frequent meetings and events organised as mentioned above under the auspices of formally established community organisations (i.e., Christchurch Kiribati Community, etc.) and church (e.g., KPC/KUC New Zealand) congregations in each community, and social media exchanges locally (see New Zealand Kiribati National Council, n.d.) and with home (see Nikunau Maneaba on Facebook, n.d.) (cf. Roman, 2013; Shuval, 2000).

Indications of how *utu* and *baronga* relationships have eased the physical and social aspects of *I-Kiribati*’s subsequent moves to New Zealand are intimated in observations below about those who have succeeded in obtaining residency and are part of one or other of the diasporic communities. The relationships in question have gone some way towards making up for being without ready access to a “native” go-between, as featured in the diasporic community in Britain, and the earlier one in New Zealand. However, the one has not been an exact substitute for the other, including that lack of the “native” go-between has meant fewer possibilities for the integration mentioned in characterising how *I-Kiribati* in Britain related to the native population. Indeed, as well as for new arrivals coming to join a community from Kiribati, these relationships have been invaluable essential support mechanisms within and

between each community, including helping *I-Kiribati* to move from one community to another—around 20 families each year move between communities (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). They have also supported Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme labourers.

Regarding the lives led by members of the diasporic communities in New Zealand, it should be borne in mind that before immigrating, the majority were born or raised and lived exclusively on Tarawa, rather than Nikunau or other Outer Islands; although so-called *home islands* can be a keen conversation topic, many have probably never have set foot on theirs. On Tarawa, they would have observed and, perhaps only to some extent, experienced some aspects of modernity but, even so, significant adjustments have been required at the individual, household and community levels in order to live in New Zealand. Indeed, her interviewees told Thompson (2016) about how much simpler life was on Tarawa compared to New Zealand. Thus, compared with living on Tarawa, most *I-Kiribati* moving to New Zealand seem to find almost all aspects of life require a big leap in understanding and present many, often unanticipated or unexpected, challenges. Here are some examples.

Two environmental aspects present various obvious and not so obvious challenges in New Zealand. First, the climate comprises four seasons, all of which are generally cooler and wetter than Kiribati, with droughts being shorter and rarer. This has implications, for example, for clothing, keeping warm and heating houses, and becoming accustomed to cooler climate fruits, vegetables, etc., including consuming such victuals according to season.

Second, the geology, geography and topography are completely different from those of an atoll. Geology gives rise to frequent earth tremors, if not earthquakes. Geography and topography present, and add to the challenges of, moving around and transport. In particular, the challenges for *I-Kiribati* associated with New Zealand having a network of national roads and, within that, networks of urban roads should not be underestimated (cf. Roman, 2013)—it should be recalled that only one road runs along Tarawa (see Figure 5). A further issue relating to travel in New Zealand is how comfortable people who have spent all their lives at sea level on small islands are with going up and down steep roads (e.g., Crown Range Road, Rimutaka Hill Road) during journeys of 600 km (Auckland to Wellington) or 1,000 km (Invercargill to Blenheim).

While *I-Kiribati* make frequent use on Tarawa of privately-run public (mini)bus services, which run continuously from one end of the atoll road to the other and return, they are less inclined to do so in New Zealand, particularly the adults. Not only are ideas of timetables and

bus stops challenging but also the number of bus routes, the complexity of bus networks and network maps, especially when expressed in English, and transferring from one route to another to complete many journeys are perplexing and probably even more inhibiting. For these and other reasons, most journeys undertaken by *I-Kiribati* in New Zealand are done by private motor vehicle, especially in the circumstances that most households have access to at least one private motor vehicle (Statistics New Zealand, 2014), including through shared ownership among groups of households and community groups (Roman, 2013), and seem cheerful about sharing this resource by giving people lifts, etc. As for journeying to destinations, the onus for knowing what directions to take usually falls on drivers. For them, similar factors arise about finding their way using road directional signs and maps as those just mentioned about bus network maps. Although the advent of global positioning systems (GPS) has reduced these factors—although GPS is not unknown for sending drivers on narrow gravel roads across precarious terrain—provided a driver has English-language skills, it is still usual for a driver who is going to a destination for the first time to be allowed to follow immediately behind a driver who is already familiar with a route. These anecdotes are consistent with McCreary and Boardman (1968) claims about *I-Nikunau* mostly being concrete learners and learning by practice, rather than through concepts, process and analogy; however, an issue with understanding ideas through analogies, metaphors, etc. is teachers and learners having things in common to use as such (e.g., sheep, goats, haystacks, roller coasters, mountains, rivers, trains, snow, canoes, currents, winds, clouds, coconut palms, frigate birds, sea shells, pandanus) and my experience is that these are difficult to find if the two people in the teacher-learner relationship have experienced life quite differently (e.g., one from an equatorial atoll, in the middle of a vast ocean, on which subsistence is the norm, and the other from a large cool temperate island, next to a large continental land mass, on which industrialisation and, indeed, post-industrialisation, is several generations old) (cf. Teaiwa, 2011).

Notwithstanding, this method of practical demonstration of a route to take to complete a journey is a useful metaphor for how extant members of a diasporic community assist and impart their knowledge to newly arriving families. Indeed, the personal stories *utu* and *baronga* tell prospective *I-Kiribati* immigrants before they set off for New Zealand, or similar countries, shapes their perceptions of what is on offer (e.g., see Roman, 2013) and their knowledge of how to go about the journey, at least as much as other sources (e.g., school learning, official and other information in documents and on film), sometimes with adverse

consequences, because the stories omit bad experiences and the information is incomplete (see Thompson, 2016).

Employment is a significant and challenging aspect of the lives of the adults in the communities. Not only is obtaining paid work necessary to generate income on which to live (i.e., victuals, rent, public utilities, transport, school and work expenses), to repay any debts arising from moving from Kiribati to New Zealand and to save for larger outlays (e.g., a bond (up to four weeks' rent) on a rental house, to purchase a motor vehicle or a dwelling) but also it is a vital condition of being permitted to settle under the Pacific Access Category. To find this work, those successful in the ballot have usually had to travel to New Zealand on temporary visas, either alone or with their partner and children, and search for work. Extant members of diasporic communities have helped them in this, including those individuals who have given sponsorship undertakings to the immigration authorities for these visas (see New Zealand Immigration, 2017c). By implication, these undertakings can entail the sponsors collecting families arriving from Kiribati for the first time at the port of entry (e.g., Auckland or Christchurch Airport), accommodating the family or finding the family accommodation with another family in the community, for weeks or, possibly, months, and helping with other matters of acclimatisation, etc. (cf. Gillard & Dyson, 2012; Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016). Sponsors or other community members often help in introducing work seekers to prospective employers and vouching for them to these employers. The work most have found is usually in occupations for which local labour is scarce, and so is one of three kinds: urban services, land-based activities and seafaring (see Statistics New Zealand, 2014) (cf. Callister, Badkar & Williams, 2009). Typical of the first are residential caregiving for the elderly, infirm, etc., commercial cleaning, domestic work, supermarket shelf stacking and similar, and construction and other labouring. The second are both close to cities and towns and in remoter places; they include horticulture, market gardening, cheese-making, fruit farming, arable cropping, dairying and vineyards. The third includes crewing the inter-island ferries and coastal ships (cf. Gillard & Dyson, 2012; Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016; Williams, 2008).

While probably not considered as fully as might be seen as economically “rational”, the expectation of being able to earn wages high enough to recover the costs of immigrating is usually part of deciding to immigrate; this may be particularly so in the numerous cases of these costs being financed with help from kin on Tarawa or in New Zealand. Indeed, few *I-Kiribati* arrive with as much capital or savings as more typical economic immigrants to New

Zealand in the skills, investors and entrepreneurship category. This is not least because *mwenga* that they were occupying in Kiribati are unlikely to be something they can sell from under parents and other kin they leave behind; and rarely would these kin be able to bestow capital on them in other ways or from other sources; if anything, their kin might be expecting the immigrants to remit money to Tarawa for their support or to enable them to emigrate from Tarawa to New Zealand themselves (cf. Thompson, 2016).

Language is another aspect to present a major challenge, as evidenced from the research of Roman (2013) and Thompson (2016). The main language in New Zealand is English, and though less pronounced nowadays, some Anglo-centricity comes with that, as well as some expectations of Anglo-conformity although *Te Reo Māori* (i.e., the language of the indigenous *Māori*) is present, as are languages and cultures of various immigrant groups, from Asia (i.e., mostly Chinese but with its neighbouring countries quite well represented, along with people from the India sub-continent, or of its heritage, via Fiji), the Pacific, other parts of Europe (e.g., Scotland, Scandinavia, Ireland) and elsewhere (cf. Edens, 2017). The challenge of language not only arises in the early periods of settlement; want of English, particularly in the way English is used in New Zealand, especially its oral form (e.g., pace, accents, slang, etc.), hampers adults in moving from the lower paid work many accept on arrival to better-paid employment.

There are several further aspects, some hinted at already, that can present challenges for both arriving immigrants and even *I-Kiribati* quite well established. They include physical aspects of accommodation and forms of housing, and public utilities (including sewerage systems and toileting), and financial or commercial aspects—most dwellings are rented from a private landlord, with rents of between NZ\$350–600 per week in South Auckland, NZ\$300–500 per week in Christchurch, etc. (see Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2017), rather than either from a governmental body or being owner-occupied (see Statistics New Zealand, 2014). They include notions of household income, spending one's earnings on one's own household, accumulating capital to improve that household and saving for old age. They include victuals and manufactures, modes of production, shopping, consumerism, living with modern equipment and amenities, and other aspects of New Zealand's material culture. They include illnesses and diseases, and accessing and using health and welfare services and systems. They include education systems, school enrolment and participation, and the relations of parents with the schools attended by their children and their roles in their children's education generally (cf. Gillard & Dyson, 2012; Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016).

Subsumed in the nature of the challenges these various aspects present are social expectations in relations between the members of diasporic communities and the general population, with its broad racial-ethnic spectrum and notions of racism and liberalism/individualism. All these can be daunting, not least when it comes to having to deal with a government bureaucracy or institution, for example on matters of immigration, social welfare, labour regulation and welfare, income tax, and motor registration and licensing. Most of these dealings involve formal procedures and written forms, declarations, etc. The organisations are invariably far more efficient and officious than *I-Kiribati* are used to, and they work with a mind-set and in languages—I refer here not only to English but also nuanced languages of government, bureaucracy and professional institutions—that *I-Kiribati* can find challenging and perplexing. As alluded to above, similar applies to public systems of hospitals and for healthcare, and of schools and for education (cf. Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016).

While these aspects and challenges present difficulties, many *I-Kiribati* have overcome them to varying extents, or at least coped with them. This savviness indicates changes to their lives, such that they are more monetised and modern than Tarawa; it also indicates that, although life on Tarawa shows signs of monetisation and modernity, this differs from prevalent behaviours in New Zealand. Indeed, many *I-Kiribati* probably find difficulties in overcoming differences entirely, including the importance of time, work routines, greater place of written communication, and forms and uses of money. These difficulties are apt to keep many in the *I-Kiribati* communities on the periphery of New Zealand’s supposed bicultural society (i.e., a distinction based *Tangata Whenua* (\cong people of the land), or *Māori*, and *Tangata Tiriti* (\cong people of the Treaty of Waitangi 1840) or *non-Māori*, but with the cultures associated with the peoples in the two categories tolerated, respected and celebrated) but, as *I-Kiribati* are inclined to see it, a society belonging to *I-Matang*. This is exemplified in terms under which *I-Kiribati* are employed and, more often than not, them living what many consider relative poverty in New Zealand, although it does not have an official poverty line (see New Zealand Parliament, 2011).

It is further exemplified in social, cultural, religious and political matters generally. Indeed, as alluded to already, integration of New Zealand’s diasporic communities with the rest of the population is weaker than in Britain, and so in terms of acculturation and assimilation what Berry (1997, 2005) labels “separation” is far more evident. This is attributable to the how most families in the diasporic communities arrived as *I-Kiribati* families already, or as *I-Kiribati* couples who have since had children, or as singles who have since married. Although

some of these marriages have involved *non-I-Kiribati*, particularly to someone from a similarly Pacific-oriented community, including *Māori*, often they have been to another *I-Kiribati*. Thus, the children and even the grandchildren arising from many relationships and born in New Zealand have mostly been *I-Kiribati*, whereas had they been of mixed race, this could have led to mixing of grandparents and other relatives of different races. It is also attributable to the strong kinship ties they can maintain with people within the diaspora in New Zealand and even on Tarawa, and the sense of being from and belonging to their island(s). These links are now far easier and cheaper to participate in on a daily or other frequent basis through modern technology applications.

This separation and insularity is perhaps more so among adults than youths and children, as the latter experience, notably at school, a great deal more of host country language and culture than many adults do, especially if the adults are spending most of their time at home and among their diasporic community. As Roman (2013) and Thompson (2016) report, in similar manner to Tarawa, *I-Kiribati*'s residential neighbours are usually of other races, including from other Pacific Island communities and *Māori iwi*, and although their interactions vary, they may only be slight. Indeed, Thompson also reports that, although working environments may present opportunities for adults to socialise outside diasporic communities, the nature of some work may not require, or may not afford, any social interaction with other workers (see also Gillard & Dyson, 2012) (cf. Berry, 2005).

These points just made resonate with the issue of how the strength of *utu* or *baronga* relationships may impede social mobility. Indeed, Roman (2013) and Thompson (2016) suggest they may also adversely affect economic mobility and geographical mobility. For households that are not of mixed race, there can be sub-conscious pressure to stay close to the persons, households and communities who helped them become established, including fulfilling, out of a sense of reciprocity, obligations to help newly arriving families. *I-Kiribati* who interact with *non-I-Kiribati* once they are established in New Zealand might be perceived by other *I-Kiribati* as allowing such interactions to interfere with these obligations.

Thompson (2016) bears this out in a perverse way: she reports favourable outcomes for *I-Kiribati* who have established so-called *weak ties*, or having non-one-off interactions with *non-I-Kiribati* outside the diasporic community. Through these weak ties, some *I-Kiribati* have moved into better-paid jobs, although that has not necessarily meant they have defaulted on any community obligations; indeed, perhaps the contrary is true, given their higher incomes. However, they may have made other moves, including re-locating to distant places,

mostly in a southerly direction (e.g., from South Auckland to Hamilton, Rotorua or Invercargill – see Figure 6), and so are not so immediately available to newcomers. Indeed, sometimes reasons for moving geographically have included the frequency of *botaki* and other community expectations (e.g., providing transport through possessing a motor vehicle) absorbing too much of their time, being beyond their means and affecting their mental health (cf. Roman, 2013).

4 Retrospective Analysis of *I-Nikunau* and Interpretation

This analysis of *I-Nikunau* is historical and formative, and thematic. Covering up to 10 generations, it discusses how *I-Nikunau*'s present and past connect, and how and why changes in their circumstances continue. Before presenting the analysis, three matters can be clarified: Nikunau Atoll's de jure and de facto colonial status, the order in which the analysis is presented and details of the 14 thematic circumstances used to structure the analysis.

How outsiders have recorded Nikunau's colonial status contrasts with how *I-Nikunau* seem to have experienced it. The self-proclaimed Great Powers (e.g., see General Act of 1885) recognised Britain as having annexed Nikunau and the other Kiribati islands in 1892—the then secret Anglo-German Declaration between the Governments of 1886 was part of this recognition. The new political unit was accorded the status of protectorate, in which the Tuvaluan islands were also soon incorporated—for a description of the actual process of Davis consulting natives and declaring the Protectorate island by island, see Morrell (1960, p. 274). However, on Nikunau and the other southern Kiribati Islands, this status, whether Protectorate or Colony—the status of Colony was formally instituted in 1916 (Gilbert and Ellice Islands Order in Council of 1915)³³—was to most intents and purposes only de jure, with de facto administration conducted under the auspices of the LMS until about 1917. In any case, before and since, *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* seem to have made little distinction between the notions of protectorate and colony, hence my choosing, for simplicity sake, to refer to both entities as just “the Colony”, except when using proper names.

The analysis is presented in 14 subsections each devoted to one of *I-Nikunau*'s thematic circumstances. Their order is based on two main considerations of flow and coherence, namely, attempting to follow the chronological flow of history and recognising that themes influence one another. However, this flow and coherence have only been possible to achieve very roughly, particularly as the influences between thematic circumstances exhibit much reciprocity. Regarding the history, one way of separating this is geographically, that is by the differences in where *I-Nikunau* were living during particular periods, and so I have

incorporated a summary of their history in S4.1, which deals with their geographical circumstances. In advancing this summary, I acknowledge that this too presents a difference between *I-Nikunau* and *I-Matang*; that is, *I-Nikunau* tell their (his)stories according to the ancestors who were present playing a part, whereas *I-Matang* are apt to stress events and arrange them in chronological order according to years counted from AD.

Turning now to the 14 thematic circumstances, these are listed next according to the subsection numbers and headings used in the rest of S4, together with a short description of what they cover. The 14 correspond to the themes of analysis that emerged, or were induced, as I undertook the several iterations of analysis. Concomitantly, as they emerged, so I used them to interrogate the empirical materials and my previous interpretations of them, so gradually lifting the narratives from the level of description to the level of analysis. I show the 14 together on Figure 7, which is drawn in a way to indicate that, similar to the themes I started with and that are depicted in Figure 1, they overlap.

- 4.1 Geographical Circumstances: these incorporate questions of where the subjects, namely *I-Nikunau*, have normally lived at different times (Agyemang & Lehman, 2013; Hall, 2012).
- 4.2 Demographical Circumstances: these encompass such matters as the size and composition of the population of *I-Nikunau*, and their forms of settlement and migratory patterns (cf. Locke, Adger & Kelly, 2000).
- 4.3 Economic Circumstances: these encompass the economic entities, economic behaviours, subsistence, victuals exchange, income, consumption and wealth associated with *I-Nikunau*, and the economic system(s) by which these phenomena are encompassed. The concept of an economic system embraces modes of production, employment (i.e., including in the broad sense of being engaged in productive activities, whether or not wages are received), consumption, savings and capital formation or investment, imports and exports, and taxation and public expenditure. Allowing for *I-Nikunau* contexts, the economic entities in such a system include individuals, *mwenga*, *utu*, cooperative, local-private and foreign-private businesses, religious organisations, socio-environmental and cultural organisations, governmental bodies and aid organisations (cf. Blomberg, Hess & Orphanides, 2004; Johnson, 2013). Categories of occupation are dealt with as economic rather than demographical (cf. Locke et al., 2000). I decided that making the usual distinction between microeconomic circumstances and macroeconomic was unnecessary.

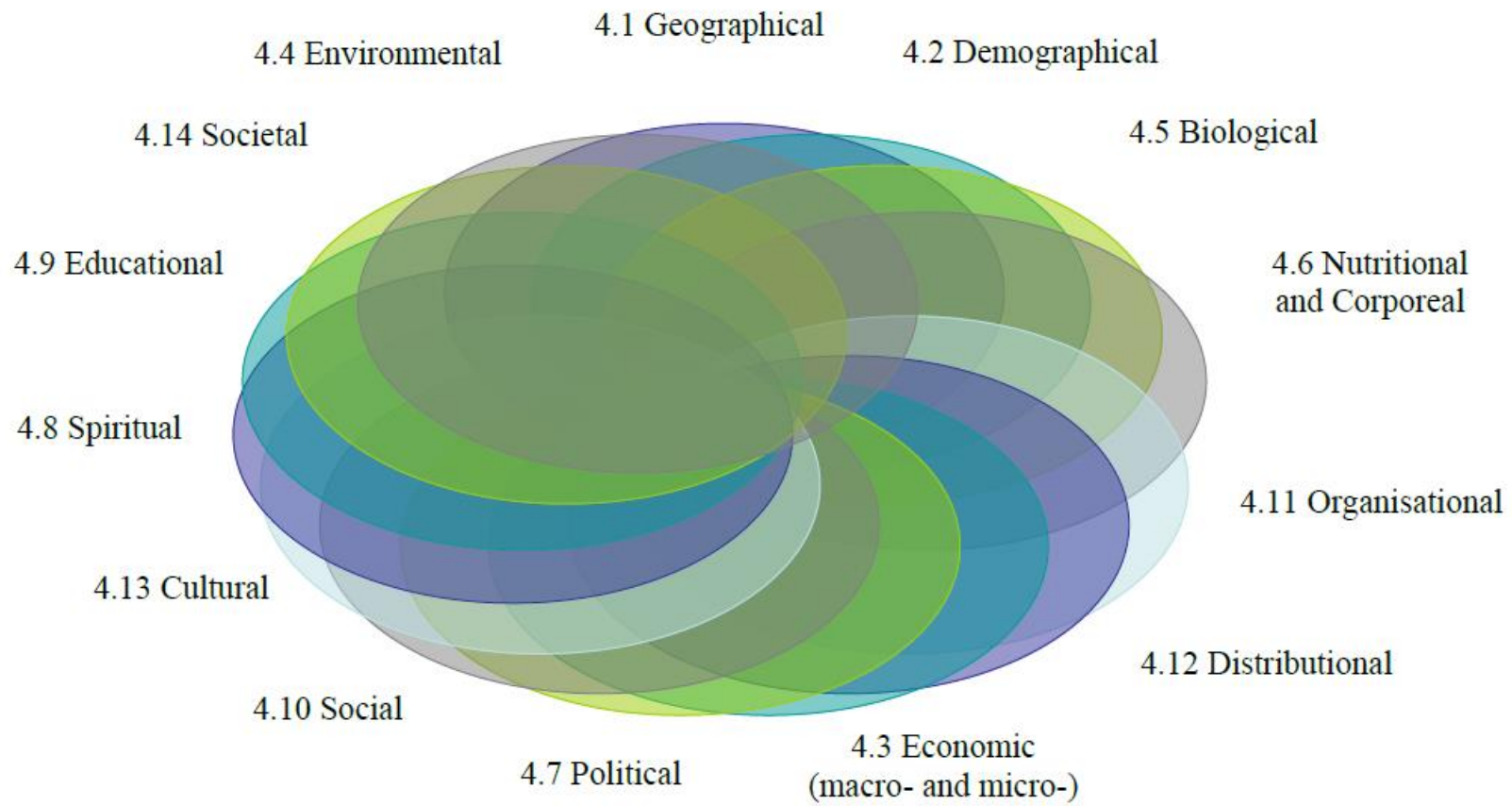


Figure 7. Themes of analysis

NB the numbering 4.1, 4.2, etc., indicates the subsection of Section 4 where the theme is analysed in this paper.

- 4.4 Environmental Circumstances: these comprise climate, state of land and sea, and similar conditions of nature, including those induced by human behaviours (cf. Hopwood, 2009; Locke et al., 2000).
- 4.5 Biological Circumstances: these embrace procreation among *I-Nikunau* and between them and peoples with different genes or physical features (cf. Anderson, 2012).
- 4.6 Nutritional and Corporeal Circumstances: these encompass *I-Nikunau*'s health and quality of life outcomes associated with the range or quantity of victuals that they consume (cf. Campbell, 1991) and with the physical activities they undertake in going about their daily lives.
- 4.7 Political Circumstances: these comprise the political systems, and structures or processes of political governance of which *I-Nikunau* have been part, as well as politics, power and related matters (cf. Doronila, 1985; Jones, 2010).
- 4.8 Spiritual Circumstances: these comprise *I-Nikunau*'s religiosity, religious beliefs, religious conversion, religious differences, etc. (cf. Midelfort, 1978).
- 4.9 Educational Circumstances: these encompass areas of knowledge in which *I-Nikunau* are educated, and who educates whom and how (cf. Liang & Chen, 2007).
- 4.10 Social Circumstances: these comprise relations and interactions among *I-Nikunau* and between them and peoples of different languages, cultures, race, etc. They include participation, engagement and involvement, and acceptance and tension in these relations, etc. The circumstances in question encompass such phenomena as social roles and affiliations, individuality and communality, kinship and social structure (including descent, inheritance and marriage), domestic arrangements, social activities, work, leisure, lifestyle, aging, and social resources, including the interrelationship between social systems and the built environment (cf. Hockings, 1984; Levasseur, Richard, Gauvin & Raymond, 2010; Moglia, Perez & Burn, 2008; Pedraza, 1991; Walker, 2003).
- 4.11 Organisational Circumstances: these encompass such matters as the nature, purpose, performance, structure and process of organisations in which *I-Nikunau* participate or that affect them (cf. Arnold, 1991; Bandury & Nahapiet, 1979; McGoun, Bettner & Coyne, 2007; Young, Peng, Ahlstrom, Bruton & Jiang, 2008).
- 4.12 Distributional Circumstances: these accord with how evenly, or conversely, how disparately, various material and intangible things capable of being distributed or shared

or experienced are distributed among *I-Nikunau*, and between them and other peoples, particularly peoples with whom *I-Nikunau* deal economically, socially or politically, or with whom they share the same social or natural space and time (cf. Arnold, 1991; Gewirtz, 2001; Krueger & Donohoe, 2005; McGoun et al., 2007; Wheatcraft & Ellefson, 1983).

4.13 Cultural Circumstances: these relate to *I-Nikunau*'s construction of learnt relations with each other and with other peoples, with things material and intangible, and with their surroundings generally. They embrace relatively loosely structured systems of shared habits, customs, social practices and general conduct so formed, and the symbolism attaching thereto. More generally, culture resides in the human mind; it has been, and continues to be, associated with social development, including separating the cultured from the others. How *I-Nikunau* respond to economic, political, social and other signals, compared or in contrast to other peoples, depends a great deal on their culture (cf. Carnegie & Napier, 2002; Harrison, 2000; Hockings, 1984; Porter, 1997; Thaman, 2003; Walker, 2003).

4.14 Societal Circumstances: these derive from to the extents to which *I-Nikunau* constitute a separate society(ies) and to which they are part of other societies. They encompass the nature and composition of the different societies *I-Nikunau* are part of, for example, in terms of customs, laws and institutions, shared or separated (cf. Modell, 2014; Nunn, 2013; Wejnert, 2002). In these contexts, society refers to how and why persons exist together in a state of social order of individuals, *utu*, communities, polities, etc. This existing together may be said to be based on mutual relations, or associations. Thus, societal circumstances encompass ways in which sociuses are linked or tied (Murphy, O'Connell & Ó hÓgartaigh, 2013; "Society", 2017).

4.1 Geographical Circumstances

I-Nikunau live nowadays on Nikunau and in traditional island, urban island and metropolitan country diasporic communities elsewhere, as shown on Figure 3 and analysed descriptively in S3. These circumstances fit into a pattern of change that may be summarised historically, starting from at least a few centuries back and separated into five periods, as follows:

1. For perhaps as long as a millenary or more up to the AD 1820s, the vast majority of *I-Nikunau* lived on Nikunau. Although having their creation stories (see Latouche, 1983), the persons, families, etc. who went through ethnogenesis to emerge as *I-Nikunau*

probably arrived on Nikunau over many years from various places around the Pacific Rim, southeast Asia/Indonesia and Samoa (Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010; Alaima et al., 1979; Di Piazza, 1999; Maude, 1963, n.d.; Sabatier, 1939/1977). Furthermore, emigration from and immigration to Nikunau arose during this millenary from inter-island marriage, kinship and similar ties, and wars, but was seemingly small, having to be effected using canoes, with the stars, cloud formations and other natural means of navigation, and mainly involved the neighbouring southern Kiribati islands of Beru (50 km distant), Onotoa (110 km) Tamana (140 km) Arorae (150 km), Tabiteuea (170 km) and Nonouti (230 km), and elsewhere within the Kiribati Archipelago. Otherwise, *I-Nikunau* seemed largely undisturbed by outsiders (Bedford et al., 1980; Lewis, 1972; Maude & Doran, 1966; Sabatier, 1939/1977).

2. From the 1820s to the 1910s, *I-Nikunau* continued to live mostly on Nikunau. Except that, at any one time, 10–20% might be working away temporarily (Bedford et al., 1980; Davis, 1892), and life on Nikunau was affected by new ideas, knowledge and skills and changed beliefs, values and attitudes they acquired through interactions with other *I-Kiribati* and *non-I-Kiribati* and with which they returned to their atoll (Macdonald, 1982a). Besides, the lives of *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau were affected by various presences of *non-I-Kiribati*, who engaged in previously unseen activities and had some social, economic and political influence, including through organisations they established with commercial and religious purposes in mind, and which I refer to in places as “non-traditional organisations”. Much of the interaction with *non-I-Kiribati* during this 100 years might be characterised as informal imperialism—informal because sovereignty was either not claimed (i.e., before 1892) or only de jure (i.e., from 1892 to 1917), and imperialism because, in contrast to forms of colonialism (see Horvath, 1972), there were very few permanent settlers from the *I-Matang* colonial race.
3. From about 1917 to the 1950s, *I-Nikunau* mostly continued to live on Nikunau but were now de jure and de facto subjects in a British colony; except, during this period some were resettled in the Phoenix Islands, whence they were then moved to the Solomon Islands. The interaction with *non-I-Kiribati* during these 50 years might be characterised as formal or administrative imperialism by British officials of the Colony Government, through indirect rule from within the boundary of the Colony but still at a distance³⁴ (Davie, 2005; Lange, 2009; Horvath, 1972).
4. From the 1960s to the 1980s, many *I-Nikunau* continued to live on Nikunau but an increasing proportion had begun the emigration from Nikunau to Tarawa, so initiating the

largest diasporic community of today. On Tarawa, the British officials of the Colony Government gradually implemented internal self-rule by *I-Kiribati* and Tuvaluans and then made the territory of the Colony formally independent, with the bulk (i.e., excluding Tuvalu) forming the Republic of Kiribati, of which *I-Nikunau* became citizens.

5. Since the 1980s, what has now become a substantial minority of *I-Nikunau* continued to live on Nikunau while diasporic communities elsewhere, including in the Republic, increased in number and size and spread to metropolitan countries. During these four decades of sovereignty, on Nikunau and within Kiribati generally, interactions between, on the one hand, *I-Nikunau* and most other *I-Kiribati* and, on the other hand, the *non-I-Kiribati* associated with a hotchpotch of aid organisations supposedly working in partnership with the Republic Government, have increasingly come to feature a national *I-Kiribati* élite of politicians, senior officials in government, and other persons associated with non-traditional organisations, be they commercial, religious, community or governmental (cf. Thomas & Kautoa, 2007). Thus, according to Horvath (1972)'s definitions, these are characteristics of neo-imperialism.

The immediate catalyst for the changes after 1820 were Atlantic whalers; after exploiting other Pacific grounds since the 1780s, they began hunting the On-the-Line³⁵ grounds during the December to March season, an activity that continued for three or four decades. Nikunau was convenient to this whaling area, and so where the whalers made a habit of coming ashore (Best, 1983; Lever, 1964; Lévesque, 1989; Macdonald, 1982a; Maude & Leeson, 1965; Mitchell, 1983; Morrell, 1960; Ward, 1946; Woodford, 1895). Among the many interactions between whaler and islander was for *I-Nikunau* (e.g., Peter and Thomas Byron) to join whaling ships' crews, occurrences that might be interpreted as the seeds being sown for the pattern of *I-Nikunau* working away. Indeed, *I-Nikunau* labour, male and female, has been in demand ever since for seafaring, agricultural work (plantations, arable and pastoral farms, forestry, vineyards), mining and similar activities, whose proliferation gave rise to the so-called "Pacific labour trade" and the aforementioned circular labour migration. This took *I-Nikunau* to various places around the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans and adjacent continental land masses, and still does (see Bedford et al., 1980; Bollard, 1981; Couper, 1967; Firth, 1973; Irvine, 2004; Lawrence, 1992; Lewis, 1988; Macdonald, 1982a; Maclellan, 2008; McCreery & Munro, 1993; Morrell, 1960; Munro, 1993; Munro & Firth, 1986, 1987, 1990; Sabatier, 1939/1977; Shineberg, 1984; Shlomowitz & Munro, 1992; Siegel, 1985; Speedy, 2016; Ward, 1946; Weeramantry, 1992; Williams & Macdonald, 1985).

However, between 1908 and 1980, in order to serve the interests of Britain and British Dominions (i.e., Australia and New Zealand), these places were largely restricted by the Colony Government (see Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate (Consolidation) Regulation 1908) to Banaba and, after 1946, Nauru,³⁶ the phosphate islands, and it was not just male labourers who were involved but *unimane*³⁷ as well and families (i.e., a wife and up to two children) (Macdonald, 1982a; Personal communication from a confidential source 2017; Shlomowitz & Munro, 1992; Weeramantry, 1992; Williams & Macdonald, 1985).³⁸

Over the years, *I-Nikunau* have had several motives to engage in this working away, with the motives varying in importance at different times and including motives for going to places and motives for not staying on Nikunau. From early on, the motives for going to places included adventure, curiosity and wanderlust (Macdonald, 1982a). The motives soon extended to earning cash, the surplus of which they could either use to purchase foreign manufactures to send to *utu* on Nikunau or take back there themselves, or, once facilities existed to do so, remit to these *utu* for their cash needs there (e.g., school fees, church contributions, purchases from trade stores).³⁹ The motives also included responding to encouragement they took from stories and information brought back to Nikunau by *I-Nikunau* on their return from working away, and by visitors (e.g., beachcombers, aid volunteers). What is more, after a while, there were cultural expectations, backed sometimes by Colony Government processes, that the men in particular would take it in turns to work away, so as to share the experiences, earnings and other benefits among *I-Nikunau* and support *I-Nikunau* back home. These motives are still valid, albeit adjusted to present circumstances, and added to by the prospect of working away from not only Nikunau but also Tarawa or Kiribati generally leading to resettlement on higher ground, in economic and social senses as well as topographically, for example, in New Zealand

The motives for not staying on Nikunau included escaping the effect of droughts (see Pastor Iakopo cited by Nokise, 1983, p. 180; Shlomowitz & Munro, 1992) and other natural hardships. Going away also enabled *I-Nikunau* to shake off, at least temporarily, some of the constraints and sterner discipline imposed in their traditionally-minded communities under the absolute traditional authority of *unimane* (see Hockings, 1984), or as experienced because of various church and colonial laws and regulations, as policed by officials of the LMS-controlled *te kabowi n abamakoro* (= council of the island) and the Colony Government-controlled Nikunau Native Government (e.g., see Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate (Consolidation) Regulation 1908; Regulations for the Good, 1933). Again, these motives are

still valid, with the addenda of the likely adverse future consequences of climate change (cf. Radio New Zealand, 2015).

The experiences of the many *I-Nikunau* who went away to work varied somewhat and was not without risks, including presumably the instances of economic exploitation, social abuse and virtual slavery that occurred to islanders generally (e.g., see Shineberg, 1984)—although many went as indentured labour, evidence of *I-Nikunau* having been blackbired is equivocal (see Maude, 1981; Speedy, 2015), but evidence concerning *I-Kiribati* generally is clearer (e.g., Tate & Foy, 1965). Furthermore, it is not clear how many bad experiences were omitted from the aforementioned stories and information they passed onto others, and which encouraged others to follow in their footsteps. However, *I-Nikunau* seem to have been reticent about admitting that they have let themselves in for such bad experiences and putting others off from experiencing things for themselves, a trait which persists, as alluded to in S3.3.2 in mentioning studies by Roman (2013) and Thompson (2016) about recent New Zealand settlement experiences. The personal stories the settlers relied on from *utu* and *baronga* to inform their preparations, etc. omitted bad experiences and provided incomplete and incorrect information.

Up to the 1960s, a majority of any generation who went away as part of circular labour migration or similar returned to Nikunau, sometimes with marriage partners from elsewhere, lived out the rest of their lives there and were buried there—reasons for not returning included marriage into other communities, choosing to settle permanently elsewhere and perishing (Bedford et al., 1980). Since, the pattern has changed: the majority still returned from their work location (e.g., Banaba, Nauru, New Zealand) but rather than Nikunau, many chose to settle permanently on Tarawa (see Bedford & Bedford, 2010). This choice arose from Tarawa's monetisation, its opportunities to purchase land with their savings and acquire assets from which to make a living (e.g., trucks), its waged work, durable household items and amenities, and its budding cultural reputation as more developed, exciting and progressive. Indeed, things associated with the motives listed above for working and otherwise travelling away from Nikunau were increasingly to be found on Tarawa. A further reason was that, although parents might have been capable of living a subsistence life on Nikunau, their adolescent children were sometimes not, because most of their childhoods had been spent on a phosphate island, and so they lacked virtually any experience of the essential knowledge and skills, such as being able to fish, grow victuals, materials, etc. cut toddy and perform some other work, chores, etc., and found it difficult to cope with Nikunau victuals

and behave in keeping with traditional expectations of other *I-Nikunau* (confidential personal communication, 2009, from two sources who spent their school years on Banaba).⁴⁰

The catalyst for the coming about on Tarawa of its various circumstances alluded to above, as well as in S3.2, occurred about 1950. Following the Colony Government's restoration, its officials initially adopted a reconstruction and development plan of devolved development of the Colony (see GEIC, 1946). However, by the early 1950s, new officials were in charge and they changed tack, embarking instead on social, economic and political development policies founded on the principle of "centralisation" on Tarawa (Connell & Lea, 2002; Doran, 1960; GEIC, 1970; Macdonald, 1982a, 1998; Maunaa, 1987). Further details of this piece of Kiribati history and the population consequences for Tarawa are set out in Box 1.

Centralisation initially had consequences for *I-Nikunau* affecting their geographical, demographical, educational and economic circumstances and more. Between the 1950s and 1970s, the largest contingent of emigrants comprised adolescent *I-Nikunau*; as higher academic achievers in Nikunau's primary schools, they took up boarding places at the King George V School (KGVS) for boys and, by 1960, the Elaine Bernacchi School (EBS) for girls—this school eventually went co-educational as KGVEBS. Although they might have expected to live away from Nikunau for only a few years, their academic achievements at secondary school, from which achievements at tertiary level followed in some cases, led to longer term or permanent emigration. Work for which they were educated (e.g., medicine, nursing, secondary school and trades teaching, engineering, administration, accounting) was primarily on Tarawa, as were facilities in which they could share (i.e., the hospital, primary schools, shops, etc.), and so they have remained there, married, and had children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

For the initial groups of students the effect of going to boarding school was separation from other *I-Nikunau* (see McCreary & Boardman, 1968). However, this separation was relatively short-lived, as these early *I-Nikunau* immigrants took deliberate steps to fulfil accumulating socioeconomic, cultural and similar obligations they had to *utu ni kaan*; these were besides economic obligations they were able to fulfil by remitting goods and cash to *utu* on Nikunau. These steps included accommodating young *utu ni kaan* (e.g., nephews and nieces) in their *mwenga* on Tarawa and, eventually, their then elderly dependents likewise. As for the numbers involved, Zwart and Groenewegen (1968) report 350 *I-Nikunau* residing on Tarawa during the 198 census, of whom 146 were under 15 years of age.

Box 1 Centralisation and Tarawa (the main source of this material is Macdonald, 1982a, 1998)

The social, economic and political development policies of the Colony Government after about 1950 were founded on the principle of centralisation on Tarawa. Capital grants from Britain's Colonial Development [and, eventually, Welfare] Fund (Abbot, 1971), and how they were administered, were significant to these policies. Typical of the time, the pursuit of efficiency (Hopwood, 1984) was taken for granted, notwithstanding its ambiguities and absence from *I-Kiribati* culture. Centralising new amenities on Tarawa, compared with spreading them across a score of remote islands, reduced the Colony Government's needs for capital from the fund in question. Moreover, the amenities were cheaper for the Colony Government to operate, because of economies of scale of individual services and of colony administration as a whole. It was believed that centralised facilities would need fewer of staff than otherwise and that they would be more productive by being in close proximity.

These beliefs about employee costs applied particularly to *I-Matang* staff, who comprised the largest item of operating costs and the resource in shortest supply. Despite never having had to be recruited in great numbers; the number of *I-Matang* staff reached 50 during the 1950s, 80 in the 1960s and over 140 by the 1970s—although junior administrative jobs held by Tuvaluans and *I-Kiribati* rose to 350 permanent public servants by the mid-1950s and then to 1,000 in the mid-1970s (GEIC, 1957, 1969, 1976), their pay rates were so low that they were of less significance to the Colony Government's finances than the *I-Matang* staff were. *I-Matang* would also be easier and less costly to recruit and maintain if they and their families had ready access to amenities of reasonable quality (e.g., *I-Matang* doctors working at a central hospital on Tarawa would more readily send their children to primary school if there were one of high quality on Tarawa).

Besides this reaping economies of scale and containing costs, effecting administrative and political control were seen as concomitant with centralisation, and so reinforced the belief held in centralisation by *I-Matang* officials on Tarawa and in Honiara (i.e., at, by then, the headquarters of the British Western Pacific High Commission) and London. Certainly, centralisation was of greater administrative convenience for those heading the Colony Government than decentralisation would have been. Moreover, it was also consistent with Britain's largely self-interested policy for implementing decolonisation across its Empire. As Morgan (1980) relates, this policy involved transferring sovereignty to a single government covering the entire territory within each colony's existing boundary, and so keeping the former colonies intact as new nation states, rather than the colonies reverting to the separate polities that, in most cases in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, existed in pre-colonial times—of course, this did not eventuate in the Colony because Tuvalu opted to separate, becoming a dominion, or a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy. Concomitantly, grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund were easier to obtain if they endowed the intended seats of government of the postcolonial nation states with public institutions and facilities, commercial supply chains, public utilities, transport facilities and other infrastructure, with the expectation of these being politically strong and capable of sustaining the nations so created.

Since Kiribati's decolonisation, the activities of aid organisations have continually reinforced this centralisation, perhaps unwittingly, and the Republic Government has acquiesced with their decisions. Under the changing auspices of *aid*, *development assistance* and then *investment partnership*, these aid organisations have supplied all manner of infrastructure, amenities, facilities and systems (e.g., coastal protection, roading, air and shipping port facilities, public utility networks, clinics, hospitals, schools, colleges and other education and training institutions, a library and museum, government accounting systems), expert evaluations and advice and other aid-in-kind (and occasionally aid-in-cash) (e.g., see Asian Development Bank, 2009a, 2009b; Tables 16 and 17 in World Bank, 2005, pp. 48-49), largely under the auspices of one discrete project or another, mostly without much real coordination, and predominantly on Tarawa. Their consultants and officials make frequent visits to Tarawa—only a few

of these organisations have ever had offices there—but to nowhere else in the country. As elsewhere (see Burall, Maxwell & Menocal, 2006; Doucouliagos & Paldam, 2011), the efficacy of these projects, individually and collectively, is questionable, including that it is probable that they have largely reflected British and other Global North economic and political priorities for Global South countries, rather than cultural, social, political, environmental and domestic economic priorities of the countries in question (Burt & Clerk, 1997), and been performed without much involvement or engagement with the people affected—an exception proving the rule is reported by Mackenzie (2008). This is despite their rhetoric of aiding peoples of the Global South, Third World, Developing Countries, Emerging Economies, etc., and a desire to reproduce Global North prosperity in these lands.

Almost from the start, not only did the policies associated with centralisation have an economic multiplier effect on Tarawa but they also fuelled an increase in its population, initially through immigration of workers and students from Nikunau and the other Outer Islands, and from Tuvalu, Britain, Australia and New Zealand. In the late 1960s, the immigration from within the Colony escalated when, contrary to recommendations made at the time, the Colony Government lifted regulations dating from the 1940s about who could live on Tarawa and why, effectively meaning it was a matter of choice (Bedford & Bedford, 2010; Bertram & Watters, 1984; Couper, 1967). Although many Tuvaluans and *I-Matang* left in the decade following the Republic being established, net immigration continued. The annual rate of immigration has barely abated up to now, despite overcrowded conditions that were evident to the naked eye by the 1990s.

Figure 8 shows the effects of this immigration, and its consequences of procreation, on Tarawa’s population. Except, the figures for 1931 and 1947 include the half of the population who then lived on North Tarawa, including because the atoll’s government station and the colony hospital were there then (Maude & Doran, 1966; Pusinelli, 1947). The increase in Tarawa’s population is some 16-fold compared with before its precedence was cemented by centralisation. This is in stark contrast to the total population of all the Outer Islands combined; their population has risen from about 31,000 in 1947—when Tabiteuea was the most populated of the Kiribati Islands, not Tarawa—to just over 54,000 now, and so has not even doubled.

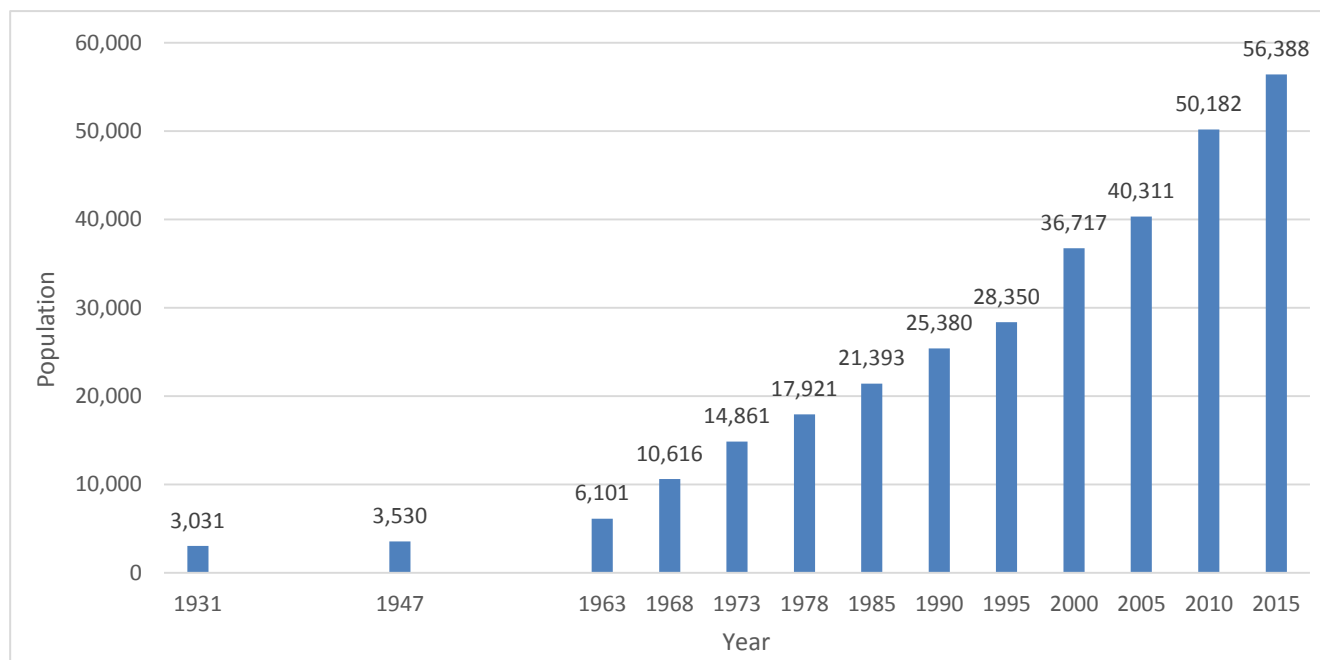


Figure 8. Population of South Tarawa 1947 to 2010 (Sources: National Statistics Office, 2016; Office of Te Beretitenti and T’Makei Services, 2012c; Pusinelli, 1947)

To begin with, many of these young *utu ni kaan* also came for educational reasons, including going to secondary schools where boarding was not an option for them and going to primary school with the intention of going onto secondary school. Their parents and *unimane* on Nikunau soon realised that being educated at primary school on Tarawa improved young *utu ni kaan*'s chances of passing the secondary school entrance examinations. Indeed, they often saw better prospects generally for these children on Tarawa than on Nikunau, and, in any case, might expect to join them themselves in old age (Burnett, 2005; Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014; Macdonald, 1982a, 1996a, 1998; MacKenzie, 2004; Maude & Doran, 1966). Later, the young *utu ni kaan* coming to Tarawa extended to those of post-primary school age who were unsuccessful in getting places at secondary school. They were encouraged by stories they heard about the different life available on Tarawa and wanted to experience it for themselves. A related matter was that, as the end of phosphate mining loomed on Banaba (c. 1979) and then Nauru (c. 2000), so Tarawa became where most *I-Kiribati* on Outer Islands went in search of cash employment—the closures affected about 100 *I-Nikunau* working on Banaba and about 145 working on Nauru, both statistics including families (based on Zwart & Groenewegen, 1968)—going further afield, to New Zealand, for example, did not arise until about 1990 and in smaller numbers than nowadays.

The accommodating of elderly dependents by their grown-up offspring on Tarawa obviated a need for these offspring to return to Nikunau and live with these dependents. There, they would have been expected to complete such tasks as to go fishing, grow victuals, materials, etc., cut toddy and perform some other work, chores, etc., tasks for which they would probably be unfit or unskilled anyway—one reason to bear children was to ensure there would be someone to after you in old age (McCreary & Boardman, 1968). Said elderly dependents would have been doing these things for themselves when they sent their offspring to Tarawa as young people but that would have changed as they aged. This movement of elderly dependents has not applied to every *mwenga* on Nikunau, mostly those where all the younger generation had emigrated from Nikunau. However, according to age distribution data for the past 20 years or so (see Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007; Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012b), this movement has resulted in a much lower proportion of *I-Nikunau* over the age of 50 than would be the case without it, just as the proportion under the age of 14 is similarly much greater, which also suggests the birth rate among women of child-bearing age is high.

I now move onto matters related to diasporic communities beyond Tarawa. The first to form can, like the one on Tarawa, trace its beginnings to the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, even predating it. However, it contrasts with this community and the ones in metropolitan countries described in S3.3 because, whereas these arose through individuals, immediate families or similar small parties moving in dribs and drabs, the community now being discussed arose through an organised movement of significant numbers who were to settle in *kawa* created specifically to house the settlers. Their story began in 1938: being concerned that Nikunau and neighbouring islands were too drought prone and infertile to support increases occurring in their populations, Colony Government officials conceived the idea of resettling some *I-Nikunau* on the uninhabited Phoenix Islands (lat. 3°–4°S, long. 171°–174°W)⁴¹ (Autio, 2017; Maude, 1952)—according to Weber (2016), the British Government was also anxious to settle subjects on these islands to ensure they were retained as part of the Empire and not occupied by, for example, the United States of America. However, barely 20 years later, they and a further contingent of *I-Nikunau* from Nikunau were removed to Ghizo, Alu and Wagina⁴² in the Solomon Islands under another resettlement project again funded from London via Honiara (Cochrane, 1969, 1970; Fraenkel, 2003; Knudson, 1977; Larmour, 1984; Schuermann, 2014; Tammy, 2011; Weber, 2016).

Although the move from the Phoenix Islands—nowadays the world’s largest marine protected area—was mostly attributed to difficulties of *I-Nikunau* surviving there, another reason was that the expenses of administering these extremely remote new settlements were beyond the affordance of the Colony Government (Laxton, 1951; Macdonald, 1982a). Having the settlers in the British Solomon Island Protectorate was cheaper and more expedient for Colony Government and High Commission officials, no matter various immediate and knock-on implications. The latter included subsequent internal emigration, starting in the 1960s, from Wagina, Alu and Ghizo to urban Gizo and Honiara. This emigration, which for a while included families returning from Nauru and Banaba, is akin to that from Nikunau to Tarawa, and has given rise to an urban island diasporic community in Honiara.

The experience of costs and other inconveniences by the Colony Government in respect of the Phoenix Islands scheme has not deterred the Republic Government from encouraging and financially incenting *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* to take part in further resettlement schemes to remote islands. Since the 1990s, these have involved three of the even more distant Line Islands, where there are now traditional island diasporic communities of significant size, as mentioned in S3. Living on these islands seems to be proving more

tolerable than living on the Phoenix Islands was (see reports about each Line Island available from Office of the President, Republic of Kiribati, 2012).

While aid funding was directly implicated in the above resettlement schemes, as the details in S3.3.1 and some of S3.3.2 indicate, this funding and the personnel they enticed to Kiribati are indirectly linked to the forming of metropolitan country diasporic communities, including in the United States (Roman, 2013). These communities at least began with colonial officials and aid organisation workers temporarily resident on Tarawa marrying *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati*; thence, the couples, sometimes already with children, settled in their present locations.

In S3.3.2, it is shown that the diasporic communities on the two islands of New Zealand developed further than applies to Britain, or the United States for that matter, than just mentioned. The immigration to there extended beyond couples of mixed races to *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* singles, couples and families. There are consistencies between why and how these emigrants from Tarawa settled near Auckland, Wellington, etc. and *utu ni kaan* emigrated from Nikunau to Tarawa, as analysed above. In particular, the motive of better prospects for their children is important, even ascendant. At least, this was how her informants expressed it to Thompson (2016), rather than as better prospects for themselves, and so reflecting a cultural aversion to being seen as self-seeking and, conversely, a cultural obligation felt to others, in this case their children, and when settled in New Zealand, to *utu* and *baronga* who follow them. Seeing it this way may also lessen the dilemma they experience over not being able to fulfil obligations they have towards *utu* left behind on Tarawa, whether temporarily or permanently.

What is more, most immigrants to New Zealand saw Tarawa as short of cash employment and similar opportunities, implying that looking for better, lusher ground, higher or otherwise, is part of their choice to emigrate. Indeed, the main factor in immigrating to New Zealand in recent years has been to take advantage of bilateral labour immigration schemes (i.e., Pacific Access Category and Recognised Seasonal Employer) (Fedor, 2012; Roman, 2013; Thomson, 2016), with taking up opportunities study abroad a contributory factor for those offered educational scholarships. And they have relocated with help from earlier settlers. Except, rather than the help coming only from *utu ni kaan*, it has extended as wide as just being *I-Nikunau* or, in many cases, just being *I-Kiribati*.

Likewise, both immigrations have had or are having similar further demographic consequences of marriage, bearing children, being joined by elderly dependents, etc. However, regarding elderly dependents, *I-Nikunau* have found it difficult for elderly parents to join them in New Zealand, except on visitors' visas of nine months maximum, despite the New Zealand Government's immigration category of re-uniting families with New Zealand citizens and permanent residents. The reasons for difficulties are income and capital criteria associated with permanent resident or other longer-term visas being mostly far too high compared with what families can afford. What is more, the less restrictive dependent parent resident visa category, which is open to all nationalities, is oversubscribed. Moreover, even this oversubscribed category has conditions that are difficult to fulfil because parents do not qualify as dependent if they have adult offspring available to look after them on Tarawa or Nikunau. *I-Kiribati* tend to have larger families than people of the many other races competing in this category, for example, because Kiribati has never had a one-child policy and its unmet need for contraception, as elsewhere in the Pacific, is very high (see Daubé, Chamberman & Raymond, 2016).

4.2 Demographical Circumstances

This section builds on the population data used in introducing this study (see S1) and to describe *I-Nikunau*'s present circumstances (see S3), and those related for Tarawa in Box 1. The historical population statistics for Nikunau 1860–2015, arrayed in Figure 9, add to this demographical picture. The section also covers the forms of settlement and patterns of emigration and immigration outlined or alluded to in the earlier sections just mentioned and in S4.1.

The total number of *I-Nikunau* differs from the population of Nikunau according to persons identifying as *I-Nikunau* not living on Nikunau and to persons not identifying as *I-Nikunau* living on Nikunau. In 1860, the two numbers were closer than nowadays, but even by that time, possibly 200 or so *I-Nikunau* were away from the atoll, either for customary reasons or because of working on ships and other Pacific Islands. Conversely, there were probably nowhere near as many *non-I-Nikunau* on Nikunau, including other *I-Kiribati* for customary reasons, and castaways, beachcombers and whale men of other races, mainly *I-Matang* (Macdonald, 1982a; Maude, 1964). Back in the 1810s, before working away became a factor, the populations of *I-Nikunau* and of Nikunau both numbered nearly 2,000, with differences in their composition only arising from interactions with peoples from neighbouring islands and whose effects were probably equally balanced.

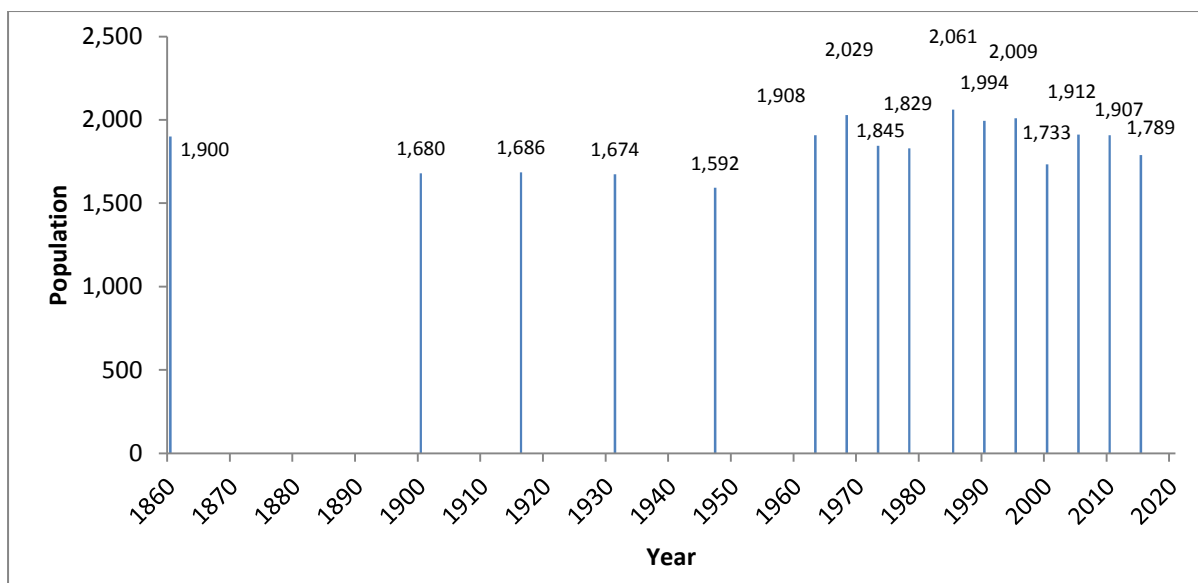


Figure 9. Population of Nikunau 1860 to 2010 (Data sources: Bedford et al., 1980; GEIC, 1957; National Statistics Office, 2013, 2016; Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007; Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012b; Pusinelli, 1947)⁴³

In contrast, today's population of Nikunau is around 1,800 still, but less than 1,600 are *I-Nikunau*, and there is an estimated diaspora of *I-Nikunau* of nearly 5,000, hence the worldwide total of *I-Nikunau* indicated in S3 of about 6,500. Furthermore, more *I-Nikunau* now live on Tarawa (i.e., about 2,600 – see S3.2) than on Nikunau, whereas, before the Colony Government instigated its policy of centralisation (see S4.1), the number there was only 32 (Pusinelli, 1947), or about 1% of Tarawa's then longstanding base population of 3,500, which it had either side of the war. However, with Tarawa's population now over 56,000 (National Statistics Office, 2016), the proportion who are *I-Nikunau* is still barely 5%, despite the growth in their numbers.

The reasons for the increase in population of *I-Nikunau* from barely 2,000 in the 1810s to about 6,500 now include the following. First, judging by settlement patterns on Nikunau and the geographical distribution and size of *aba* held by each individual (cf. Hockings, 1984; *Land (Copra) Tax Register 1910–1916*), the population was already growing naturally at that time. Afterwards, the rate of growth seems to have increased, probably for several reasons around life expectancy, changes in birth control practices and more opportunities for marriage to *non-I-Nikunau*, both other *I-Kiribati* and *non-I-Kiribati*. New knowledge about health and wellbeing was imparted by outsiders. Trade improved food and nutrition security (Campbell, 1991) and made it possible to feed more children. The church and colonial authorities enacted regulations covering order, cleanliness, civility and similar (e.g., Gilbert

and Ellice Islands (Native Laws) Regulation 1912). New religious mores emerged about abortion and infanticide. Violent death lessened, including because local warfare reduced. *I-Nikunau* mingled with other peoples while participating in the Pacific labour trade and on Banaba, and so the number of persons of mixed blood increased who are *I-Nikunau* by affinity.

The rate of growth was further boosted after the 1950s by the new development policies alluded to in S4.1 around health, education, water and sanitation (e.g., see Asian Development Bank, 2008; Castalia Strategic Advisors, 2005; Doran, 1960; GEIC, 1957, 1969; Veltman, 1982). These further reduced the susceptibility of *I-Nikunau* to the vagaries of drought, and so the effects of famine. They also improved the public health environment, notably as associated with clean water, and increased the availability of effective health and welfare interventions, including around childbirth, infectious diseases and easily-treated conditions (Bedford et al., 1980; Macdonald, 1982a; Pusinelli, 1947). The increase in life expectancy arising from all these has been despite the adverse nature of some developments in nutrition (Lewis, 1988). The development policies also led to the increased immigration to Tarawa outlined in S4.1 and, eventually, to adverse living conditions there (see S3.2), which may now be affecting life expectancy adversely (McIver et al., 2014; Thomas, 2002). However, the more prevalent effect of this immigration has been to increase the incidence of marriage to *non-I-Nikunau*, and so increase the rate of births per *I-Nikunau* parent.

Two other points about population are remarkable. First, notwithstanding the emigration from Nikunau over the past eight decades to the Phoenix, Solomon and Line Islands and Tarawa, the its population, as shown on Figure 9, has not so much fallen as fluctuated; indeed, it is now more or less the same as 200 years ago. Some of this sustaining of the population is attributable to the number of *non-I-Nikunau* who have settled on Nikunau, temporarily or permanently. Their reasons for being there vary. They include the aforementioned *I-Kiribati* immigrating as a result of inter-island marriages; beachcombers, castaways, and itinerant and resident traders, all consequent to whaling, coconut oil and copra trading, and similar commerce; clergy associated with the Protestant (LMS then KPC/KUC), and RC Churches; and staff of Colony or Republic and island governmental organisations (Couper, 1967; Goodall, 1954; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a; Maude, 1964; Maude & Leeson, 1965; Munro, 1987; Nokise, 1983; Sabatier, 1939/1977; Speedy, 2016; Wilde, 1998). Indeed, the point at which the population was lowest, being the nearest statistic to the war, coincides with these outsiders probably being at their lowest because of the wartime cessation of trading and

the evacuation in 1941 of the colonial authorities to Fiji.⁴⁴ However, probably more important is that this was also the time when the emigration took place to the Phoenix Islands (see Pusinelli, 1947). As intimated in S3.1, there are a significant number of *I-Kiribati* from other islands who now work for the Island Council or Republic Government, and so are living in Rungata with their families.

Second, whereas most of the growth in the population of *I-Nikunau* on Tarawa during the 1950s and subsequent decades is attributable to immigration to Tarawa, recently, the ascendant factor has become natural increase among *I-Nikunau* already on Tarawa. Furthermore, although *I-Nikunau* emigrating to New Zealand and similar destinations outside the Republic had previously been resident on Tarawa, rather than Nikunau, this emigration has barely affected the number still on Tarawa.

The units of settlement presently on Nikunau and known as *kawa* are described and explained in S3.1, along with *mwenga* of which they are comprised. *Kawa* arose through the interventions of LMS and Colony Government officials in the name of goodness, orderliness and cleanliness between the 1880s and 1930s. Before then, *I-Nikunau*'s units of settlement were areas known as *kainga*. In the mid-19th Century, there were almost 50 *kainga* scattered around the atoll (for names and locations, see Latouche, 1983, p. 23); in turn, probably 350–450 *mwenga* were spread among them. In contrast to the tight, ordered formations in which they are arranged in *te kawa*, these *mwenga* were scattered around the total area making up *te kainga*. Each comprised a co-residential *utu ni kaan te mwenga*, usually of 3–7 persons of two or, occasionally, three generations—those of two generations could comprise either parents and children or grandparents and adopted grandchildren (Hockings, 1984).

Besides *mwenga* and the structures associated with them that are described in S3.1, *te kainga* also included *te uma ni mane* (\cong men's house), of which there is a loose equivalent in *te kawa* of today but used by a wider range of community groups than just men (see S3.1), *bangota* (\cong stone shrines) and *aba*, on various items (e.g., coconut palms, pandanus, *bwabwai*) for victuals, materials, etc. were grown (re traditional victuals, see Grimble, 1933; Lewis, 1988; Turbott, 1949). These *aba* were frequented daily by *te kainga* residents according to the usufructuary rights each *te mwenga* had for cultivating them and taking produce. Besides, *te mwenga* had other *aba* away from *te kainga* in *buakonikai*: men would work on these distant *aba* for either a day at a time or a few days without returning home. Furthermore, sea conditions permitting, the men regularly ventured out to hunt and gather on marine areas

(known as *maran* and *nama*) to which they had rights⁴⁵ situated within and beyond the reef (Pole, 1995).

As well as the earlier *kainga* settlements being scattered and those in the later *kawa* ones being convergent, *kainga* were on ancestral land, and how they were established and how their populations were renewed was ancestral, whereas *kawa* are primarily a place where people reside. What is more, as well as an area of land, the term *kainga* signified alignment with a type of bilateral kinship group called *boti* (\cong clans), each named after *te bakatibu* who founded it (e.g., *te boti* of *Kaokoroa*) (Maude, 1963). All the residents of each *te kainga* belonged to the same *boti*, whereas residents of neighbouring *kainga* were in a different *boti*. Political, social and economic relations among neighbouring *kainga* were effected formally by virtue of all belonging to and participating in the district *mwaneaba* (Hockings, 1984; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Macdonald, 1982a). Indeed, the explanation of *boti* is connected to this feature of *kainga* settlement patterns with *mwaneaba* at their heart. The interior of each *mwaneaba* was separated into areas, also known as *boti*, and named according to the members of *te boti* who sat in the area during formal occasions (e.g., *botaki*, *bowi*). An example of this naming of areas is provided by Latouche (1983, p. 74); his floor plan of *Te Atu ni Uea Mwaneaba* in Tabomatang shows the names of 18 *boti*. Furthermore, Latouche elaborates his map of *kainga* of Nikunau (see above) with genealogies (Latouche, 1983, loose inserts).

Of further significance is that the founding of particular *boti* originated in *mwaneaba* districts within and beyond Nikunau (e.g., on Beru) (for an explanation, see Maude, 1963). Thus, *boti* names were shared, or replicated, across Nikunau and the many *mwaneaba* throughout the other southern and central Kiribati islands, depending on whether particular *boti* had *te kainga*, and so members, in a district. The extent of this replication is evident from comparing *mwaneaba* floor plans from district to district and island to island—for floor plans from Beru, see Maude (1963), from Tabiteuea, see Geddes (1977), and from Onotoa, see Hockings (1984).⁴⁶ What is more, members of *boti* in, say, the Tabomatang district of Nikunau would have had kinship links based on their *boti* with *boti* in the five other districts, and the same from island to island, no matter how many generations these dated from. To clarify, the replication of *boti* names was allied with *te I-Nikunau*'s membership of his or her *te boti* being recognised across islands. This was provided that he or she could authenticate it, a process that involved the claimant reciting their genealogy to the council in *te mwaneaba* of a district they were visiting, and so having it compared with that of the relevant *kainga* of that

district. Once authentication was complete, *te I-Nikunau* concerned was, among other things, entitled to sit in the area of *te mwaneaba* associated with their *boti* during formal occasions, and share in the entitlements, responsibilities and duties of members of that *boti* inside and outside *te mwaneaba* (see Grimble, 1989), and living in *te kainga*.

Te I-Nikunau joined their *boti* at some stage of growing up, being initiated as an adult and marrying, as various researchers attempt to explain (see Goodenough, 1955; Hockings, 1984; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Maude, 1963). As every *I-Nikunau* was also part of two or more *utu* by virtue of birth, *tibutibu* or marriage, these two bilateral kinship categories existed side by side; to clarify, residents of each *te kainga* could and usually did belong to a variety of *utu*.⁴⁷ But whereas residents of neighbouring *kainga* belonged to a different kinship group in terms of *boti*, the residents of one *te kainga* could and probably did belong to the same *utu* as some residents of a neighbouring *te kainga*. Thus, in Tabomatang and the other five districts on Nikunau, the two categories were manifested as *kainga*, in the sense of people of the same *boti* living in one settlement, and *mwenga* in which all the members of the household were of the same *utu*.

An implication of these circumstances of kinship and settlement was that, on top of bonds of *utu* through living together within *te mwenga*, bonds through belonging to the same *boti* engendered far more community mindedness, sharing and dependence among residents of *te kainga* than only geographical neighbours might show. Moreover, in many other ways too, said circumstances provided a solid basis of social structures within the districts and across the atoll, and among *I-Nikunau* and the peoples of the other southern and central Kiribati Islands (Goodenough, 1955; Grimble, 1989; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Maude & Maude, 1931; Maude, 1963). As related in subsequent subsections, this carried on until some way into the 20th Century, gradually weakening as the *boti* kinship group type withered in importance.

As to how and why today's *kawa*⁴⁸ came to replace *kainga* as the form of settlements, the clue to these questions are the churches being so prominent in them, and traditional *mwaneaba* mostly being absent. The churches were built in the four decades after the Christian missions arrived in the 1870s. Between 1873 and about 1910, the LMS mission was performed by resident pastors of Samoan origin, accompanied in many cases by their wives. Their post-conversion *kerisiano fa'a-samoa* version of Christianity included a strong dash of Samoan culture (Nokise, 1983). This *kerisiano fa'a-samoa* included different notions of village life from *te kainga* of *I-Nikunau*, and based on these notions they brought their *I-*

Nikunau converts together in *kawa* adjacent to their mission premises. The main consideration in this was to separate converts from the unconverted still living in *kainga*. The number of converts increased during the 1880s (Nokise, 1983) and, as they did so, *kawa* became the ascendant form of settlements.

In any case, the pastors perceived *kainga* as having links to ancestor worship and as a barrier to their authority to carry on their mission work, incidental to which was a desire to govern, and so be able to increase conversion and have everyone conform to church law, including observance of the *Te Tabati*. Although *kainga* were abandoned as settlements and have all but disappeared archeologically (cf. Di Piazza, 1999), the term is still used but now refers to parts or sections of *kawa*. The institution of *boti* was also challenged by the change from *kainga* to *kawa*, and as alluded to above, it too would ultimately be undermined through changes in political circumstances, although this was some time after the demise of *kainga* (Hockings, 1984).

An added feature of the establishment of *kawa* arose when William Goward became the chief LMS missionary for the southern Kiribati Islands. Possessed of some town planning knowledge, he applied it in developing *kawa* as being model from an aesthetic perspective (Macdonald, 1982a). Thus, *mwenga* had to abut the street at right angles—this made them easy for the pastors and, later, the civil authorities to patrol and inspect (Geddes, 1977; Hockings, 1984)—and conform to standard designs, which incorporated wells and reef-latrines. Maintaining the street and paths adjacent to each *te mwenga* was the responsibility of the occupants, giving rise to an early morning sweeping of the areas in question; curiously, this is still an almost daily occurrence that one sees and hears on *Nikunau* and elsewhere in the diaspora.

The requirements about the extent, layout and situation of *kawa* and *mwenga* (and demise of *kainga* settlements), and for responsibilities to maintain them, came to feature in regulations officially endorsed, and probably suggested, by the Colony Government but formally enacted by the *Nikunau* Native Government, which carried them through enthusiastically all the same (Macdonald, 1982a). However, resituating *mwenga* raised issues about *aba*: essentially, *mwenga* were put on *aba* adjacent to the road but in which the then rights of *te aba* did not belong to anyone in *te mwenga*. This de facto loss of their usufructuary rights upset the existing rights-holders and their *utu*, who could have expected to inherit those rights. Hockings (1984) reports disgruntlement over this on *Onotoa*, to which the Colony Government's response was to declare land adjacent to the road as its property, and then to

vest user rights in the head of *te mwenga* settled on each plot. However, the loss of rights often went deeper, being seen by members of *te kainga* whose ancestral land it was as dispossession and denial of rights to use said *aba* in the way they preferred.⁴⁹

Another matter arising from the setting up of *kawa* in place of *kainga* is for customary inheritance and transfer in the following century or so to have resulted in *te I-Nikunau* owning small plots of *aba* widely dispersed around the atoll. The corollary was for naturally coherent areas of land coming to be divided among many owners; this was inhibiting from a cultivation point of view, not to mention inefficient from a rational economic *I-Matang* perspective. Before, fragmentation was modified by collective use of *aba* by residents of *te kainga*, who through sharing *utu* or *boti* were amenable to cooperation and rationalising landholdings. However, on top of *te kainga* disappearing, and so no longer there to effect rationalisations that were desirable from a community view, the change in question and others of similar ilk have led to a greater sense of individuality and a keener sense of which *aba* belongs to whom (Baaro, 1987; Hockings, 1984; Macdonald, 1971, 1982a; Maude, 1963; Pole, 1995; Sabatier, 1939/1977; Trussel & Groves, 2003).

The changes related in the previous few paragraphs and the various *aba* ownership problems accompanying them gradually dissipated, although some may still be bubbling beneath the surface. Indeed, *aba* matters are the most common subject of disputes among *I-Kiribati* that end up in courts. Disputes arise for various reasons, including disagreements over boundaries, encroachment on seldom-used *aba* being challenged, and contested ownership arising from inheritance and other transfers (see Lundsgaarde, 1968b). On Tarawa, similar issues arose and with land there at a premium, the issues just referred to are much more significant and keenly affect *I-Tarawa* as the ancestral landowners, especially as aid organisations, and before them, the Colony Government, have been concerned about the inefficiency concept mentioned above.

In the last three decades, a further aspect of settlement to have changed on Nikunau is the distribution of the population becoming skewed towards the vicinity of Rungata. By the time the six *kawa* existing today were ascendant in the early 20th Century, it is probable that there were about 1,700 *I-Nikunau* residing on the atoll and these were more evenly spread than today—the earliest census data available (i.e., Pusinelli, 1947) indicates four *kawa* with between 11% and 15% of the population, with the two outliers being Tabomatang (6%) and Rungata (35%). This was still the case by the mid-1980s, when the population of the atoll had increased to about 2,000 (National Statistics Office, 2013), but without so many *non-I-*

Nikunau public service workers present as there are today. Since, Rungata has grown by about 30% and accounts for nearly half the atoll's total population (National Statistics Office, 2016; Pusinelli, 1947; Zwart & Groenewegen, 1968).

Three basic reasons explain how the present distribution came about. First, for no obvious reason, emigration from *Nikunau* in the 1980s and 1990s has emptied some *kawa* faster than others, to the point that Tabomatang for one, now with only 4% of the population (i.e., indicative of a 60% in headcount since 1968 – Zwart & Groenewegen, 1968), may lack sufficient residents to be a viable autonomous social unit. Second, although still small, the number of job positions and amount of casual work with the Island Council and Republic Government has increased. Besides, the pay and conditions of those working for the Republic Government on *Nikunau* now reflect those on Tarawa, and are a more prominent part of the atoll's economy than hitherto (cf. Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007). Most of this employment is around Rungata, or Rungata is used as a depot or similar base. What is more, much of the full-time employment comes with accommodation, which is provided in the Island Council area in Rungata; this includes the persons in senior positions. Although these positions are open to *I-Nikunau*, they are usually filled by other *I-Kiribati*, for reasons of independence, and because these others have no *mwenga* or *aba* on *Nikunau*, they stay in the accommodation provided. Third, limited as they still are, the facilities and monetised aspects of the economy in and around the Island Council area and Rungata have been extended, and to access them *I-Nikunau* have to come to Rungata, or indeed live there, as is the case with the junior secondary school, which opened c. 2001. Besides, all this has had a multiplier effect around Rungata compared with the other *kawa*. This is epitomised in the private family store situated adjacent to the Island Council area being relatively prosperous compared with others on the atoll.

I-Nikunau settlements and households elsewhere are inspired by those on *Nikunau*, past and present but all have had to adjust in various and sometimes substantial ways to the circumstances where they are located. On Tarawa, the aspects of colonialism that had affected traditional settlements on *Nikunau* between the 1840s and 1940s also affected some there, and Betio in particular and more besides were severely damaged during the Battle of Tarawa—despite an organised clear up effort in the mid-1950s,⁵⁰ there are still war relics and spent munitions in evidence and unexploded bombs are occasionally uncovered. However, by the time *I-Nikunau* began settling in significant numbers, the precedence of Tarawa, its status as the Colony Government headquarters and its growth in population through immigration

were well in train (see Doran, 1960; Maude & Doran, 1966). *I-Nikunau mwenga* have had to fit in with these developments physically and socially (see S3.2). This includes some *I-Nikunau* purchasing land from *I-Tarawa* or other owners and, once they were joined by *utu ni kaan* or had families of their own, sub-dividing this land to accommodate the consequent new *mwenga*.

Similar, though more substantial, adjustments have occurred in Great Britain and New Zealand. On Great Britain, the dwellings and households resemble the norms of the British socio-economic class or level of affluence of the *I-Matang* partner in the *I-Matang-I-Kiribati* marriage and of the geographical district in which they are located (e.g., London, Cornwall, Mid-Wales, Lancashire); the links with Nikunau and Kiribati are reflected in decorative features and some social behaviours, rather than the structure, fabric, layout, etc. of dwellings. This also applies among earlier diaspora of *I-Matang-I-Kiribati* settlers in New Zealand, except that the norms are those of the majority *Pākehā* population—although *Pākehā* vary in ancestry among English, Scots, Irish, Scandinavian, Welsh, etc., most seem to have become Anglicised in a peculiarly New Zealand way, different from British (cf. Black & Huygens, 2007). However, with immigration continuing in significant numbers, and recent settlers being mostly all *I-Kiribati* singles, couples and families, the earlier diaspora in New Zealand are under greater influence than the diaspora in Great Britain to behave socially in ways reflecting Nikunau and Kiribati.

For their part, these *all-I-Kiribati* settlers face some challenging aspects of housing designs and utilisation, among other housing matters alluded to in S3.2. Their familiarity with New Zealand dwellings before arriving is often limited to what they have seen on Tarawa from the outside of modern single and double-storey houses of imported designs resembling them (see S3.2); not many have spent much time inside such dwellings, let alone lived in them, and so their experiential understanding of these structures and designs is incomplete and they can experience various difficulties, as noted by Thompson (2016). What seems to occur is that furnishing and decorating their interiors, utilising them spatially, etc. ends up as some compromise or other between *mwenga* on Tarawa and *I-Kiribati* perceptions of dominant cultural (i.e., *Pākehā* or \approx *I-Matang*) norms for dwellings in New Zealand. Uncontrollable factors affecting this compromise include that fixtures, fittings (including carpets and stoves) and furniture have come with the rented dwellings in which most live. Besides, discretionary incomes are mostly relatively very low and spending on these matters is usually given a low

priority, including behind community contributions, motor vehicles, entertainment equipment, mobile devices and Internet access (cf. Kuruppu and Liverman, 2011).

A major difficulty many *I-Kiribati* experience with dwelling structure and design has to do with the closed nature of houses, which presumably arises from considerations of weather-tightness, especially during the New Zealand winter, and of *Pākehā*'s views about privacy and the function of houses, including as serving what Black and Huygens (2007) refer to as the short family (cf. Buckenberger, 2012). This closed nature contrasts with the open-style *mwenga I-Kiribati* arrivals were used to even on Tarawa, let alone Nikunau, where built structures are spread around a dwelling area and their sides are designed to admit breezes for cooling (see S3.1 and S3.2). These difficulties are particularly challenging for larger, extended families (cf. Berry, 2014), or when families share a house, which occurs frequently through a second or, even, third family being given a place to stay temporarily. The latter arises when the second or third family first arrive in a community and continues while they go about setting up separate households for themselves, which often takes months not weeks (see Roman, 2013; Statistics New Zealand, 2014; Thompson, 2016).

Setting up their own households is identified by Thompson (2016) as a critical resettlement event for *I-Kiribati* arriving in New Zealand. Intriguingly, in the case of low-rent, and so usually poorly maintained, accommodation, it is sometimes the household officially renting the property that moves out, to a better, higher rent property, after vouching to the landlord that the family taking over the property and the rental agreement is reliable. What is more, the aspiration of many is home ownership, seeing it as freer, more stable and likely to provide a sense of achievement (see Thompson, 2016); arguably, this aspiration derives from *te katei ni Nikunau* and the way *mwenga* formed in *kainga* and later *kawa* (see S4.2). However, only a still small minority of *I-Kiribati* families in New Zealand have achieved this aspiration—the rate according to Statistics New Zealand (2014) is only 11%, and even that may include the earlier diaspora of *I-Matang-I-Kiribati* settlers. In any case, even those later settlers who achieve such aspirations may be deterred from changing fixtures and decoration by cultural attitudes to décor and lack of knowledge and skills in use of materials available locally (wallpaper, paints, soft furnishings, etc.).

A further factor is that, although *I-Kiribati* may obtain perceptions of how *non-I-Kiribati* New Zealanders lay out their dwellings and furnish them, and so may feel some obligation to mimic these, they are probably more concerned about what other *I-Kiribati* think of them, as they are probably by far the most frequent visitors to *I-Kiribati* dwellings (cf. Thompson,

2016). Concomitantly, the perceptions they acquire through these visits of how other *I-Kiribati* in New Zealand are seen to live in their dwellings influences them in terms of what is acceptable and not acceptable to these other *I-Kiribati*.

4.3 Economic Circumstances

The range of economic circumstances of *I-Nikunau* nowadays is broad, particularly according to where they live, as the descriptions in S3 indicate. On Nikunau, their micro- and macro-economies are barely distinguishable from each other or from social, political, religious and other facets of life; on Great Britain and New Zealand's two islands, indeed even on Tarawa, *I-Nikunau* might be described as part of someone else's macro-economy. The broadness of their circumstances reflects two fundamentals. First, many of them, or their recent ancestors, responded willingly to possibilities of being drawn away from Nikunau to work, be educated and for other reasons, and for dependents and other *utu* following them. As related in S4.1, these possibilities began when whalers first took on some men as ships' crew and they have occurred frequently since and to a remarkable assortment of places. However, up to the 1960s, nearly all *I-Nikunau* were still part of the Nikunau economy; it was only afterwards that the geographical broadening of their economic circumstances took effect, as their emigration became permanent.

Second, as extensions of their subsistence economy activities, they took willingly to producing and trading coconut oil and, subsequently, copra. Oil was a product for which they already had uses (e.g., anointing their bodies, preparing food, fuelling simple oil lamps, as introduced by beachcombers) and copra replaced tobacco as the form of local currency, not only to purchase trade goods but also to pay "tax copra", and church and civil fines, dues and fees⁵¹ (Couper, 1967; Lawrence, 1992; Maude & Leeson, 1965; Morrell, 1960).

The references just made to taxes, church dues, etc. are an indication that the trade in copra, and indeed cash remittances received from *I-Nikunau* working away, enabled the establishment and perpetuation of other non-traditional organisations on Nikunau besides trade stores. Using either copra or cash, *I-Nikunau* have been increasingly called on to pay church contributions, fines for spiritual and secular misdemeanours, school fees, various poll, land and copra-export taxes, licence fees (e.g., for bicycles and dogs) and similar (Macdonald, 1982a; Nokise, 1983; Sabatier, 1939/1977). These have been due variously to successive religious organisations (i.e., the LMS and KPC/KUC, and the RC Church), successive governmental organisations (i.e., the Nikunau Native Government and Nikunau Island Council, and the Colony Government and the Republic Government) and community

groups. *I-Nikunau* have also made contributions in kind to these same organisations. Most of these have been voluntary, and are still. They have involved frequent exertions, such as on behalf of their churches, but have come to be seen as part and parcel of *kawa* or diasporic community life. Thus, *I-Nikunau* approach them with the same willing and cheerful attitude that they exhibit towards friends or visiting strangers and especially to *koraki*, no matter how distant is the relationship biologically or geographically. However, some were involuntary, the most significant and formal of these being so-called “communal workdays” required of almost all adults annually between the 1900s and the 1960s by the Colony Government (e.g., see Regulations for the Good, 1933). These were extremely unpopular and controversial (see Correspondent, 1913) and have left a legacy of a strong aversion to performing unpaid work for *Te Tautaeka*, whether it be the Nikunau Island Council or the Republic Government; this applies as equally to performing committee work without payment of a sitting allowance as it does to manual labour (Macdonald, 1982a).

For many *I-Nikunau* still resident on Nikunau, copra is still a significant, if meagre, source of cash, as is brought out in S3.1; otherwise, many would have very little with which to pay the present day versions of the aforementioned taxes, school fees and church dues or to purchase imported goods. *I-Nikunau* receive a price for their copra that the Republic Government guarantees; this arrangement continues attempts by the authorities on Tarawa to counter what has proved to be a long-term downward trend in its price as a world commodity (see Razzaque, Osafa-Kwaako & Grynberg, 2007). These attempts began with the (Copra) Producers’ Development and Stabilization Fund in the 1950s. Estimates I was supplied by the National Statistics Office in a personal communication in 2009 show that a spike in the world copra price reduced the subsidy greatly in 2008 but this was only temporary. In 2017, the subsidy across the whole Republic is estimated as AU\$25m (Kiribati Government, 2016). Although the subsidies were funded with assistance from the European Union’s Stabilisation des recettes d’Exportation (STABEX) for several years up to about 2000 (see Aiello, 1999), now they are borne by Republic Government general revenue. Given how much of this revenue (usually >60%) comes from licences issued to various foreign vessels to fish for tuna in Kiribati’s vast Extended Economic Zone (EEZ) (Williams, Terawasi & Reid, 2017), the subsidies are a method for *I-Nikunau* to share in this revenue while also being encouraged to be active by continuing to produce copra. One curiosity, however, is that the Republic Government is having to portray this guaranteeing of prices as a mechanism to stabilise incomes of *I-Nikunau* and copra cutters on other islands in the face of fluctuating prices, and

so to appear compliant with demands by the Asian Development Bank and others not to subsidise agriculture.

The dynamics of the various economic and related developments explained above are as follows. Before the 1820s, *I-Nikunau* comprised a small, isolated and so virtually closed, self-reliant, tropical atoll economy, although it is important to appreciate that this would not have meant there was no contact whatsoever with other people, not only on neighbouring Kiribati islands but further afield, and that this probably meant some innovations (e.g., plants, growing techniques) being introduced intermittently but rarely (cf. Gibson & Nero, 2008). This economy was based on subsisting on poor, drought-prone *aba*, the two lakes, reef and nearby parts of a vast ocean (Catala, 1957; Di Piazza, 2001; Republic of Kiribati, 2009; Lewis, 1981; Sachet, 1957; Thomas, 2001). However, nothing was only economic. Thus, participation, transactions, etc. took place as part of a wider awareness and acknowledgement of relationships with *koraki*, customary usufructuary rights in *aba* and marine areas, and technical knowledge and skills, magic, spells and rituals (A. F. Grimble 1989; R. Grimble, 2013; cf. Gibson & Nero, 2008).

Economic order was indistinguishable from other forms of order, covering affairs that might be classed academically as social, political, spiritual, military, environmental, cultural, etc. The basic economic units were *mwenga* and *kainga*, as covered in S4.2; their constituents eked out a living with the victuals, materials, etc., they procured from their *aba*, whether forming *te kainga* or in *buakonikai*, and from marine areas. Any surplus (e.g., of fresh fish) did not lead to barter or other trading—any such taking advantage was seen as *kamama*—but was shared with other kin, or with *baronga*, and an insufficiency was overcome similarly. This non-reciprocal distribution of victuals, materials, etc. extended to cooperation within *kainga*, for example in major fishing expeditions and on other occasions (Geddes, 1977; Hockings, 1984; cf. Burrige, 1957). Cooperation and assistance were also available from within *utu* and, particularly for significant tasks and projects, from other *kainga* in a district. This applied particularly when specialist knowledge and skills were needed (e.g., to build *bata* and other dwelling structures, canoes and other capital formation activities; to provide medical care and nursing), and in times of crisis. Furthermore, *utu* provided help no matter that they might normally reside on different *kainga*, including outside the district, in which case it was routine for the visiting helper to be fed and accommodated in *te mwenga* (Hockings, 1984). As alluded to throughout S3, these practices continue in modified forms today wherever *I-Nikunau* are located, including that in diasporic communities the sharing

and assistance occurs not only among *utu* but also among *baronga* (cf. Ratuva, 2014; Thompson, 2016).

Another important traditional practice that survives today in modified form for transferring goods or services among *I-Nikunau* is *bubuti*; the practice is as social as it is economic (see Geddes, 1977; Macdonald, 1972; McCreary & Boardman, 1968). Basically, *bubuti* entails a person having the right to gift goods or services to another with whom they have some social relationship, or to solicit goods or services from that other, with an obligation on the part of the other to agree. While at the time of the gifting or soliciting, no corresponding action occurs that would turn this into an exchange, there are implications of potential reciprocity in the future, and just as it strengthens social relations among the participants, so there are social limits on how it is conducted (e.g., for it to be seen as begging would give rise to *kamama*). Not only does *bubuti* have continuing significance in the distribution of goods and services among *I-Nikunau* wherever they reside (cf. Duncan, 2014; Ratuva, 2014; Thompson, 2016) but also it is celebrated culturally; this continuity is despite repeated attempts made by the Colony Government to stamp it out (e.g., see Regulations for the Good, 1933).

Order within the above economy was through gerontocratic rule, exercised by *unimane* within each *te kainga*, and, beyond that, within each of six districts. A feature of this rule were *bowi* held, respectively, in *te uma ni mane* and in *te mwaneaba*, hence the concept of *mwaneaba* districts. This order included quasi-taxing of *mwenga* based on income or wealth, levied, for example, to stage ceremonials in *te mwaneaba*. One item on the agenda of a meeting called to organise a particular event would be consideration of the items each *te kainga*, and, by implication, each *te mwenga*, would contribute. I have witnessed, or sometimes been part of, similar kinds of discussion on Nikunau and in diasporic communities. Kazama (2001) and Autio (2010) report similarly in their analyses of the role of the *mwaneaba* on Tabiteuea.

Initial changes to the above circumstances coincided with visits to Nikunau by the aforementioned whalers and a few other passing ships. The visitors bartered with *I-Nikunau* for locally-produced goods and services, for example, coconuts and other fresh provisions (including, eventually, meat from the pigs and fowl bred from stock that whalers entrusted to *I-Nikunau* with this purpose in mind – Macdonald, 1982a), mats and other handicrafts, *kaokioki* (\cong coconut rum), and the services of *nikiranroro* (i.e., captives, slaves and single women known to have had sexual relations⁵²) (cf. Druett, 1987). In return, *I-Nikunau* obtained *kaako*, for example, various metal implements (e.g., tools, weapons), trinkets, plugs

of tobacco and tobacco pipes, and the abovementioned fowl and pigs. For *I-Nikunau*, this bartering was a new concept, as implied above in mentioning how a surplus catch of fish was dealt with.

The whalers were particularly after the oil they could process from whale carcasses; it was an important commodity in their ports of origin in Western Europe and New England, being used for, among other things, lighting, heating, cooking, lubricating, and making candles, soap, glue, corsets and umbrellas (Best, 1983; Lever, 1964; Mitchell, 1983; Phillips, 2006). Then, perhaps as the behaviour of whales changed or their stock was depleted (Davis, Gallman & Hutchins, 1988), and, in any case, as the demand for whale products declined in the face of alternatives, some also turned their attention to coconut oil, which had other uses as well and could be accumulated and transported in the same barrels (Maude & Leeson, 1965).

I-Nikunau's response to this demand for coconut oil (1840s–1860s) was one of enthusiasm for more trade. They showed even more enthusiasm when the product demanded changed from oil to copra (1870s–) (see Bollard, 1981); although coconut by coconut, the price received for copra was lower than for oil, they could cut and dry copra more easily and efficiently than they could press oil. Whatever, from the 1840s, *I-Nikunau* were increasingly incited to expand nut harvesting by planting more coconut palms, mostly on underutilised *aba*, so as not to affect their other land-based subsistence resources. The time they spent on cultivating palms, and cutting and either pressing or, later, drying nuts also increased (Macdonald, 1982a). Although this reduced the time available for other activities (cf. Lewis, 1988), some labour saving devices were among goods that *I-Nikunau* could obtain through trade, thus making them more efficient in conducting some of these other activities, as well as in producing oil and then copra. However, droughts and poor soils were still constraining. On the other hand, the difficult growing conditions meant commercial planters were uninterested in turning Nikunau into a plantation, unlike some other Pacific islands.

Not so some of the half dozen trading companies with bases on Butaritari, however; the change to copra, and the resulting higher production potential, incited them to change their mode of trading with *I-Nikunau* from passing, or itinerant, to resident. However, although they knew little about *I-Nikunau*, they probably perceived them as lacking the capital, connections and reliability necessary to be admitted into their companies and trading networks, to say nothing of the possible social, cultural and racial disdain and condescension, if not hostility, they may have harboured. In any case, for their part, *I-Nikunau's* involvement

in proprietorial trade was constrained culturally, which, in studying their neighbours in Tuvalu, Munro (1987) attributes to “kinship obligations, community solidarity, and ethics of reciprocity that run counter to profit making and economic individualism” (p. 80) (see also Autio, 2010; Macdonald, 1982a, especially pp. 212–213) (cf. Burridge, 1957; Eisenstadt, 1956). Thus, the trading companies in question financed *I-Matang* and Chinese agents to establish trade stores on Nikunau. Soon there were at least four stores, two serving single *mwaneaba* districts and two serving two neighbouring districts. The presence of these stores greatly increased *I-Nikunau*’s continuous access to victuals, hardware, cloth, implements and other trade goods, and so spurred them to produce more copra (Couper, 1967; Davis, 1892; Macdonald, 1982a; Maude, 1977; Maude & Leeson, 1965; Munro, 1987; Sabatier, 1939/1977; Willmott, 2007).

I-Nikunau’s enthusiasm for and level of participation in the trade that developed because of the stores was notwithstanding the companies and their agents undoubtedly having the upper hand in knowledge, skills, etc. This applied in knowing about concepts of trade, commercial manufacture and economic profit, the fairness or otherwise of prices at which goods were sold and copra was bought, and, indeed, the uses to which oil, copra, etc. were put—this being oblivious to what was happening to the products of their work also applied when they were working away, including in mining phosphate ore, for example, and still does in some cases. Undoubtedly, this comparative ignorance caused *I-Nikunau* disadvantages in the exchange rate between goods and copra, and in goods having inferiorities (cf. Bakre, 2008). Indeed, the period was not free of occasional disputes, but usually focusing on the particulars of whether the traders might reduce copra prices, giving reasons such as world prices falling, and not over the general circumstances of trade. Whatever, the disputes were most frequently conducted at the level of *unimane* and traders, rather than the individual copra cutter having to take on the trader alone.

Although the siting of trade stores on Nikunau was a sign of prosperity, the stores and the trade were always susceptible to the frequency of droughts (Sachet, 1957) and fluctuations in external demand for copra (Munro, 1987; Razzaque et al., 2007). Over the entire time the stores have existed, these have frequently presented challenges not only for the viability of stores but also of the shipping services on which the stores rely to bring the *kaako* and collect the copra, and so the micro-economy on Nikunau (cf. Couper, 1967). The Great Depression period presented a particularly extreme challenge to the stores, shipping and the very survival of the trade, and had far-reaching consequences. The price of copra crashed so low that the

trade stores, then still in private ownership, would have folded had they not been reconstituted as *I-Nikunau* owned and operated cooperatives—I believe there were at least four of these by 1935, registered eventually under the Native Co-operative Societies Ordinance 1940. Concomitantly, the shipping and import-export services at the level of the Colony continued in private hands, but, whereas half a dozen companies were still around in the 1920s, their number was down to two by the late 1930s, namely Burns, Philp & Co, Ltd, by then based on Tarawa, and W. R. Carpenter & Co. Ltd, still based on Butaritari. The continuance of the trade was helped by copra prices recovering steeply when a world shortage of oils and fats loomed with the prospect surfacing of another major war (Catala, 1957; Couper, 1967; Macdonald, 1982a; Maude, 1949, 1950).

The cooperatives established on Nikunau at this time, together with perhaps a further 40 or so on neighbouring islands in Kiribati and Tuvalu, not only overcame the immediate issue of saving the existing trade but also they marked the beginning of the cooperative form of ownership across these islands, as at first embodied in *boboti* but then increasingly in *mronron*. This form of ownership is in tune with *te katei ni Nikunau* (Macdonald, 1982a); *mronron* in particular somehow meld distribution based on kinship with using cash to oil the process of goods purchased collectively being distributed among members, without the prospect of *kamama* associated with arm's length trading for individual economic gain (Couper, 1967; Munro, 1987). Besides, *I-Nikunau* probably obtained a better deal because of the stores being reconstituted along cooperative lines, and were more in control of the trade than when it was in private *I-Matang* or Chinese hands. The better deal was despite *I-Nikunau* who participated in the governance and administration of the cooperatives still mostly being at a knowledge disadvantage when dealing with external suppliers and intermediaries from the aforementioned shipping companies. Besides, even though these *I-Nikunau* had gradually acquired knowledge and understanding through participating in the trade now for some decades, many economic and social concepts the trade encompassed were alien to them culturally, being both strange and even repugnant. This incognisance endures in modern contexts of trading and other economic relations, and still is challenging for *I-Nikunau*, including on Tarawa and in metropolitan countries.

Events in the Kiribati Islands during World War II (see Notes 21 and 42) caused a pause in trade from 1941 to 1948, which in turn affected not only *I-Nikunau's* access of to trade goods but also the revenues used to operate and maintain churches, schools and government (Macdonald, 1982a). However, when the trade did restart, under the auspices of the Colony

Government with capital from London (Maude, 1949), copra prices were higher than for some decades before or since because the aforementioned world shortage of oils and fats continued, which was the case for another decade or so. *I-Nikunau* responded to these higher prices by increasing cultivation and production, and so their purchases of imported goods increased, including catching up with hardware replacement that had not been possible during the wartime disruption. The resumption of trade also meant *I-Nikunau* could resume paying taxes, school fees, licences, fines and other payments to the Colony Government, the Nikunau Native Government and the churches, meaning they too could revive and renew their activities and assets, and even their presences, in cases where they had left altogether.

A significant change once trade had resumed was for the Colony Government to place the stores it had re-established on Nikunau under the ownership of a single cooperative, namely, *Te Bobotin Nikunau*. This cooperative was supplied from Tarawa, where the Colony Government had established a body responsible for the importing and wholesaling of goods, the collection and export of copra, and shipping services. The Colony Government made sure this enterprise had a monopoly by preventing the two companies mentioned above from returning to the Colony after the war. Concomitantly, on Nikunau, *Te Bobotin Nikunau* might also be said to have had a monopoly in the supply of goods and a monopsony in the purchase of copra. However, these concepts would neither be familiar to *I-Nikunau* or how they would have described the organisation in question, given tradition was largely based on forms of cooperation and inclusion among kinship groups in and around *mwenga*, *kainga*, *mwaneaba*, etc.; perhaps the one peculiarity was that, as with the Nikunau Native Government, *Te Bobotin Nikunau* was a whole of Nikunau organisation, not a *mwaneaba* district one, except that it had branches in four of the *kawa*, corresponding to the pre-war circumstances. Besides, from time to time, one or two church *mronron* stores operated as well, but usually buying their *kaako* from *Te Bobotin Nikunau*.

Te Bobotin Nikunau remained significant for the first 50 years of its existence, not only economically but also politically, socially and culturally, as was true of its counterparts on Tarawa and other Outer Islands. But, like them, it has declined since the 1990s, resulting in the organisation I observed in 2009 being a shadow of the thriving enterprise I had observed two decades earlier. However, this decline contrasts with the enthusiasm still shown by *I-Nikunau* for cooperative enterprises, which lives on at the grassroots level through *mronron* (see S3.1). As others have described in writing about them (see Couper, 1967; Macdonald, 1982a), and as I observed in 2009 while living in *te mwenga* running one on Tarawa, these

stores sell the most basic victuals, dealing in the smallest quantities (e.g., a cup of rice, sugar or flour, a spoonful of salt, a stick of tobacco or locally rolled cigarette) and at all hours, reflecting among other things the meagre incomes of their member-customers.

Further to the point made above that up to the 1960s the economy for most *I-Nikunau* was Nikunau, this was notwithstanding that for *I-Nikunau*, the copra, remittances and imports, comprising not only consumables but also technology, knowledge and beliefs, had all represented economic changes, not to mention political, social and cultural ones. Nowadays, outsiders might perceive it as still largely self-reliant, even closed, because of such factors as its physical remoteness, the lack of export value of its copra and the low earnings of people temporarily working away. However, since the 1960s, there have been changes even more profound economically and otherwise as those earlier ones, as foreshadowed in dealing with their geographical and demographical consequences in S4.1 and S4.2. The upshot of these recent changes has been that the economy for most *I-Nikunau* since the 1970s has at least incorporated Tarawa, and perhaps for two decades has been more Tarawa than Nikunau. To appreciate more fully these changes retrospectively, I first consider the economy on Tarawa and *I-Nikunau*'s economic circumstances there, and then return to how the present Nikunau economy has evolved since the 1960s.

The condition of Tarawa as a monetised economy traces back to the aftermath of the Battle of Tarawa, and the presence of supplied and moneyed American soldiers there and nearby (Macdonald, 1982a; Wright, 2000). Concomitantly, the restored Colony Government was headquartered there de facto and then de jure, from when Tarawa once again became the administrative centre of the Colony.⁵³ Its role as economic centre also began emerging, including as the centre of the restored import-export trade around copra; indeed, three cooperatives, equivalent to Nikunau's *Te Bobotin Nikunau*, were established and other enterprises besides, these in connection with the Colony Government's fledgling development activities (Couper, 1967, 1968; Maude, 1949, 1950; cf. Morgan, 1980).

After the war, under a Labour Government in London, new imperial policies were adopted; these involved development planning and extended to human development and social infrastructure (Morgan, 1980). The Colony Government was required to implement these policies,⁵⁴ and signalled this by drawing up the first national plan for reconstruction and development (i.e., GEIC, 1946). This turned out to be the first of a series that continues today (e.g., see GEIC, 1970; Government of Kiribati, 1983, 2016), along with other representations suggestive of direction, coordination, altruism and unity of purpose (e.g., United Nations

Conventions on Biological Diversity and on Climate Change, the Millennium Goals). In proceeding to implement its plans,⁵⁵ the Colony Government applied for capital finance from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, with the result that some of the applications were approved and the projects involved went ahead (Macdonald, 1982a; Maude & Doran, 1966).

The gist of these Colony Government activities and their geographical and demographical consequences are related in Box 1. They transformed the Tarawa economy in terms of its size and nature. A gradually accelerating series of civil engineering, education, health, housing, social welfare and other projects ensued, few of which could be associated with tradition, and these were accompanied by a steady inflow of people (see Figure 8), mainly from other islands in the Colony and supplemented from Britain, Australia, New Zealand, etc. by public and commercial administrators, teachers, medical specialists, engineers, etc. and their families. Banking, finance and insurance, telecommunications, public utilities, construction and vehicle maintenance, transport and similar services were established, some as joint ventures between the Colony Government and an overseas provider, public or private. The import trade was extended into goods of a modern nature and primarily meant for governmental body, business and domestic use, especially by the small but knowledgeable and economically substantial *I-Matang* community.

Similar has continued since the Republic Government took over. Indeed, except for a brief lull in the early 1980s, development activities affecting Tarawa have not merely continued but accelerated. The lull arose because phosphate royalties from Banaba ceased in 1980 and the incumbent government adopted policies aimed at self-sufficiency and non-dependence on deficit funding from the former colonial power (Jeremia, 1993; Macdonald, 1982a). Two occurrences in the mid-1980s changed the situation, ended the lull, and gave the Tarawa economy added impetus. First, following international acceptance of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, the Republic Government was able to charge various foreign vessels for fishing for tuna in Kiribati's EEZ.⁵⁶ Second, the new Republic began being "discovered" by the ever-increasing number and wider range of supranational organisations, aid donor countries and organisations, middle-persons and other organisations that were joining the world's fast expanding aid industry—on the growth of this industry and aid organisations, see Brown (2012), Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (2013) and Stubbs (2003).⁵⁷

Something of the economic circumstances of *I-Nikunau* on Tarawa have been covered already in S3.2, indicating that the level at which *I-Nikunau* participate in Tarawa's economy varies. Occasionally, some have been close to its centre, including having some involvement in government ministries and state-owned enterprises (e.g., as ministers and government department secretaries, public officials, medical professionals, educators, enterprise managers and staff, etc.). However, as their immigration has been fuelled less by education and more by *utu* relationships, so increasingly *I-Nikunau* are spread in their economic statuses, occupations, if any, and pursuits, with many being on the economy's periphery. Accordingly, they exhibit signs of what even the free market leaning Asian Development Bank (2006) describes as "increased economic frustration" (p. 1), a frustration of quite longstanding (see McCreary & Boardman, 1968) and felt equally by many other people on Tarawa. Even those with some qualifications struggle to derive income from skilled or professional employment (Bedford & Bedford, 2013), or from running their own private business, and so struggle to shake off dependency. Indeed, reiterating S3.2, paid employment of any kind is difficult to find, particularly for young adults, because the availability of even casual, unskilled jobs is well below the numbers seeking them.

Perhaps adding to this issue, and certainly not making it any easier, are persisting customary limits around who *I-Nikunau* might regard as legitimate employers, and concomitantly, around whether *I-Nikunau* can employ others in a modern sense (cf. Duncan, 2014). Notwithstanding changes in perceptions reported by Roniti (1985), going outside these limits may still lead to community censure, ridicule, *kamama* and being made *te bai n rang* (Macdonald, 1982a). From a potential employee's point of view, doing so is tantamount to allowing oneself to be exploited by fellow *I-Kiribati* for the latter's private gain. They are the same sorts of limits as apply to obtaining goods from other *I-Kiribati* as part of proprietary trade or to supplying goods to other *I-Kiribati*. The former may be interpreted as a sign of self-seeking and individual ambition, including aspiring to be better than the rest of the community, and the latter as a sign of not being self-sufficient.

Nevertheless, as Macdonald (1982a) and Roniti (1985) observed in the 1980s, it is increasingly acceptable on Tarawa, not to say imperative, for *te mwenga* to earn a living through organising and administering, say, a trade store, and so being entitled to take an economic share of the cash surplus that may result, or going fishing with a view to landing a surplus catch for hawking. However, for this to be customarily acceptable, there must be a semblance of *mronron* principles involved, such as through involving, and being reliant on,

customers, in the form of other *mwenga*, with some family or other social links to *te mwenga* operating the store. What is more, the prime motive for operating a store should be to provide goods and services to these other *mwenga*. The income so derived should only be incidental to this prime motive and be moderate, which seems to be the case anyway considering the low mark-ups prevailing because of prices being determined according to similar goods being on sale nearby and the hours of work usually involved, whether it be out fishing, producing bread, donuts, ice blocks, locally rolled cigarettes, etc., or just tending the store. Besides, *te mwenga* operating the store are expected to refrain from conspicuous consumption, or any displays of greater affluence than the other member-participants.

Notwithstanding lack of opportunities for many able-bodied *I-Nikunau*, particularly among the younger generation, to participate in Tarawa's market economy, few possess the inclination to return to Nikunau to follow a subsistence life, let alone the knowledge and skills or beliefs and values associated with life there; this is despite probably having rights to use *aba* there and the Republic Government guaranteeing them a price for the copra they might produce. Kuruppu and Liverman (2011) find this applies to many of Tarawa's residents with Outer Island roots; they also find them as being less self-sufficient than Outer Islanders, and more dependent on non-traditional government. Besides, returning to Nikunau might generate a sense of *kamama* about having squandered the opportunity to live and work on Tarawa (confidential personal communication, 2017). Among the less able-bodied on Tarawa, including members of the older generation, they cannot return to Nikunau because they depend on the younger generation, and so must stay on Tarawa with them, probably until they die; this is notwithstanding their having been raised on Nikunau, and so being used to the subsistence life there, and capable of teaching the young about living such a life.

In any case, *I-Nikunau* on Tarawa perceive, probably rightly, that Nikunau continues to lack almost all the material, economic and social amenities they observe on Tarawa, and might occasionally be able to enjoy. What is more, some have also become accustomed to holding positions of authority by virtue of wisdom based on intellectual ability, knowledge obtained through formal learning and merit demonstrated by accomplishments, rather than through age, gender and birth, as prevails on Nikunau, along with various other of the more tradition-oriented provisions of *te katei* (see Hockings, 1984). Especially the women (cf. Kutimani Tenten, 2003; Rose, 2014), but the men too, have become accustomed on Tarawa to greater individual freedom, including in their personal conduct and private lives.

I now return to the Nikunau economy, to consider how it has changed, especially in light of the lion's share of development and growth in activities, etc. having been performed on Tarawa. Just as the Colony Government was criticised in the late 1960s by observers sent from London (Macdonald, 1982a), it is no exaggeration to say that Nikunau, like the other Outer Islands, has been neglected by the aid organisations—some published advisors' reports even refer to Kiribati as the island in the singular, perhaps implying that Kiribati and Tarawa are synonymous (cf. Teaiwa, 2011); many more point out that Kiribati comprises 33 islands but then say no more about the 32 others—and, almost as much, by the Republic Government. Moreover, Nikunau and the *I-Nikunau* residing there have gradually suffered from an accumulation of so-called “backwash”; that is to say, negative effects that growth and development at the centre can have on conditions at the periphery (see Brookfield, 1972; Connell, 2010; Couper, 1967; De Haas, 2010; Myrdal, 1957; Ortega, 2008). Emigration and parallel occurrences have resulted in resources, notably in the form of people who performed better at school, being drained from Nikunau to Tarawa; the resources referred to are political, social and cultural, as well as economic. The occurrences include the decline of the nationwide network of *boboti*, and with it *Te Bobotin Nikunau*; and air and sea transport becoming increasingly dependent on the Republic Government, which tends towards Tarawa-oriented policies, finance and operating practices.

Concomitantly, looking for spread effects (De Haas, 2010; Myrdal, 1957) that counter backwash, the Nikunau economy, though still isolated geographically, has received some economic benefits from the centre. Income from the supply of produce by *I-Nikunau* on the periphery for consumption on Tarawa is one potential form of such benefits. However, this has only been significant in terms of *utu* relationships, not in terms of income and economic activity on Nikunau. Only copra has had any export significance (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007; Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012b) and, as outlined below, the circumstances of it all now going to Tarawa, but rarely further, is more social and political than it is economic, in the sense of the periphery supplying the centre with raw materials or victuals. Nevertheless, selling copra has gradually regained its position as the main source of cash among *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau, not especially because prices and production have increased but because other forms of incomes have declined.

Infrastructure and similar projects are another form of potential benefits but, reiterating above, compared with what has happened on Tarawa, these have been minor and carried out reluctantly. Indeed, many were carried out initially only as a response to the aforementioned

criticisms of the Colony Government because of signs of torpor on Nikunau and the other Outer Islands. Since, some upgrading of earlier infrastructure has been effected, along with some additional provision, including under the Republic Government; the areas involved have been schools, clinics, administrative buildings, the road, wharf and airport (see S3.1). However, as alluded to in Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs (2007) and Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services (2012b), physical maintenance and expertise to effect them seem to have been problematic. Structures were constructed with foreign materials not readily available when needed to be replaced, and there has been a lack of skills, tools and funds (Thomas & Kautoa, 2007; cf. Alejandrino-Yap, Dornan, McGovern & Austin, 2013).

The most visible provisions in recent years are the supply through aid donors of several utility vehicles and small lorries to the Island Council—vehicles on Nikunau have in the past been infrequent—and the establishment of the junior secondary school at Rungata. However, many of the vehicles I observed in 2009 were off the road, awaiting parts from Tarawa and beyond. Getting these is problematic because, assuming they can be identified on Nikunau, an order has to go to Tarawa, usually for overseas procurement, and then shipped through Tarawa back to Nikunau. Indeed, some rusting wrecks were accumulating for lack of parts, but the number was nothing compared with this phenomenon on Tarawa. And the school seems starved of money for learning resources and maintenance,⁵⁸ but even so, some children succeed in the entrance examinations for senior secondary schools, which usually means they go to Tarawa to study and few ever return.

A third form of potential benefits in the periphery–centre context are remittances from *I-Nikunau* working on Tarawa and transfer payments to *I-Nikunau* from the Republic Government. Long before the 1960s, remittances from around the Pacific and then from Banaba, Nauru, etc. were of significance for the Nikunau economy; these remittances could be several fold greater than the amount that *I-Nikunau* could earn on Nikunau from cutting copra—Macdonald (1982a, p. 175) remarks on the ratio of remittances to copra in the southern Kiribati Islands being 4:1 in the 1960s. With *I-Nikunau* taking jobs on Tarawa in the 1960s and 1970s, remittances became significant in the periphery–centre context but then declined in the 1980s and 1990s, as parents and other *utu* dependents accepted invitations from adult offspring to live with them on Tarawa (see S4.2).

Regarding transfer payments, in the past decade or so, the aforementioned AU\$40 per month non-contributory pensions for *I-Kiribati* over the age of 70 have not been insignificant in putting cash in the hands of *I-Nikunau* living on Nikunau. However, although one reason for

introducing it was to incent people to live on Outer Islands by enabling them to purchase some of their needs there, rather than have to rely on their adult offspring, and so perhaps have to move to Tarawa to join them, it has only been marginally effective in this regard. Indeed, the cash from this pension may actually be an additional incentive for adult offspring on Tarawa to have parents move there and join their *te mwenga*.

Another arrangement constituting a form of transfer payments relates to present dealings around copra. As indicated above, all the copra that *I-Nikunau* can produce is now purchased by the Republic Government. The source of revenue the Republic Government uses to make purchases, that is licences to exploit the tuna fishery, make this arrangement at least as much a means to transfer cash to the hands of *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau as it is a way of procuring raw materials for a manufacturing operation, namely the copra processing plant the Republic Government built on Tarawa in the 2000s. Ultimately, Outer Islands' communities on Nikunau, etc. are receiving shares of the proceeds of fishing licence fees. What is more, purchasing copra is essential for the government of the day to maintain political support among these islands' inhabitants—the subsidised prices at which copra is purchased from copra cutters is invariably an issue at elections—and more generally for them accepting governance by a Republic Government from Tarawa. Like the aforementioned pensions, the Republic Government now seems to see the transfer payments through copra as an incentive for *I-Nikunau* to live on Nikunau, and not to immigrate to Tarawa, or even to return to Nikunau from Tarawa. But, as in the past (cf. Couper, 1967), their effectiveness in this regard seems to be marginal at best.

Another significant stream of cash coming to the atoll are the Republic Government's grants towards the Island Council's annual recurrent expenditure mentioned in S3.1. Formally, the grants cover five out of every six months of the Council's operating expenditures,⁵⁹ and the Council is then supposed to raise enough to cover the sixth month from local revenues, which incidentally by virtue of local choice no longer include a land tax. However, reiterating S3.1, it is commonplace for these local taxes not to be collected because of *I-Nikunau* lacking the means to pay, with the consequence that the Council's employees are without pay for the month.

It is arguable that these various streams of incoming cash, goods, capital items and personnel have made *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau increasingly dependent since the 1960s on outsiders, including on, first, *I-Nikunau* in the diasporic communities on Tarawa and in the metropolitan countries, and, second, the Republic Government, sometimes in conjunction with aid

organisations. Moreover, the balance between these two has tilted away from private dependence based on *utu* relationships and towards government dependence, although, as intimated above, *I-Nikunau* seem more self-sufficient and less dependent on non-traditional government than Tarawa's residents are (see also Ratuva, 2014).

Regarding the economic circumstances of diasporic communities in metropolitan countries, Roman (2013) and Thompson (2016) relate that *I-Kiribati* arriving in New Zealand quickly realise, sometimes with surprise or even shock, how important money is to being able to live there. This surprise is notwithstanding how supposedly monetised the Tarawa economy is, as related above; the experience of many on Tarawa was that surviving with very little money was possible, added to which the quantity of transacting that occurs on Tarawa involving money is much less than is experienced in New Zealand. Some of the latter stemmed from having been under the misconception that there would be a vacant job waiting when they first arrived to smooth their re-settlement; not only that but also that the job would come with a house seemingly free of not only rent but utilities, property taxes, insurance, repair costs, etc., either literally or because charges would figure as deductions from wage payments. This misconception may not be as bizarre as it sounds because these are the circumstances that greet workers arriving under Recognised Seasonal Employer schemes, they were or are similar to the circumstances that greeted colonial officials, missionaries and aid workers arriving on Tarawa, and they are similar to the circumstances under which many Republic Government employees live on Tarawa.

Roman (2013) relates that the earliest of the immigrants who came without a partner with New Zealand or British connection (see S3.3.2) faced particular difficulties, economic and otherwise, because of not knowing anyone in New Zealand to whom they could turn. Even as the numbers in New Zealand grew, many difficulties have continued. Thus, Thomson (2016) relates how, for a time after their arrival, most *I-Kiribati* singles, couples and families have experienced living at or below the poverty line. This arises from being obliged on arrival to accept low-paid jobs because often nothing better is available or accessible. The earnings from these jobs are usually inadequate to be able to pay for basic victuals, clothing (including school uniforms), housing, utilities, health insurance, so-called "voluntary" donations and other school expenses (e.g., for stationery, supplies, sports, examination entry), and other essentials in a New Zealand context.

A significant factor in this matter is that not only is obtaining employment necessary in order to live in New Zealand, but also it is essential in order to obtain the visas needed to re-settle

under the Pacific Access Category. Although immigrants might hope to obtain employment before they arrive in New Zealand, invariably they do not and their initial entry is effected by the adult(s) having a work visa(s) and dependent children travelling on visitor visas. These visas are only converted to residence visas once the adult members of the immigrating family has permanent employment; if such employment is not secured within what the immigration authorities consider a reasonable time, then the immigrants must return to Kiribati. Given the imperative of permanent employment, the adults often accept the first job that qualifies as permanent, which usually means starting in a job on the acceptable income threshold, and so low-paid (cf. Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016)—employers often know about the necessity of immigrants having a job and can factor this into the pay and conditions they offer or impose (cf. Reilly, 2011).

After a period of settling in, many *I-Kiribati*, through means such as weak ties (see S3.3.2), have been able to obtain better-paid jobs, and so experience good management practices, protection of unions, and to move to better quality rental housing (e.g., between NZ\$400 and NZ\$600, depending on location – see S3.3.2), or even purchase a dwelling, and achieve a high level of contentment (see Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016). However, at least as many have remained in low-paid jobs with various, usually adverse, economic, social, and physical and mental health consequences. These consequences include exploitation, insecurity, racism and, within households, some domestic abuse and violence. Thompson (2016) points to the mental anguish felt by some of her interviewees for not being able to provide for their families, particularly the children, as well as some women interviewees remarking on domestic violence but saying that they still felt safer in New Zealand than on Tarawa (cf. Kiribati Conceptual Framework Working Group, 2015; Lievore & Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2007).

Overall, the median personal fortnightly income of *I-Kiribati* is NZ\$565, or only 52% of the overall national median (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). As it is common for households to have two or even more members in full- or part-time work, as much through economic necessity as choice, *I-Kiribati* average household fortnightly incomes are likely to be around NZ\$1,500, or 2 to 3 times more than on Tarawa, but still well below the circumstances of New Zealand national median households. The disparity of economic circumstances between *I-Kiribati* households and New Zealand households generally is further reflected in the home ownership rate mentioned earlier: the rate for *I-Kiribati* of 11% compares with a rate of 50% overall (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

The differing experiences with employment and of labour mobility among *I-Kiribati* households in New Zealand have given rise to quite a wide range of living standards within diasporic communities. However, these disparities have not weakened ties much and communities are still quite tightly knit. Thus, the most obvious consequences of this wide range is that communities have adequate physical, economic and social resources to be internally supportive, the support going some way beyond receiving new arrivals into the community (see S3.3.2). Even so, some immigrants have seriously considered returning “home” to Kiribati for economic as well as other reasons (see Thompson, 2016), although how many have done so, or why, is unclear.

Regarding the effect on Tarawa of emigration to metropolitan countries like New Zealand, unlike that from Nikunau to Tarawa, there do not seem to be many backwash effects, so far at least, probably because of how small a proportion of people are involved to date. Indeed, Tarawa may be a net gainer through the spread effects of remittances in kind and in cash, and of something akin to *Pākehā* concepts of going on holiday (Black & Huygens, 2007) and tourism (cf. Bedford & Bedford, 2013)—having *utu* in a metropolitan country means the accommodation and many other costs of visiting such a country are reduced. However, to most *I-Kiribati*, touring is an unfamiliar concept; most visits to New Zealand are about spending time with *utu*, and if they occur at all, visits to places of interest (e.g., national parks, museums, cathedrals, seal colonies) and partaking in adventures (e.g., jet boating, skiing) are incidental.

The backwash effects being suffered by Tarawa presently are more to do with globalisation and the nation’s dependence on and acceptance of aid, as alluded to earlier in this subsection and in S4.1, S4.2 and elsewhere. However, should projections about life on Tarawa and other atolls being compromised by sea-level rise come closer to fruition, it is probable that there would be a scramble to emigrate. If so, it will be the younger, higher academic achieving, more qualified who will find it easiest to be accepted elsewhere, corresponding to what has happened in Nikunau’s case since the 1950s, with the consequence for Tarawa of intellectual and social decline, and almost certainly further backwash on Nikunau and the other Outer Islands.

4.4 Environmental Circumstances

Several references have been made already to how trends in climatic conditions and sea-level rise, and their likely dire consequences for residents of low-lying islands (e.g., insecurity of land, interruption of freshwater and food supply, coastal erosion, flooding), have brought *I-*

Kiribati, and by inference *I-Nikunau*, to the world's attention (e.g., see Donner & Webber, 2014; Nunn, 2013; White et al., 2007). What is more, these trends have inspired a stream of aid projects classed as environmental, rather than economic or social, but still predominantly on Tarawa (e.g., see Republic of Kiribati, 2009). However, while on Nikunau the gradual effects of climate change may be things that *I-Nikunau* come to imagine and appreciate as problematic (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007; Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012b), on Tarawa, *I-Nikunau* face more immediate, very real environmental concerns of impaired living conditions on an overcrowded and environmentally degraded atoll (Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012c).

Tarawa's "worrisome trend," as the Asian Development Bank (2006, p. 1) describes it, is most apparent in the living spaces found on the shores of the most overcrowded parts of Betio. In contrast to *mwenga* or anything of modern design (see S3.2), these comprise tightly packed lines of *buatarawa* and *kiakia*, which seem to have arisen by agreements among *utu* to subdivide already crowded dwelling areas, not necessarily with the knowledge or formal approval of the *I-Tarawa* landowners or the leaseholders, which in many cases is the Republic Government (cf. Corcoran, 2016; Maunaa, 1987). Whatever, these are a consequence of inter-related or reciprocative factors: reconstruction after the Battle of Tarawa; the enthusiastic construction of infrastructure, and provision of facilities and equipment, by the Colony Government, Republic Government and aid organisations, with insufficient resources and knowledge to maintain them since; seven decades of immigration and urbanisation; a density of human population far in excess of what is naturally sustainable; etc. etc. (Biribo & Woodroffe, 2013; Carden, 2003; Corcoran, 2016; Doran, 1960; Solomon & Forbes, 1999).

A further phenomena arising in the past three decades in my experience is the incidence of motor vehicles, with perhaps a 100 fold increase since the 1980s—Doran (1960) reports the presence of only 24 vehicles on Tarawa, compared to over 7,000 in 2007, according to the World Bank (Trading Economics, 2017)—as well as an obvious change from merely construction and delivery lorries, and minibuses, which provide public bus services and official transport for officials of various government bodies and aid organisations, to the proliferation nowadays of saloon cars and similar private vehicles, owned by single *mwenga* and among *utu* and other social groups. The sheer number of vehicles, much in excess of the capacity of Tarawa's single road running through the middle of its ribbon of residential settlements (see Figure 5), has brought about significant traffic congestion, much air

pollution, and many traffic injuries and deaths—the road is so difficult to cross at certain times of the day as to cause some partitioning of the settlements in question. Then, once these vehicles break down irreparably, usually for want of parts and the money to purchase them, they add to the countless rusting vehicles littering the atoll—occasionally, the more obvious of these are collected by the authorities and transported offshore, usually ending up at the bottom of the ocean.

Ironically, many environmental issues on Tarawa stem from overcrowding having rendered inadequate the very public and private infrastructure that has encouraged the immigration at the root of the overcrowded conditions. Furthermore, the living conditions of most residents, coupled with their straitened economic circumstances and cultural constraints on their adaptive capacity (Kuruppu, 2009; Kuruppu & Liverman, 2011; Storey & Hunter, 2010), are giving rise to chronic health problems and economic, if not cultural, poverty (McIver et al., 2014; Thomas, 2002) (cf. Bryant-Tokalau, 1995; Connell & Lea, 2002). However, the prospect of living among these conditions is but a mild deterrent on further immigration from Nikunau or other Outer Islands, whether it is for the socio-economic and cultural reasons set out in S3.2 and S4.1–S4.3 or for the more recent, somewhat ambiguous reason of climate change (see AJ+, 2014; Locke, 2009; Smith, 2013).

The neo-liberal policies foisted on the Republic Government by some aid agencies are not helping alleviate inadequacies of public services for dealing with immediate environmental issues. As inferred in S4.3, these policies have often been condensed into ministries (e.g., education, health, transport, local government) having to cut spending overall, and thence to spend much less on consumables in order to leave budgets for employees largely intact. An example of the implications is that refuse vehicles go without routine or other maintenance, and so become unfit to function—most will join the accumulation of scrap vehicles mentioned above—refuse collection employees are idle and refuse goes uncollected, and so residents fly-tip their household refuse near the lagoon and ocean edges—recent initiatives, promoting recycling and neighbourhood rubbish collection and cleaning have gone some way to address this issue but plastics (e.g., ice block wrappers) and other non-degradable waste are still a problem (confidential personal communication, 2017). Similar problems one observes for lack of public or private money, knowledge or criticism include power houses surrounded by diesel waste, unused premises being in a dilapidated state, sea-walls, causeways and roads in dangerous states of disrepair, and immobile or unwanted government-owned vehicles rusting in compounds next to crowded residential areas—some

were imported for construction projects by aid contractors and gifted to the Republic Government to avoid the cost of repatriating them.

On Nikunau, the immediate natural environment resembles Tarawa only in the two being low-lying, restricted, narrow strips of land, surrounded by ocean, with maritime equatorial climates, whose obvious features are bright sunshine, intermittent and irregular rainfall, and a daily temperature range between 26° and 34°. Besides having a small population, Nikunau is relatively empty of fabricated structures, although its vegetation (e.g., the quantity of coconut palms) and features such as *bwabwai* pits and fish traps are a result of human activity (Lewis, 1981). Nikunau's small population and remoteness from any other population centres mean that its marine areas (i.e., the foreshore, reef and surrounding ocean) are relatively pristine and abundant in seafood. It is also generally free of rubbish, junk, etc., for reasons such as low consumption by the small population, low incomes resulting in low imports of packaged goods, low aid spending resulting in few scrap vehicles and similar, and greater ingenuity and incentives for turning potential rubbish, junk, etc. into useful implements (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007).

Elsewhere, it would be difficult for any of *I-Nikunau's* diasporic communities not to occupy, or be close to, higher ground than is available in Kiribati. However, this living on higher ground is largely coincidental, rather than by design, although the populations of Alu and Ghizo are obvious exceptions; the *I-Nikunau* there lived in coastal settlements established in the 1950s, but, in 2007, a tsunami forced them to flee to higher ground, albeit only a few miles distant, where they have chosen to remain (Schuermann, 2014; Weber, 2016). Although *I-Nikunau* in the various diasporic communities are certainly more conscious of the issue of low-lying land being insecure than they were only a decade or so ago (see Fedor, 2012; Kuruppu & Liverman, 2011), it is, to reiterate, an exaggeration and simplification to claim that *I-Kiribati* moved to New Zealand pre-emptively, in search of higher ground, because of the projected environmental consequences for Kiribati of climate change. However, they did regard Tarawa as overcrowded, and brought this environmental consideration into their decisions to choose to emigrate from there (see Fedor, 2012; Roman, 2013; Thomson, 2016).

As to other aspects of the environmental circumstances of *I-Nikunau's* diasporic communities outside Kiribati, these vary with geography, income and wealth, and so on. Taking as examples the urban areas of New Zealand associated with the larger diasporic communities (e.g., South Auckland, Porirua and the Kapiti Coast, Hutt Valley, Mahurangi), most households, even those with lower incomes, live in less crowded neighbourhoods than many

would have previously experienced on Tarawa, and which have modern conveniences that are taken for granted in such places, for example, mains electricity, clean water, sewerage, telephones, broadband, paved footpaths and roads, street furniture, town planning controls and building regulations, regular public services, including refuse and transport, parks and playing fields, schools, and doctors' surgeries. However, as related in S4.2, in many, the number of occupants per household is probably similar to Tarawa, taking into account both extended family circumstances and temporarily accommodating second or third families.

Another significant environmental feature facing *I-Nikunau* in New Zealand is the climate (cf. Roman, 2013). Reiterating S3.3.2., temperatures are much cooler than anyone from Kiribati is used to, particularly outside the summer season, at night generally, the further south they live (e.g., Invercargill) and if, as many do, they live in older, rental houses, with inadequate insulation and inefficient heating systems. One consequence is that electricity bills arising from heating their homes can represent a significant financial burden, heightening the challenge, physical and mental, of coping with poor housing and low incomes (Thompson, 2016). Even so, many *I-Kiribati* seem to adapt to the climate, including in the clothes they wear, how they utilise sunshine and by just accepting the cold.

Regarding emigration from Kiribati being compelled by climate change, there has been some linking between liberalisation of the immigration policies of New Zealand and other potential countries of immigration with the uncertain future for inhabiting the Kiribati Archipelago and other islands forming the Republic. This reason for emigrating is an area of growing concern to observers, researchers and other outsiders, perhaps more so than for many *I-Kiribati* just going about their normal lives. The subject includes smoothing the path of immigration to other places, where resettlement will likely entail issues that often accompany forced resettlement. These include matters around the resettlement process, financial hardship, lack of special support, problems with land rights, citizenship and identity—including being regarded by people “native” to the country of arrival as immigrants, and sometimes resented—loss of culture and language, destruction of homeland, and ceasing to be recognised internationally as other than residents in the country of arrival (Collins, 2009; Fedor, 2012; Roman, 2013; Smith & McNamara, 2015; Thompson, 2016; Reilly, 2011; Weber, 2016; Williams, 2008; Wyett, 2014).

Many outsiders see a need for organised bilateral schemes of immigration and resettlement, such as New Zealand's Pacific Access Category, but based on climate change effects (see Brickenstein & Tabucanon, 2014); these would be designed and effected in order that *I-*

Nikunau and other *I-Kiribati* would settle and carve out an identity among other ethnocultural groups. Although personal, domestic and neighbourhood matters alluded to here and in other subsections may seem mundane and hardly “environmental” as such, they do reflect the sorts of things about which *I-Kiribati* arriving in a new country need help in understanding, and so their importance in designing schemes of resettlement should not be underestimated.

An area of interest raised by Thompson (2016) concerns information acquisition by *I-Kiribati* to help their immigration to New Zealand. As intimated already, *I-Kiribati* arriving in metropolitan countries like New Zealand rely a great deal on *utu* and *baronga* who have preceded them in immigrating. This reliance extends to obtaining most of the information they process being from earlier immigrants, often preferring it to official information, despite some of that seeming to be available in *te taetae ni Kiribati* even (e.g., see New Zealand Immigration, n.d.). The official information, no matter how accurate it might be, is not always appreciated or likely to be trusted because it comes from a non-kin source—it does not help that the example just cited has people whose physical features suggest they are from other Pacific Island countries (e.g., Samoans, Tongans) but have speech bubbles written in *te taetae ni Kiribati*. Besides, the official information is mostly in written form and unidirectional, rather than oral and capable of being discussed in order to bring out its meaning and significance. The official information also seems not to appreciate the circumstances in which most *I-Kiribati* come to New Zealand; either that, or it is not acceptable politically to acknowledge said circumstances, as they are out of kilter with the image of new immigrants, being young, highly skilled and motivated, middle class, probably without children as yet (e.g. see images on New Zealand Immigration, 2017a).

The preference for information from *utu* and *baronga* who immigrated earlier is notwithstanding that much of the information received is often so incomplete, inaccurate and insufficient as to be unreliable or tantamount to misinformation (Thompson, 2016). Various reasons account for these inadequacies: even after having been through the experiences of preparing, travelling, arriving and settling themselves, *I-Nikunau* in question may not appreciate the extent of the information they have acquired, may be unable to articulate said information and may remain ignorant of important information. Besides, they may be shy, or otherwise reluctant, to impart details of what happened to them, particularly any misfortunes that befell them or other negatives; *I-Kiribati* are probably not unique in taking care not to be seen as *te bai n rang* through being ignorant of “common sense” things and of making mistakes, and still feeling foolish about the consequences. A related issue is not to want to

infer that the potential recipient of the information they could impart does not have the information already or lacks common sense to fathom the situation for themselves. What is more, they may be reluctant to provide information that is tantamount to advice for fear of being blamed if the advice proves incorrect—avoiding blame and any risk of having to apologise are strong traits in *te I-Kiribati* psyche.

4.5 Biological Circumstances

I-Nikunau's present biological circumstances, similar to those of other *I-Kiribati*, are the result of contact with *I-Matang*, Chinese, Tuvaluans, other Pacific peoples and people of other races. As inferred in S4.3 and other subsections, this contact has occurred for at least 150 years on Nikunau, although it was mostly begun when copra gave rise to traders residing on Nikunau (Pusinelli, 1947).⁶⁰ Indeed, many of the resident traders, whether *I-Matang* or Chinese, arrived as unaccompanied men and were permitted and encouraged to marry *I-Nikunau* by *unimane*; an exception was Rakera Turner, whose story of marrying elsewhere and returning to live and trade on Nikunau (with husband Andrew) is related by Maude (1977). The intermarriage continued with other temporary residents, including pastors. Meanwhile, contact arose at the other places where *I-Nikunau* men and families with children of marriageable age resided temporarily while working. Recent examples are contacts between *I-Nikunau* and *I-Matang* on Tarawa, particularly between the 1960s and 1990s, that gave rise to diasporic communities in Britain and New Zealand (see S3.3.1 and S3.3.2).

The descendants of the aforementioned intermarriages retained the given names or surnames of their fathers as their surname. This retention is reflected in contemporary surnames among *I-Nikunau* and around the Kiribati Archipelago in general (e.g., Anro (from Andrew), Kum Kee, Murdoch, O'Connor, Schutz). What is more, some children of the marriages were trained in the knowledge and skills of the outsiders, including in storekeeping, accounting and commerce, and, for example, took over the family's trade store or obtained another elsewhere, as did their offspring (cf. Munro, 1987), with the result that some of these surnames remain prominent in commerce and government today.

It might be supposed that, before 19th Century contact, *I-Nikunau* were some sort of thoroughbred, with little dilution of their genes, other than through contact with neighbouring islands. However, the inhabitants of the Kiribati Archipelago before the 1820s were undoubtedly descended from a diverse range of peoples, who thus provided a quite wide gene pool (Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010; Maude, 1963). While their relative isolation since at least the 15th century meant that they went through a process of bio- and ethno-genesis, their

te katei ni Kiribati customary practices regarding marriage and limits of *karikira* (\cong incest), expressed as *e ewe te kaaroro* (\cong the fourth generation goes free) (Grimble, 1921, p. 27), protected against inbreeding and genetic drift (re these concepts, see Bittles, 2010). Moreover, protections against inbreeding and genetic drift have persisted since; this includes possessing the genealogical knowledge to preclude relationships developing between first, second or third cousins. Indeed, in urban and metropolitan diasporic communities in particular, these preclusions are perhaps even wider than third cousins because, in present generations, details of customary practices and reasons for them have often become blurred and decoupled, and so anyone “related” is precluded from marrying.

A further change is that choosing marriage partners is nowadays far more up to the partners themselves than to *unimane* and parents, as was mostly the case on Nikunau and most of the other Kiribati islands as recently as the 1980s (see McCreary & Boardman, 1968).⁶¹ For the diasporic community on Tarawa, this means much more inter-*I-Kiribati* contact, marriage and children; and for diasporic communities elsewhere, it means some broadening with regard to race, ethnicity, etc. of contact, marriage, children and affinal membership of communities, but perhaps not as great as it would be if, for example, the diasporic communities in New Zealand were less separated and more integrated (see S3.3.2).

4.6 Nutritional and Corporeal Circumstances

The current nutritional circumstances of *I-Nikunau* in their different locations coincide significantly with what Lewis (1988) identifies as gustatory subversion and nutritional dependency on metropolitan countries. These circumstances have various health, illness and medical ramifications (see also Catala, 1957; Gilkes, 2006; McIver et al., 2014; Thomas, 2002, 2003). These ramifications are also affected by the physical activities in which *I-Nikunau* may engage, which vary according to age, gender and similar, and according to location and the traditional or modern lifestyles associated therewith. The ramifications also mean that nutritional and corporeal circumstances, including mental health, are interrelated. This can be expressed crudely in terms of consumption fuel intake in the form of victuals, fuel consumption through physical activities and fuel retention determining body weight. A potential source of mental health issues are the stresses of immigrating, say to New Zealand from Tarawa, or even to Tarawa from Nikunau (cf. Lewis, 1981), including struggling afterwards to reconcile conflicts between the traditional and the modern (cf. Thompson, 2016; Wright & Hornblow, 2008).

Mention of traditional victuals produced on and around Nikunau was made in S4.2, referring to studies into these (Di Piazza, 1999; Grimble, 1933). These were added to, enhanced, substituted and displaced from when whalers came. Since, greater availability of, familiarity with and demand for imported, processed victuals (see lists in S3.1 and S3.2), and methods of preparing them (e.g., frying⁶²), and improved constancy and greater abundance of supply of all victuals, have shaped *I-Nikunau*'s nutritional circumstances (Gilkes, 2006; Lewis, 1981, 1988). Two experiences related in S4.1 to S4.5 are of longstanding and particular significance to these circumstances. First, the imported victuals sold in trade stores were conditioned by the profitability of copra and whether the trade items could be procured cheaply and had a long shelf life. Second, the imported victuals distributed to workers and their families as rations by employers, including the British Phosphate Commission, reduced how long *I-Nikunau* spent fishing and cultivating crops, and so increased how long they were available to work in the mines, or on the farms, etc., thus increasing their productive worth and containing costs. The supply of rations were stipulated in agreements and regulations (e.g., Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate (Consolidation) Regulation 1908). From *I-Nikunau* having had little, if any, exposure to these up to at least the 1870s and even 1900, some (e.g., rice, tinned corned beef) are now staples or regarded even as ceremonial delicacies.

All parties to the supply, demand and consumption of these victuals have seemed oblivious to their nutritional value or toxicity. Even today, nutritional appreciation among *I-Nikunau*, particularly understanding of choice of victuals, levels of consumption and other dietary matters, seems slight and unimportant, despite the accumulating morbid consequences, such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, or hypertension, and high cholesterol (see Lewis, 1981). Moreover, by contrasting *I-Nikunau* on Tarawa with those on Nikunau and in New Zealand, it becomes clearer that many of their present nutritional circumstances are aligned with their demographical and geographical circumstances.

Unlike *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau, those on Tarawa have little land on which to cultivate crops and fishing is usually unproductive because of over-fishing, not to mention loss of previously common skills and unfamiliarity with fishing grounds (Republic of Kiribati, 2009; Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012c; Thomas, 2002, 2003). What is more, unlike *I-Nikunau* in New Zealand, they have few opportunities to acquire victuals of high quality and nutritional value (e.g., fresh vegetables and fruit, fresh milk, lean meat, fibrous cereals) (cf. Thompson, 2016), mostly because they are not physically available, or otherwise because they are out of their price reach. A further constraint is that many victuals are seen as things

bought by the more privileged, including *I-Matang*, and being labelled as trying to be like an *I-Matang* exposes *I-Nikunau* to *te bai n rang*, even *kamama*.

Something that seems peculiar is that many stores on Tarawa do not generally sell fresh produce, nor very many locally produced items, the victuals being dried, tinned and bottled, and so preserved (in brine, vinegar, sugar, etc.) or, in recent times, frozen. This might be explained by the history of trade stores there and on Nikunau, etc. being one of only selling imported items, with local produce not customarily being the object of trade. Locally produced fresh vegetables and fruit that are for sale are hawked at the roadside or in small market areas (cf. McCreary & Boardman, 1968); this applies to locally caught fish and to bananas from Butaritari. The other exceptions include the aforementioned bread, donuts, ice blocks, locally rolled cigarettes, etc., but usually their sale is limited to *mronron* stores, having been produced by *mronron* members, and at prices that must hardly cover the costs of their ingredients, let alone the labour they entail.

The possibility of internal trade involving the Outer Islands and Tarawa seems to have been forever frustrated by various inadequacies. These include the unreliability of shipping, copra producers on the Outer Islands being reluctant to switch from a longstanding, now subsidised, cash crop to new crops that it would be more difficult to turn into cash, and many *mwenga* on Tarawa simply lacking money to purchase local fish and garden produce regularly enough for it to be worthwhile for suppliers to maintain supplies. Demand may also be affected by perceptions of local produce being inferior to, or less fashionable than, imported goods (cf. Catala, 1957; Lewis, 1988).

Despite inferences above about *I-Nikunau* in New Zealand having many opportunities to acquire victuals of high quality and nutritional value, this has not brought about great change to victual consumption and nutritional circumstances there very quickly; this is despite Thompson (2016) being told by some interviewees that availability of fresh victuals was a reason for immigrating. The reasons changes being slow seem related to most *I-Nikunau* in New Zealand having lived on Tarawa before and now live as all *I-Nikunau* or *I-Kiribati* households, rather than the mixed race households that were a feature of the early diaspora (see S3.3.2). Their knowledge and expectations about victuals are based much more on conditions on Tarawa. Not only are they more familiar with the appearances and methods of preparing victuals available on Tarawa in tinned, bottled, preserved, frozen or ready processed forms (e.g., corned beef, sausages, milk, chicken drumsticks and wings, fruit salad, tomato sauce) than with same in New Zealand but in their fresh forms, but they are also

unfamiliar with many other items common in New Zealand but rarely, if ever, seen on Tarawa (e.g., fresh milk, cheese, parsnips, swedes, asparagus, most greens and salads, meat, poultry and game, berry and stone fruits, offal). This unfamiliarity, etc. may be less so among children because of the school curriculum; they be more amenable to healthier victuals (e.g., tap water, fresh fruit and vegetables) and more appreciative of the virtues of lower consumption. However, it is the adults who acquire the victuals and determine what is served for meals. Besides, the victuals that feature in marketing campaigns aimed at younger persons and are part of New Zealand's pop culture are the less healthier ones (e.g., sugary drinks, fast food).

These claims are exemplified at the frequent *botaki* held in New Zealand's diasporic communities. The most popular victuals at these still partially reflect the narrow range of items referred to above and in S3.2, save that there is likely to be a roast pig, barbecue, ground and other meats, coleslaw, pumpkin, kumara, potatoes and eggs, and fish may be absent in the unlikely event of members of the community not having caught any, or had some brought from Tarawa, and kept it frozen—many *I-Kiribati* regard the fresh fish that is widely available from retailers in New Zealand as too expensive. The victuals will mostly be high in salt, sugar or fat, either naturally (e.g., because of using cheap cuts of meat) or because of how they are prepared (e.g., because of excess use of sugar-based marinades and dressings, salt and saturated fats). These victuals are widely associated with detrimental health effects, as are the narrower range of the cheaper victuals among these consumed at home or otherwise away from *botaki* (cf. Bathgate, Alexander, Mitikulena, Borman, Roberts & Grigg, 1994; Lewis, 1981; Statistics New Zealand and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2011; Thompson, 2016).

A few other factors affect purchase and consumption in New Zealand. First, there can be a perception that if a victual was expensive and privileged on Tarawa, then the same continues to apply in New Zealand, including that their purchase may be regarded as behaving like *I-Matang*, and so risking ridicule. This is notwithstanding how price patterns of fresh produce on Tarawa and in New Zealand are often reversed; for example, many fresh cool-climate fruit and vegetables are far more readily available and cheaper in New Zealand, whereas, as noted above, fresh fish and other seafood are mostly more expensive, certainly in the case of tuna. While being more expensive has the expected effect of deterring demand, the cheapness may not encourage as much change in consumption as it might, particularly among households in the lower deciles of the income scale, who may be satisfied with rice, flour, sugar and similar,

which are cheap anyway and can at least fill a family's stomachs, even if not very nutritiously (cf. Lewis, 1981).

Second, whereas, apart from breadfruit and pandanus, seasonality does not seem to apply to crops grown in Kiribati, seasonality affects almost all crops in New Zealand. Even so, most crops are available in New Zealand all year round, either through cold storing or freezing them or through growing them in artificial conditions or through importing them from the northern hemisphere. However, among *I-Kiribati*, just how seasonal fresh victuals are in New Zealand is not always fully appreciated without information exchange and storytelling; nor is how their prices vary accordingly, and so when the most advantageous times to buy are. For example, in winter, because they are imported or grown under glass, tomatoes and other salad items can be three or four times their summer prices, whereas the prices of root vegetables stay at reasonable levels from harvest time through winter because their storage is relatively easy.

Third, purchasing fresh victuals in loose form, although usually cheaper, can be problematic compared with purchasing them in pre-priced packages. This occurs because of a mix of language and ability-to-pay issues. For example, purchasing loose produce at, say, a delicatessen counter in a supermarket or more traditional shop requires the shopper to state the product and quantity wanted. Purchasing loose produce in a supermarket or self-serve vegetable market requires bagging the items in the produce area and taking them to the checkout for payment. It is not until the shopper is going through the checkout that the price per unit of measure (e.g., per kg.) of the produce is converted into the price the shopper will be asked to pay, at which point having insufficient funds to make the payment might lead to *kamama*, which is best avoided, and can be by sticking with pre-priced packages. Similar awkwardness over possible lack of funds, from language shyness and through social hesitancy can also deter use of other trading venues, business outlets and amenities in New Zealand. These include visiting shops not set up in the way supermarkets are and which require interaction over a counter or similar. They include restaurants, other eateries and bars, in which victuals anyway are often regarded as far too expensive, and tourist attractions reasons for whose attractiveness is not always clear culturally.

Incidentally, it is commonplace in New Zealand to pay for even minor purchases using debit cards, something which are not used much on Tarawa, if at all. These too can be declined when making purchases for want of funds, and so a source of embarrassment, or they may be accepted but take the bank account beyond any authorised limits, so incurring penalty charges

for the user, which if their income is low can be significant. Credit cards are also widely used in New Zealand but few *I-Kiribati* seem to have them, reflecting their absence on Tarawa.

Another group of amenities commonly found in New Zealand whose use may be limited by awkwardness and cultural misunderstandings are playing fields, swimming pools, gymnasiums, tennis, netball and basketball courts, bowling greens, golf courses, ski fields and other sports facilities, parks, urban walkways and bicycle tracks, bush and beach walking tracks, rock climbing and hunting areas, and other leisure facilities. Yet all these have potential when it comes to *I-Nikunau*'s corporeal circumstances, or the extent to which physical activities are a required or discretionary part of the life *I-Nikunau* lead. On Nikunau, the still largely traditional life involves much daily physical activity (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007), and so does not entail *I-Nikunau* having to make a special effort to engage in discretionary activities out of health and welfare considerations. For example, water is drawn and carried from wells; toddy is cut from the fronds of coconut trees, which have to be climbed; copra and various subsistence crops, and firewood, involve manual cultivation or collection; fish and shellfish are caught or collected manually; walking and cycling are main means of travelling; and sports, pastimes and dancing involve physical exercise (see S3.1).

Elsewhere, usually more can be achieved with less effort, and so life can be more sedentary than on Nikunau. On Tarawa, many of the paid jobs *I-Nikunau* do there are more mental than physical—similar applies among children attending school—and they use the money they earn to purchase goods, services, transport and utilities, rather than expend much physical effort to produce them. In any case, subsisting is constrained by the scarcity and over-exploitation of resources (see S3.2), and so the physical exercise that goes with such activities barely arises. Thus, to engage in physical exercise equivalent to that which is a normal part of life on Nikunau is discretionary on Tarawa, and while young persons make much use of areas set aside for volleyball, basketball and football, or otherwise improvise, including swimming in the lagoon, many older *I-Nikunau* choose not to indulge or to indulge at insufficient levels. Insufficient that is to offset their consumption of victuals, etc., which is probably higher than on Nikunau because much more is readily available. Thus, many more on Tarawa than on Nikunau are overweight, leading to health issues (e.g., obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases).

In metropolitan countries, the health issues just alluded to on Tarawa also arise more often than on Nikunau; this is notwithstanding that probably more *I-Nikunau*, say, in New Zealand

than on Tarawa are in physical jobs (e.g., labouring, cleaning, farm work) and their working hours, and so physical activities, are longer (see S4.3). It is also notwithstanding the many easily accessible sports and leisure amenities in New Zealand, as listed above (i.e., swimming pools, walking tracks, etc.), many of which are free or available at subsidised rates through local councils, with special rates for families with low incomes. However, with victuals being cheaper and more readily available than on Tarawa, even to those in lower paid jobs, consumption of them is probably higher. The overall effect of these circumstances is a tendency for many immigrants to gain weight, which in turn leads to health issues similar to those listed above for Tarawa along with gout, hepatitis and mental stress (cf. Thompson, 2016; Wright & Hornblow, 2008).

With personal health services being far better resourced and of much greater extent than on Tarawa, more of these issues are diagnosed and treated, which can in turn lead to ambiguous attitudes by the diagnosed, including continuing to indulge knowing that treatment is available, rather than reducing indulgence, changing behaviours or taking other preventative actions. The various reasons for lack of such actions include expectations in communities to be involved in frequent community or other group events, most of which involve sharing victuals. They also include indulging in physical exercise out of health and welfare considerations not being something that is part of *te I-Nikunau*'s culture, which being founded on traditional life, still operates on the basis of physical activities and efforts being indistinguishable from living that life.

In any case, for adults brought up on Tarawa, many of sports and leisure amenities in New Zealand are unfamiliar, and the point of some of them is quite puzzling, be it walking up mountains and along beaches or lane swimming. However, children in metropolitan countries can get greater exposure to these amenities, especially so with New Zealand's broad range of sports and a tradition of them being played at school from a young age. That, combined with community activities involving dancing, means young *I-Kiribati* in New Zealand have more opportunities than adults for physical exercise (e.g., swimming, rugby, volleyball, dancing, netball, basketball). Besides, they may be more amenable to healthier victuals and to consuming less of them. However, these things are discretionary and children mostly have to exercise this discretion themselves because the adults lack experience of these things, not having been raised in New Zealand, let alone had experience of its schools, etc. The outcomes vary but with a tendency among these children as adults towards overweight and

show signs of the early onset of health issues connected with nutrition and exercise (Thomson, 2016).

4.7 Political Circumstances

The political systems under which *I-Nikunau* live today comprise elaborate and hegemonic nation states, usually characterised as democratic and of whose voting population they are a small or tiny minority. These differ greatly—in geographical extent, size of population governed, scope of responsibilities, type of system, incidence of colonialism, et cetera—from the traditional *I-Nikunau* system that existed up to the mid-19th Century, before any semblance of colonialism or diaspora arose, and that Uakeia of Nikunau is alleged to have spread to the other Kiribati islands in the 17th Century (Kambati, 1992). Nonetheless, some vestiges of that traditional system are evident in the political systems still existing on Nikunau, and within the diasporic communities inside Kiribati and in the other nations enumerated at the start of S3. However, they are not provided for in the Constitution of Kiribati 1979, and so are not part of the Republic Government structure in a formal sense, and aid organisations and other outsiders regard them at best as informal.

Politically, the other nations just referred to are either constitutional monarchies with parliamentary democracies or are republics. Whichever, they all include characteristics (e.g., separation of powers, equality under the law, universal franchise, no taxation without representation) associated with the “Westminster System”, which as its name infers is connected to the systems of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and before that, the Kingdom of England. Indeed, the head of state of all the constitutional monarchies in question is the same person, although she has titles distinctive to the realm (e.g., Queen of New Zealand). However, each has a different person as head of its political government, usually with the title, prime minister.

The system in Kiribati itself, as illustrated in Figure 10, is a democratic republic. Compared with Britain and New Zealand, as well as Australia and the Solomon Islands among countries with diasporic communities and being constitutional monarchies, its main difference is that the offices of head of state and head of political government are both held by the directly elected *te beretitenti*. Furthermore, he or she—there has yet to be a female *beretitenti*—has to be a member of the legislature, *Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu*, as have the ministers whom s/he appoints to form *Te Kabinet*—among other relevant countries, similar applies in Fiji, but not in the United States of America, where the members of the executive are outside the legislature.

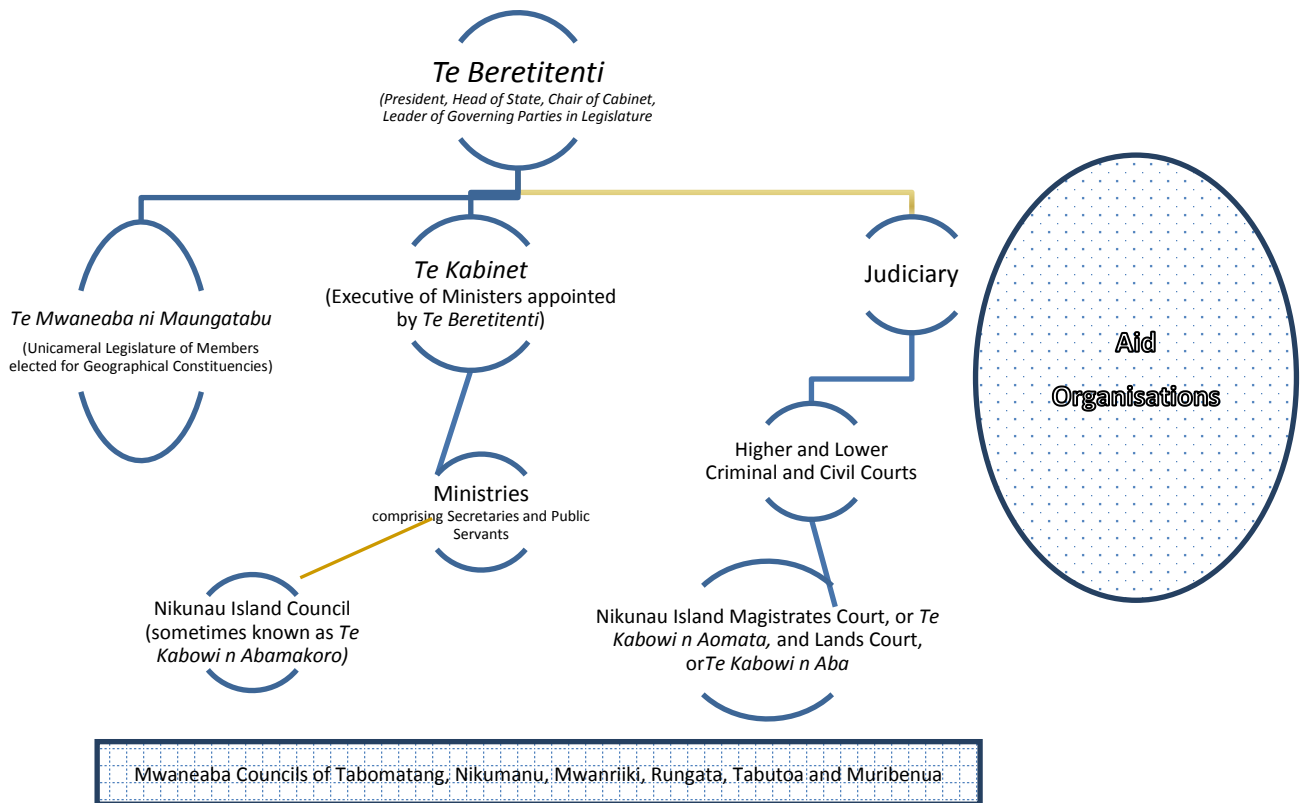


Figure 10. Present Structure of Government in the Republic of Kiribati

I have included aid organisations in Figure 10, but as a separate element, in order to indicate their de facto status vis-à-vis the system. They are shown on a par with *Te Kabinet* and ministries, reflecting how they wield significant influence on the performance of the executive function of government. The actions of aid organisation representatives and the extent of their informal authority in many matters have at times seemed akin to filling the shoes of the senior Colony Government officials. The latter departed in the 1970s and 1980s, as their roles were seemingly localised, and as the Republic Government’s need for deficit funding from the former colonial power ended (see S4.3) and those whose continuing presence was a condition of this funding became surplus to requirements.⁶³ *I-Kiribati* who replaced them formally had arguably been afforded insufficient practical training and experience (Macdonald, 1982a); besides, the systems they inherited were designed for empire, not self-government along *I-Kiribati* lines (Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014). Especially early on, this made them extremely susceptible to the influence of the experienced and well-resourced aid organisation representatives with whom they dealt. Indeed, the activities and methods of the aid organisations are consistent with informal imperialism or neo-imperialism,

in which a strong external influence is exercised over an emergent local (i.e., *I-Kiribati*) élite of politicians, officials and other prominent persons (Horvath, 1972).

The lower portion of Figure 10 shows the elements of the Republic Government's structure as they apply on Nikunau Atoll—the diasporic communities on Tarawa and in the Line Islands come under equivalent island councils and courts there. Besides, I have included the six *mwaneaba* councils on Nikunau (see S3.1) but, as with aid organisations, as a separate element because their status vis-à-vis the system is de facto, not de jure. These traditional councils oversee affairs, organise activities, maintain traditions and regulate conduct in their respective *kawa* (cf. Autio, 2010; Kazama, 2001; Thomas, 2001). Although not shown on Figure 10, one finds *I-Nikunau* on Tarawa using equivalent committees to effect similar purposes in their social and community groups, whether oriented around *utu*, religious denominations, historical associations with *kawa* on Nikunau, or being *I-Nikunau* (see S3.2); these are less traditional in who participates, including women and not-so-old men. In diasporic communities outside Kiribati, similar prevails in governing bodies of associations, such as were mentioned in S3.3, including Kiribati Tungaru Association and Kiribati Waipounamu Community. The peoples making up these communities from the other Kiribati Islands have some familiarity with Nikunau's traditional system through the 17th Century exploits mentioned earlier of Uakeia of Nikunau.

According to Maude (1963), the traditional system developed on Nikunau and nearby Beru between about the 14th and 19th Centuries. The system was gerontocratic and based on *mwaneaba* districts, of which there were six back then too (see S3.1, S4.2 and S4.3). For example, the *mwaneaba* district around what is now Tabomatang had as its focal point *Te Atuni Uea Mwaneaba*, and comprised the territory of the various *kainga* closest to it and the population residing in *mwenga* on these *kainga* (see S4.2). *Te I-Nikunau* could easily walk around the boundary of his or her district in a single day. Besides being closely or distantly related to some of them, *te I-Nikunau* knew personally all members of the council for his or her district, and they knew him or her. Said councils and their processes were constituted orally, a legacy of *bakatibu* (\cong ancestors), as encapsulated in *te katei ni Nikunau*.

The literature dealing with the *mwaneaba* customs, protocols and related matters on Nikunau and elsewhere in the Kiribati Archipelago and Banaba is extensive and features aspects of these councils and this political system (e.g., Alaima et al., 1979; Geddes, 1977; Goodenough, 1955; Grimble, 1921, 1933, 1989; Hockings, 1984; Kambati, 1992; Kazama, 2001; King & Sigrah, 2004; Lambert, 1966; Latouche, 1983; Lawrence, 1983; Lewis, 1988;

Lundsgaarde, 1968a; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a; Maude & Maude, 1994; Maude, 1963, 1991; Sabatier, 1939/1977; Teweiariki, n.d.; Thomas, 2001). This literature attests to temporal and geographical variations around a set of ideas that have endured, as discussed by Autio (2010). The councils were subject to no external authority in a hierarchical sense. Internally, there was some elements of hierarchy, relating to gender and to the relative status and roles of *boti*. However, unlike what had come to exist in islands further north in the Kiribati Archipelago by the 19th Century, there were no *uea* (\cong monarchical chiefs) (Macdonald, 1982a). The councils performed their functions wholistically, although they might be analysed as political, judicial, legislative, executive, religious, social, economic, etc., and, in turn, the *mwaneaba* districts can be seen as political territories, legal jurisdictions and religious parishes. The essence of these ideas was that cooperation among neighbouring *kainga* sustained the bonds that were integral to living on Nikunau.

The institution of *boti* (see S4.2) was politically ascendant in the traditional *mwaneaba* system on Nikunau and many other Kiribati islands (Maude, 1963). The council comprised *atun te kainga* (literally, the heads of *kainga*), the senior *unimane* in each *te kainga*. Each *te kainga* comprised members of the same *boti*, and each councillor was also *atun te boti*, or the head of his *boti* in the district. Besides being custodians of *te katei* and superintending conduct in their district, the councils also oversaw customary rights and laws that applied to gathering, propagating, cultivating, fishing and other use of *aba* and marine areas in their respective districts. Each council was also responsible for dealings with councils from other parts of the atoll, a task made easier because of the replication from district to district of *boti*. Even so, not everything could be resolved peaceably and disputes over *aba* were not only frequently at the centre of island politics, they occasionally led to hostilities between *mwaneaba* districts (Lundsgaarde, 1968a).

The councils met in open session and might have seemed to have trappings of community participation and accountability, verging on democratic, although oligarchic is another possible description (see Lundsgaarde, 1968b). It was during these sessions, which according to Hockings (1984) were only occasional, that members of each *te boti* sat behind *te atun te boti* in the area of the *mwaneaba* associated with their *boti* (see S4.2); otherwise, when *te mwaneaba* was used for other, less formal, purposes, the sitting arrangements might be less structured. During these formal *mwaneaba* sessions, only *atun te boti* were permitted to speak; other *unimane* were expected to attend but not speak, and likewise all residents of each

te kainga in the district. However, the views expressed by *te atun te boti* during formal sessions, and positions taken on decisions about policies and issues, were subject to counselling before these sessions by *unimane* from each *te mwenga* in the *te kainga* that *te atun te boti* represented (Hockings, 1984).

Notwithstanding the increasing presence of whalers, beachcombers, castaways and traders between the 1820s and 1870s, the traditional system continued, with each district and its *mwaneaba* council being relatively autonomous (Maude, 1960). Indeed, traders traded in one district, or two at most, rather than the entire atoll, reflecting the autonomy and discreteness of the districts. Although it is inconceivable that the economic, or even social and cultural, influences of these outsiders did not spill over into the political, any political influence appears to have been insubstantial, particularly as patterns of settlement (i.e., in *mwenga* on *kainga*) were not seriously affected (see Hockings, 1984; Maude, 1964). Nevertheless, seeds of political change might have been sown, as was undoubtedly the case among those *I-Nikunau* who had lived away temporarily and returned with a different view of the world, prompting them to reflect on the political structures and processes on Nikunau, as well as matters social, religious and cultural (Borovnik, 2005; Macdonald, 1982a; Rennie, 1987).

Subsequently, several major longitudinal interventions have occurred to transform the traditional system to the present one, affecting not only structure but also whence *te I-Nikunau* was formally governed—that is, from within his or her *mwaneaba* district, then at the level of Nikunau Atoll, and then from elsewhere, including for nearly a century, from outside the Kiribati Islands. Moreover, each intervention influenced how Nikunau became part of a formal state covering the Kiribati Archipelago and the other islands in the Republic, how *I-Nikunau* have come to live on Tarawa and elsewhere, and how vestiges of the traditional system remain, albeit outside the formal system. The interventions have also led to the present system being more democratic and less gerontocratic.

The first intervention came from the pastors of Samoan origin mentioned in S4.2. After an inauspicious start in gaining converts (see Turner cited by Nokise, 1983, p. 168), they began making more of their cultural understandings in furtherance of their theological aims, and so, by the 1880s, had gained sufficient influence in each *mwaneaba* district to be involved in their traditional political processes, structures and functions; this included gradually converting *unimane* (Garrett, 1992; Macdonald, 1982a; Maude, 1963; Nokise, 1983).

Subverting these political processes, etc. to further their aim of conversion proceeded such that they established the aforementioned *te kabowi n abamakoro* (see S4.1),⁶⁴ which Davis

(1892) observed as having authority across the whole of Nikunau and comprising 70–80 *unimane* drawn from the six *mwaneaba* districts. Concomitantly, the *mwaneaba* councils in the districts became increasingly subservient to this single council and, as *kawa* replaced *kainga* as the form of settlements (see S4.2), the distinction between *atun te boti* and other *unimane* began to blur.

Just as there was little separation between politics and traditional religion in *te mwaneaba* previously, so the nature of governance exercised by *te kabowi n abamakoro* was as much theocratic as gerontocratic, but instead reflecting the LMS's Christian values and beliefs—this governance extended to everyone on Nikunau, including traditional believers and RCs, with Sabatier (1939/1977), an RC priest, characterising it as “constant tyranny from the Protestants” (p. 181). These values and beliefs were reflected in the laws *te kabowi n abamakoro* passed, including those running to observance of *Te Tabati*. What is more, accountability in these laws was increasingly portrayed as giving a personal reckoning, eventually, to the spiritual being named in Bingham (1907) as *Iehova* (≡Jehovah), and, more immediately, to His earthly representatives, the pastors.

This earthly accountability was manifested in revenues from copious fines (in copra) imposed for even the most trivial infringements of the aforementioned laws and for other minor misdemeanours (e.g., failing to respond quickly enough to a summons to *te mwaneaba*). Said laws were enforced by a profuse force of *kaubure* (≡ wardens and police constables, council officials), as also observed by Davis (1892) (Macdonald, 1982a). The fines were added to with other contributions akin to quasi-taxes the pastors levied, which were paid enthusiastically in copra. Amounting to a tidy sum, the pastors were able to finance impressive church buildings, along with equally impressive dwellings—in describing similar built by the RC Church only a little later, Sabatier (1939/1977) relates how the building materials (e.g., cement, wood, asbestos, zinc-covered sheeting) were imported from Sydney at great cost—religious activities and personal comforts for themselves and even their *I-Nikunau* deacons and catechists. Although the dwellings and comforts exposed the pastors to criticisms of self-aggrandisement (Grimble, 1952, 1957; Lundsgaarde, 1978; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Maude, 1989; Munro, 1996), another interpretation is that their circumstances were “a living example of the accomplishments that could follow from Christianity and civilisation” (Macdonald, 1982a, p. 49). Besides, significant amounts left the atoll for the upkeep of LMS headquarters, whether in Malua or, from 1900, in Beru, and run by *I-Matang* missionaries. These matters are revisited in S4.8.

The second intervention came from officials of the British Empire, one of the so-called Great Powers with colonial interests in the central and south Pacific region in the late 19th Century—the others were France, Germany and, mostly further north, the United States of America. In 1892, on the insistence of the German Government,⁶⁵ Davis annexed Nikunau and the other Kiribati islands in the name of the British Government by virtue of treaties with *unimane* or, in a few cases (e.g., Butaritari), *uea* (see Bennion, 2004; Davis, 1892; Morrell, 1960; Ward, 1946).⁶⁶ The new Colony Government enacted Native Laws 1894 and imposed a successive series of poll and land taxes, as evidenced by *Land (Copra) Tax Register 1910–1916*.⁶⁷ These laws had the effect of *te kabowi n abamakoro* serving de jure as the Nikunau Native Government from 1895, and the taxes had the effect of according secular legitimacy to the aforementioned revenue raising activities of the LMS (cf. Munro, 1996). Part of the yield from the taxes was forwarded to the Colony Treasury to help pay for administering the Colony. As long as that happened in a timely fashion, the Colony Government took no more than a cursory, distant interest in the LMS's form of rule of Nikunau and neighbouring islands (Grimble cited by Macdonald, 1982a, and by Maude, 1989), despite these islands coming within its formal jurisdiction.

The Colony Government's neglect of Nikunau between 1892 and 1917 arose largely because its priorities lay elsewhere, initially with the northern islands, where copra, and so tax-copra, was more plentiful and where trading disputes were rife, and then with Banaba, after it was added to the Colony in 1901 and phosphate mining was begun.⁶⁸ Other than a few visits or similar short presences (e.g., see Wilde, 1998, as mentioned by Sabatier, 1939/1977), mainly to pacify sectarian disputes between the LMS majority and RC minority (see Macdonald, 1982a), Nikunau was largely neglected up to the late 1900s; one reason was an insufficiency of financial or personnel resources to take a closer interest in the southern Kiribati Islands generally, let alone Nikunau.⁶⁹ The frequency of visits increased in the 1910s but only because of the Colony Government's involvement in recruiting, transporting and eventually repatriating labourers needed by the phosphateers on Banaba (Grimble, 1952, 1957; Lundsgaarde, 1978; Maude, 1989; Munro, 1996; Sabatier, 1939/1977; Williams & Macdonald, 1985).

The third intervention began in 1917 and arose from what had come to be perceived by three parties as problems following the second intervention; the three parties were the Colony Government on Banaba, the LMS leadership in Samoa, and the bishop of the RC Church, based then on Bikenibeu on Tarawa, and its mission posts and converts on the southern

islands. About 1900, the LMS had established a headquarters for the southern Kiribati Islands at Rongorongo on Beru and appointed William Goward as the chief missionary. Goward gained a reputation for encouraging zeal and excesses among *I-Kiribati* and Tuvaluan pastors he appointed and their congregations—Sabatier (1939/1977) likened Goward's style to that of an autocratic prince bishop. It was the combined actions to curtail these excesses by the outside parties enumerated above that led to the third intervention (Garrett, 1992; Macdonald, 1982a; Nokise, 1983; Sabatier, 1939/1977). The start of the intervention was marked by the Colony Government establishing a Southern Gilberts District and sending Grimble (1952, 1957) to Beru as resident district officer. His arrival in 1917 coincided with Goward being retired by the LMS, although it was 1919 before he reluctantly left the Colony.

Grimble turned out to be the first of several successive resident district officers on Beru up to 1941; others included Maude (1977) and Bevington (1990). Their presence meant a Colony Government official was much closer than previously to Nikunau—a canoe ride, in fact—and so could visit more easily, if still only intermittently—besides Beru and Nikunau, there were five other atolls in the district. Even so, the concept of indirect colonial rule applied (cf. Bush & Maltby, 2004; Davie, 2005; Lange, 2009; Morgan, 1980; Newbury, 2004; Ward, 1946), as is evident from the structure of government shown in Figure 11, which stretched from the six *kawa* on Nikunau up to the imperial palace in London.

Rule in this structure emanated, at least formally, from the monarch in London, but, in any case, the highest tiers of government were outside the territory of the colony, and occupied by persons from the colonising power and *I-Matang* by race. Inside the territory, there was a colony-level tier and then a district-level tier, both occupied by persons from the colonising power or, later, one of its dominions, and *I-Matang* by race. The quality of being indirect arose from the next tier(s); the bodies⁷⁰ and persons in this tier(s) interceded in the system of rule between the positions occupied by *I-Matang* and the native subject population on Nikunau and on the other islands. These were native political bodies and quasi-political official positions occupied by natives, some *I-Nikunau*, through election or by appointment, and some other *I-Kiribati* or Tuvaluan, by appointment—from an *I-Matang* point of view, there was no difference between *I-Nikunau* these other *I-Kiribati* or Tuvaluans sent to govern or administer them, but not so from an *I-Nikunau* point of view, not in those days when a national *I-Kiribati* identity was hardly germinating (see Lundsgaarde, 1968a; Macdonald, 1982a, 1996a, 1998). In a similar manner to including them in Figure 10, I have included the

six *mwaneaba* councils on Nikunau as a separate element because their status vis-à-vis the system was de facto, not de jure.

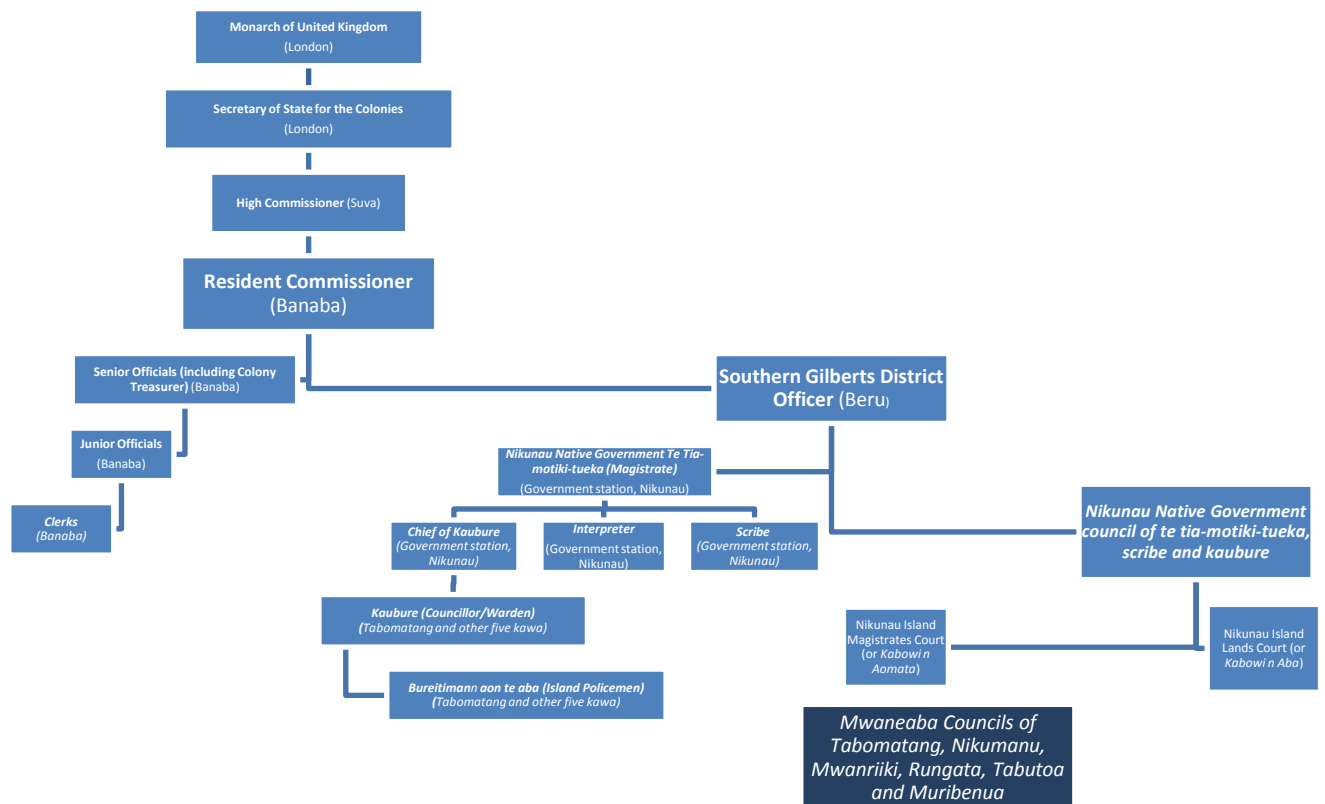


Figure 11. Structure of Government in the Colony under Great Britain from the 1920s until as late as the 1960s (*I-Kiribati* and *Tuvaluans* held posts in italics, *I-Matang* in regular font)

The political structure portrayed in Figure 11 was such a geographical stretch that, according to Grimble (1952), as far as *I-Nikunau*, *I-Beru*, *I-Tabiteuea*, etc. were concerned, the district officer was *te kamitina* (\equiv commissioner) and perceived not only as King George V or similar's direct representative but also as his kinsman. Indeed, the resident commissioner being some week's communication away on Banaba meant the district officer exercised a great deal of authority autonomously, and so, as far as *I-Nikunau* were concerned, much still hung still on directions from Beru, but now from the district officer rather than the chief missionary. It was the district officer's responsibility to oversee the native bodies and officials on Nikunau, etc. On visits to Nikunau and otherwise, he would appoint members of the native courts and the native government council, or, if applicable, organise elections to the council; this was albeit that some of these were not de jure until they had been formally ratified by the resident commissioner. He would oversee, intervene in and even direct these bodies, review their decisions, and evaluate their procedures. He would appoint their senior officials (e.g., the island magistrate (referred to as *te tia-motiki-tueka*) and *te tia-koroboki* (\equiv

scribe, clerk and treasurer), again subject to the resident commissioner's formal ratification, and oversee these officials' activities, including auditing their accounts and records and replenish their cash imprests. He would provide basic training and development. He would bring local procedures in line with the relevant Colony Government ordinances, regulations, etc. (e.g., Laws of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony 1952; Gilbert Islands, Island Regulations 1939; Regulations for the Good, 1933; Revised Native Laws 1916) (Grimble & Clarke, 1929; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a).

The provisions of said Colony Government ordinances, regulations, etc. covered murder, abortion, rape, assault, theft, prostitution, customary extra-marital sex, sorcery, drunkenness, gambling, marriage, and registration of births, marriages and deaths. They resembled laws applied by the LMS in many ways, except their coverage was more temporal than religious—observance of the *Te Tabati* was not provided for, for example. Presumably, in an attempt to communicate with *unimane* and *I-Nikunau* generally, the earlier ones at least were printed in *te taetae ni Kiribati*, as well as English. However, by the time Laws of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony 1952 was published, this practice of using both languages seems to have ceased and only English was used—the latter practice continues even under the Republic Government (e.g., see Election of Beretitenti Act 1980; Kiribati Primary Materials, 2017), although the Local Government Act 1984 had been translated into *te taetae ni Kiribati* by 2006 (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007).

Translation into *te taetae ni Kiribati* notwithstanding, the ordinances, etc. reflected *I-Matang*, rather than *I-Nikunau*, values, etc. Thus, they recognised individuals, close family and households (i.e., *mwenga*), and natives forming the geographical cum administrative entities of village (i.e., *te kawa*) and island; there was also some recognition of *utu*, but only as the concept was consistent with recognition of dependence and inheritance among *utu ni kaan* (Hockings, 1984); conversely, they excluded recognition of the socio-political entities of *boti* and *kainga*, and of *mwaneaba* districts—this pattern was repeated in Colony Government rolls of residents, land registers and censuses. However, this did not mean that district officers and some other Colony Government officials were mostly not cognisant of these excluded concepts; on the contrary, they frequently encountered them in their work, as, for example, Maude (1963) acknowledges in the case of *boti*, which he found valuable still from 1929 to 1938, when he was Native Lands Commissioner.

The district officer's de facto autonomy was subject to him making an annual return to report on the activities of native governments and courts on each island and about circumstances,

events, etc. in his district, including Nikunau (Grimble & Clarke, 1929). The Nikunau Native Government had to submit information to the district officer for these returns. In turn, the resident commissioner used these returns and other reports to produce biennial reports to the high commissioner and secretary of state (e.g. GEIC, 1932, 1957) and otherwise keep his superiors informed of events, although again communications often took weeks, including to receive acknowledgments, replies and instructions.

All the formal information flows seem to have been about *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* but were for *I-Matang*. They amounted to a primarily temporal political and administrative accountability (cf.) to men outside *mwenga* and *utu*, and outside of what remained of *kainga* and *boti*, which as related in S4.2 had been the institutional pillars of the *I-Nikunau* social system and traditional system of government. Said accountability was mostly upwards, reflecting the relationships between government and people being hierarchical (cf. Hassall et al., 2011; Sinclair, 1995), and alien in form, content and purpose. Even so, the perception of *I-Nikunau* that the district officer was a kinsman of the king in London seems, for a while at least, to have refreshed *I-Nikunau's* attitude to Colony Government taxes, some even regarding the copra as tribute received in London by the king (see Grimble, 1957, p. 157)—the attitude to paying these taxes had taken a knock when, as related above, the Nikunau Island Fund balance was sequestered.

During the six decades of this third intervention, the Colony Government established, maintained and bettered some public infrastructure and amenities at the so-called government station (now the Island Council's premises) near Rungata (see S3.1) and elsewhere along the atoll; for example, the two clinics and two primary schools that serve Muribenua and Tabutoa, and Nikumanu and Tabomatang, and the associated dwellings for teachers, and medical orderlies and dressers (now replaced by nurses)—the third clinic and primary school are part of the area at Rungata—and the airport. However, these developments owed a lot to *I-Nikunau* resources and efforts, including, between 1900 and the 1960s, the aforementioned communal workdays. After 1950, this Colony Government activity was in the form of a few project grants or similar funding and aid-in-kind. Concomitantly, *I-Nikunau* exerted influence in these projects on their atoll through their *unimane* in the *mwaneaba* at *kawa* level and through their churches and *boboti* and *mronron*, notably *Te Bobotin Nikunau* (Grimble & Clarke, 1929; Hassall et al., 2011; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a; Maude, 1963; Sabatier, 1939/1977).⁷¹

Arguably the above went on while relations between colonisers and colonised were characterised by the “working misunderstanding” that was rife among the main protagonists in colonial situations (see Bohannon, 1965; Lundsgaarde, 1968a). Sources of this misunderstanding were not least the use of two languages—English and *te taetae ni Kiribati*—and how the various *I-Matang* officiating in the district office on Beru from 1917 to 1941 and from 1970 to 1983—between 1948 and 1970, the so-called district office was on Tarawa—or otherwise visiting Nikunau had to reconcile dealing with *I-Nikunau*, etc. officiating in the council and courts on Nikunau, and at *kawa* level, and meeting expectations of their superiors in the colonial chain of command, expectations that usually reflected their unfamiliarity with life in the Colony and ignorance of Nikunau and life of *I-Nikunau*. It appears that, whereas *I-Nikunau* saw an autonomous, largely self-reliant island, with opportunities to venture away to work or study, *I-Matang* saw a very minor unit within a colony at the farthest flung corner of their Empire (Grimble, 1952; Macdonald, 1982a).

The vestiges of the traditional system not only persisted during this third intervention, and so explaining its survival today, politically and socially, but also it was perhaps even more important to *I-Nikunau* than subsequently. Between the 1920s and the 1960s, *te bowi* of *unimane* in each *te kawa* were the most prominent kind of what might be categorised as “quasi-traditional organisations”—that is organisations that, albeit much changed, having incorporated many so-called post-contact adaptations (e.g., see Lundsgaarde, 1966, 1978), resemble traditional organisations, such as *mwaneaba*, *kainga* and *mwenga*, and in which *utu* and *baronga* relationships are a significant feature. These *unimane* headed either *mwenga* or small groups of *mwenga* of the same *utu ni kaan* (see S4.2 and elsewhere). In each *te kawa* and across the atoll, they acted as a counter to colonialism, and so mostly operated separately from the official British system, often as a thorn in its side. Using whatever traditional authority remained to these *bowi*, some of it deriving from association with the LMS, *unimane* countered aspects of indirect rule that ran contrary what they saw as *I-Nikunau*’s interests. In particular, *I-Nikunau* increasingly and enduringly regarded the Nikunau Native Government, and its successor, the Island Council, not as a grassroots body but as an extension of *Te Tautaeka*, or the Colony Government, of which they were wary (Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a), and are still, despite its reincarnation as the Republic Government (Hassall et al., 2011; Ortega, 2008).

As well as the distance between Nikunau and the headquarters’ island of the Colony and, now, Republic Governments (i.e., Banaba, then Tarawa), various incidents contributed to this

perception and attitude, and these have stuck in the memory, including being passed through the generations. They included the extremely unpopular and controversial communal workdays mentioned in S4.3; the sequestration in 1917 of all cash reserves entrusted to the Colony Government by the native governments⁷² and the curtailment of the latter's financial autonomy⁷³ (Macdonald, 1971, 1982a); and the inequity of social and economic development efforts on Nikunau compared with Tarawa (see S4.1). This wariness is manifested in *I-Nikunau*'s apathetic attitude towards, and reticence about performing voluntarily for, governmental organisations, in complete contrast to the willing and cheerful attitude they have towards exertions on behalf of *utu*, friends, visiting strangers and their churches.

A strategy *unimane* used in order to keep the Nikunau Native Government at a distance from their traditional rule was to refrain from standing in elections to it, and instead nominating their younger selections, who, having their support, were bound to win (Macdonald, 1971, 1982a). Another was to refuse to carry out committee and related work without receiving a sitting allowance. Concomitantly, they were prominent on the elected governing bodies of pre-war *boboti* and *Te Bobotin Nikunau*, thereby controlling the atoll's economic system (see S4.3), and so deriving political influence that way vis-à-vis the Nikunau Native Government and Colony Government (Couper, 1967; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a).⁷⁴ Otherwise, despite the appearance of allowing them to participate in how they were governed, *I-Nikunau* often found the official system frustrating. Many official practices were alien to *I-Nikunau*, by virtue of even fundamental matters, such as entailing the unusual technology of writing and dealing with external parties and in English.

Figure 11 also lacks any *I-Kiribati* in any Colony-wide positions, reflecting a point made above, and Ieremia (1993) observed retrospectively, that even at independence in 1979, Kiribati not only lacked any nationally known leaders but also the very concepts of a nation and national leaders were strange (see also Macdonald, 1982a, 1996a; Van Trease, 1993a). A related point is that the principle of centralisation on Tarawa (see S4.1) was adopted by the Colony Government despite peoples from the various islands, that is *I-Nikunau*, *I-Butaritari*, *I-Arora*, etc., and even *I-Tarawa*, not identifying with the territory of the Kiribati Archipelago as a single nation, let alone a nation that included the extended territories of the Colony in the Line and Phoenix Archipelagos—the policy of centralisation stemmed from the British Government intent on nation building (see Morgan, 1980), as per the fourth intervention discussed next.

The fourth intervention was initiated outside the Colony, with the British Government responding to pressure from the so-called International Community in the aftermath of World War II. This pressure arose from concerns about the future of colonial peoples and the dismantling of empires, for example, as encapsulated by the United Nations Declaration of 1960. It led to what remained of the British Empire in Africa, the West Indies, Asia and, eventually, the Pacific being decolonised (see Morgan, 1980), Kiribati being one of the last. As this decolonisation process was in full swing elsewhere, the resident commissioner set in motion a process by which the system of government at Colony level changed from being entirely or largely autocratic in the mid-1960s, with the resident commissioner being advised by officials, to one of internal self-rule by the mid-1970s, with the prospect later of independence. This change saw the resident commissioner gradually transfer some of his authority to an executive body and the establishment of an assembly. The executive body started as a mix of *I-Matang* officials and *I-Kiribati* members but matured into a cabinet of mostly *I-Kiribati* ministers, save for the finance portfolio; this executive body carried on after 1979 as *Te Kabinet*, as appears in Figure 10. And the assembly started advisory, with representatives selected from the islands in the Colony, but matured into an elected body that carried on after 1979 as *Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu*, as also shown in Figure 10 (Gilbert and Ellice Islands Order 1974; Macdonald, 1970, 1982a).

This fourth intervention of shifting political authority from *I-Matang* to *I-Kiribati* was mostly felt on Tarawa. The undertaking there of civil engineering, education, health, social welfare and other projects in the name of economic and social development had already been underway for over a decade (see S4.1 and S4.3), and so this political development lagged behind, with the implication that there had been no *I-Kiribati* politicians who could have expressed views on the policy of centralisation that underpinned said development. Indeed, although the political system varies from the Westminster system (see above), much else about it resembles the system under British colonial rule. This is explained by how colonial officials instigated and closely oversaw internal self-rule, arguably to such an extent that in substance their ascendancy continued up to 1979, even though in form *I-Kiribati* occupied leading political positions (Macdonald, 1970, 1972, 1982a, 1983). These officials were prominent in drafting the Constitution of Kiribati 1979, except for local preferences prevailing in two matters that have attracted most attention in the history of this period, that is Tuvalu separating from Kiribati after a referendum and Kiribati adopting a democratic republic system (Goldsmith, 2012; Macdonald, 1982a; Van Trease, 1993a). Some of these

officials even carried on in positions created for them in the Republic Government administration, notably in the area of public finance, as a condition of deficit funding from the former colonial power.

The fifth and current intervention also arose outside the Republic, corresponding with concerns about the economic and social conditions of colonised and other peoples. This produced pressures for various measures, leading to an expansion worldwide of socio-economic aid and a global industry. The beginnings of this in the Colony have just been referred to and were mostly financed from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. As related in S4.1, S4.3, S4.4 and elsewhere, the Republic Government picked up the aid baton and, since the mid-1980s, its politicians and officials were having dealings with a hotchpotch of aid organisations (Dixon, 2004a; Macdonald, 1996a, 1998; Mackenzie, 2004).

A feature of this fifth intervention is for Kiribati to have been categorised as yet another “developing country”, or more precisely a “least developed country” (United Nations, 2017), signifying a country in need of aid, including political and administrative aid. The most overt form of this political and administrative aid to have affected the political system under which *I-Nikunau* live today in Kiribati has come from persons, etc., with Anglosphere connections. Reflecting policies in their countries of origin, including New Zealand and Britain, they have been particularly active in promoting ideas with a neo-liberal bent, although the projects in support of these have involved an extensive, often conflicting, variety of beliefs, values, motivations and specialities, including in the conditions they have attached to funding and in the ways the projects are carried out. Indeed, this latter observation applies to aid projects generally, and is significant politically because, despite arrangements between donors and recipients often being labelled nowadays as “partnerships” (cf. Webster, 2008), aid organisations’ policy consultants, project implementation staff, etc. invariably have the upper hand in the dealings around projects, etc., as indicated in discussing Figure 10 and the practical training and experience of *I-Kiribati* who entered the Republic Government and inherited the structures, processes and systems left behind by the Colony Government (Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014; Horvath, 1972; Macdonald, 1982a).

Underlying this asymmetry in donor-recipient dealings in Kiribati are such considerations as aid workers’ enthusiasm, even zealotry, in seeking out what they perceive as problems for *I-Kiribati* and Kiribati, or in applying, usually off-the-shelf, solutions, or even both. The advent of perceived problems of climate change and sea-level rise has added especial impetus to this enthusiasm. Furthermore, most development projects proceed only after being

evaluated according to policies and criteria of whichever donor organisation has been involved. Formally, the Republic Government also has to approve each one, but questioning a donor's judgment and generosity is not easy, either culturally, or technically or expertly, including in the area of so-called financial management and control, which is far from neutral in its political consequences.⁷⁵ Aid organisation representatives are dealing still not only with, as suggested earlier, an emergent *I-Kiribati* élite of politicians and officials of the Republic Government but also with similarly prominent *I-Kiribati* associated with institutions inherited from formal colonial or earlier neo-imperial times. These sometimes inexperienced, often unworldly and mostly non-expert *I-Kiribati* have often shared the aforementioned enthusiasm but, in any case, have found it difficult to resist the various and often incongruent opinions expressed under the auspices of aid organisations. Moreover, *I-Kiribati* issues and desired actions may be more stifled now than in the past by the choices of situations for evaluation and similar being made at a distance, and particular evaluations being completed during shorter engagements (see Macdonald, 1982a). Indeed, it is arguable that for much of the time since the advent of the Republic, aid organisation personnel have been prominent in determining the official direction of the governments under which *I-Nikunau* on Tarawa and on Nikunau have lived, hence the claims above about neo-imperialism characterising the structure, process and functioning of Kiribati's political system, particularly on Tarawa.

Back on Nikunau, just as economic developments on Tarawa have had accumulated backwash effects there (see S4.3), so the same can be said about the political developments outlined above. Apart from all else, emigration in general, and emigration of the Nikunau's more intellectually able in particular, have drained resources from, and so weakened, political institutions at the atoll and *kawa* levels, including church and cooperative organisations as grassroots political forces—this is particularly evident at Tabomatang, whose population of <70 is barely half that of 30 years ago. However, on paper at least, at the island level, Nikunau continues to have local government and local judicial offshoots of the system on Tarawa, as shown in Figure 10. And at *kawa* level, traditional and grassroots politics goes on, although many *unimane* heads of families are on Tarawa and their *utu* have been reticent to deputise for them in *kawa bowi*.

Perhaps a positive is that the formal political bodies on Nikunau seem closer to *I-Nikunau* than they were a decade or two ago, even though some wariness remains from times when these bodies, and especially the Nikunau Island Council, were regarded as an extension of *Te Tautaeka*, and *I-Nikunau* was accountable to it, rather than the other way around. Reasons for

the closer-ness include the following three occurrences. First, although resident district officer positions were in the government administrative structure inherited from the Colony Government, these were soon disestablished by the Republic Government. This was in response to local disapproval of such arrangements once the *I-Matang* incumbent was replaced by an *I-Kiribati*—the disapproval was grounded in *te katei*, there being unwillingness to accept an *I-Kiribati* in such a lauded official position above *unimane* in a political system that was no longer topped by *I-Matang* officials, and so with *I-Matang* authority.

Second, the Republic Government seems further away, less interested and less intrusive. Some of this dates from the 1980s and 1990s, when emergent national leaders and newly-promoted senior officials were preoccupied with setting up the new state on Tarawa (e.g., see Government of Kiribati, 1983) (Jeremia, 1993; Macdonald, 1982a, 1996a; Van Trease, 1993b). Since, said leaders and officials have been grappling with the effusion of aid and the population growth and other unfamiliar issues materialising on Tarawa (e.g., see Biribo & Woodroffe, 2013; Castalia Strategic Advisors, 2005; Connell & Lea, 2002; Duncan, 2014; Locke, 2009; Thomas, 2001).

Third, there has been some work conducted by consultants to the Colony and Republic Governments on decentralisation, political as well as economic (e.g., Green, Bukhari and Lawrence cited by Lewis (1988); Ortega, 2008; Pitchford cited by Connell (1987), Corcoran (2016), Roniti (1988) and Maunaa (1987);⁷⁶ the reports, Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs (2007) and Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services. (2012b) were associated with or a result of the same United Nations' project as Ortega's study was. However, this closer-ness is notwithstanding that most of the funding for the Island Council comes from the Republic Government and that its annual budget is subject to limits set by Republic Government officials on Tarawa, not to mention other financial controls from there and from Republic Government officials on Nikunau. The Republic Government also appoints its senior staff, who are usually posted from Tarawa and originate, at least ancestrally, from other islands.

The way activities are organised and controlled at *kawa* level, including the holding of various special events, reflects much of the insularity of *mwaneaba* districts and *kainga* in the past (see Hockings, 1984) (cf. Autio, 2010; Kazama, 2001). Besides, quasi-traditional *mwaneaba* councils continue to oversee affairs, organise activities, maintain traditions and regulate conduct (see above), and so *te kawa's unimane* appear to have a significant say in

the organisation of its social life, reflecting that *te mwenga* have emerged as the basic kin units socially and in matters both economic and political. However, depending on the nature of the events, etc. that *te kawa* is called on to organise, there appears to be more sharing of this authority among other adults living there.

National politics in Kiribati dates from the 1960s at most. *I-Nikunau* have had their share of involvement, including participating in the political bodies arising from internal self-rule; several *I-Nikunau* rose to prominent official positions and holding political office before and after the Republic was inaugurated (e.g., see Index of /sites/docs/hansard, 2014; Macdonald, 1982a, 1983). This has continued, with a few *I-Nikunau* being appointed to ministerial positions (e.g., Beniamina Tinga was vice-president 2000–03 and Tiwau Awira was a member of *te Kabinet* 1979-94). If they were not there already, many of the *I-Nikunau* concerned moved to Tarawa, and became members of the diasporic community there, finding it impossible to fulfil their duties as members of parliament, etc., unless they lived on Tarawa. Subsequently, they only visit their islands occasionally, including to campaign during elections. These elected persons and senior officials are besides the many *I-Nikunau* now working in the public service in various middle-ranking and junior administrative, technical and professional positions. As a proportion of these offices and positions, the overall number of *I-Nikunau* involved are probably about what can be expected from a people comprising 4–5% of the adult population both of Tarawa and of Kiribati. However, apart from the two Nikunau Island parliamentary seats, factors other than being *I-Nikunau* are behind *I-Nikunau* being elected or appointed to positions. Administrative positions and increasingly political office have been associated with educational attainment;⁷⁷ political office has also increasingly followed on from a successful career in the public service or other organisations on Tarawa, including churches. Indeed, *mwaneaba* district or single island figures have long since been replaced by figures with national political status and other prominence (cf. Macdonald, 1982a).

Regarding relations between *I-Nikunau* and the Republic Government, despite the notions of a republic and citizens, rather than empire and subjects, the notion of the Republic Government giving a formal account to an *I-Nikunau* or broader *I-Kiribati* audience, on Tarawa, Nikunau or elsewhere, is impaired by the structure, process and technology (e.g., the accounting system) of government being largely unchanged in substance, if not in form, from the days of the Colony Government. This may seem a strange claim to make, given the significant amount of aid project activity there has been in the past 35 years in the areas of

administration, policymaking, governance, management and information systems. However, if anything, the continuing imposition through these projects of administrative methods, expertise, ideas, materials processes, structures, systems, technology, etc. has reinforced the aforementioned hierarchical nature of government and accountability being mostly upwards. The accountability is shaped around and focused on foreign concepts and concerns, and is far better suited to outsiders than to *I-Nikunau* or broader *I-Kiribati* audience, and so, unwittingly or otherwise, is consistent with the aforementioned claims of a strong external, neo-imperial influence (Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014; Hassall et al., 2011; Ratuva, 2014; Macdonald, 1996a, 1998; Mackenzie, 2004). However, a substantial saving grace when it comes to accountability is that, on small islands, even one that is as densely populated as Tarawa, residents can observe much and can be much observed. Similarly much can be heard, mostly face-to-face, in the forms of *te kakarabakau* (\cong formal debating and discussing) and *maroro/winnanti*. How much knowledge and power this gives to the aforementioned *I-Nikunau* or broader *I-Kiribati* audience, cast in the role of The People, is open to question; but it does seem to be effective during elections and by deterring politicians from displays or other outward signs of affluence.

Outside Kiribati, in metropolitan countries, *I-Nikunau* are very much on the political periphery of the nations and towns or cities in which they live, being entitled to vote if they qualify as citizens or residents, but not much else, at least as *I-Nikunau* or *I-Kiribati*. Otherwise, they tend to have to muddle through the political, administrative and service arrangements laid down by the powers that be, whether in immigration, housing, healthcare, schooling, tertiary education, labour practices, welfare, taxation, elections, the structure and process of governments and parliaments, local government, etc.

Where politics does arise for many members of diasporic communities outside Kiribati (and indeed on Tarawa) is within the communities themselves. As alluded to already, the communities often set themselves up formally (e.g., see Kiribati Tungaru Association, 2017), partly because this is a requirement of hiring venues for events and making successful applications for community event funding, and partly because of internal protocols, recognition of roles and speaking on a community's behalf, for example, to local and national government organisations and to media. As this politics plays out, it is more obvious than on Nikunau that *te mwenga* comprise the basic kin units politically and in matters both social and economic (e.g., subscriptions are denoted not by per person but by per household, regardless of household size). In the case of economics, this household unit coincides to a

significant extent with the norms of Anglosphere societies around them. However, within the community the unit *te mwenga* reflects not only how members come together regularly and where (see S3.3.1 and S3.3.2) but also how power, authority and status among a community is exercised or allocated. For example, usually the most senior *I-Kiribati* males are expected to speak for their *mwenga* on community matters, except that this role falls to the most senior female if the husband is *non-I-Kiribati*, and this situation makes it easier for all the women to join in (cf. Rose, 2014).

4.8 *Spiritual Circumstances*

The great proportion of *I-Nikunau*, wherever located, are practising Christians and frequently involved in church activities, as indicated throughout S3. Even so, some traditional beliefs and rituals continue, but mostly below the surface or in ignorance of their origin (Hockings, 1984; Macdonald, 1982a). For the most part, an RC–Protestant duopoly of longstanding continues on Nikunau virtually intact, whereas on Tarawa and in metropolitan countries that duopoly has been broken by small but significant numbers of members of diasporic communities joining other denominations. For diasporic communities, church is a potential sphere for mixing with the *non-I-Nikunau* among whom *I-Nikunau* live geographically. This potential is most evident on Tarawa, where church activities often draw people from across diasporic communities of the different Kiribati islands, a routine example being the many children who attend church high schools.

In diasporic communities outside Kiribati, there is a dichotomy between joining existing congregations of the same faith and establishing a congregation limited to *I-Kiribati*. Thus, in various centres in New Zealand, for example, RCs, although meeting together for some RC *I-Kiribati* occasions, tend to use churches serving the multiracial communities in which they live, and so usually worship in English—Statistics New Zealand (2014) report that 960 (45%) of *I-Kiribati* in New Zealand identified themselves as RCs. On the other hand, most Protestants—estimated as 890 (38%)—rather than attend extant local churches, have preferred being loyal to the KPC/KUC, and so establish their own congregations. What is more, apart from general fundraising to provide for routine expenses, the four largest congregations in New Zealand, that is in Auckland, the Bay of Plenty, the Kapiti Coast and Invercargill, have accumulated capital to purchase dwellings for pastors, with land on which they plan to erect churches. The KPC/KUC’s head administrative office on Tarawa posts pastors from Kiribati to live and serve among these four largest congregations and visit the other communities, and deacons are recruited and trained from within all the communities to

assist the pastors. KPC/KUC events are held within and among members of New Zealand's diasporic communities, and occasionally, over long weekends, across these communities—venues range from members' homes and community and church halls to campgrounds and *marae* (\approx *mwaneaba* associated *Māori iwi*) hired for said weekends. Next to identifying as *I-Kiribati*, and organising around that, the KPC/KUC in particular is a further means in New Zealand of community support and association, around language and culture (worship is in *te taetae ni Kiribati*), and part of maintaining separation from other peoples in the country.

The origins of Protestantism on Nikunau are alluded to in S4.1 in accounting for changes in the settlement pattern on Nikunau and in S4.7 in relating the atoll's political circumstances up to 1920. In the 1870s, the Samoan District Committee of the LMS sent representatives to perform a mission to convert *I-Nikunau* and other peoples in the southern Kiribati Islands to Christianity. For over 25 years, this mission was effected by pastors and their wives trained at the LMS theological college and regional headquarters at Malua in Samoa, and so who were mainly Samoans. Pastor Iosefatu, who arrived in 1873, was the first of four pastors who resided on Nikunau in the 1870s, and a further 11 were so resident afterwards, the last arriving in 1901; each stayed for upwards of eight years, some spending the rest of their lives there (Nokise, 1983).⁷⁸

When the first pastors arrived, *I-Nikunau* still adhered to various traditional beliefs, spiritual features and rituals, which had accumulated over centuries and were largely indistinguishable from the secular (Grimble, 1989); this adherence was despite any influences of *I-Nikunau* returning from working away having been exposed to Christianity or other religions,⁷⁹ or of whalers, beachcombers, castaways and traders. Traditional spiritual associations were made with the structure and orientation of buildings on *mwenga*. Religious features found in *mwenga* and *kainga* included *boua-n-anti* and *bangota*; these were dedicated to *bakatibu* and other *anti* (\cong spirits, possibly of the first human *bakatibu* of the *boti*)—for an illustration of *te anti* stone, see Alaima et al. (1979, between pp. 18 and 19), and for *te bangota*, see Baranite (1985, p. 78)—and were decorated and adorned regularly with offerings of food. As well as social and political centres, and inns for visitors, *mwaneaba* served as religious centres. Indeed, Grimble called *te mwaneaba* a “tabernacle of ancestors in the male line” (quoted by Maude, 1963, p. 11), one of their vital features being that the relics of their founder were kept in a place in the roof and, on ceremonial occasions, were taken down and washed—for a photograph of this practice on Tabiteuea, see Alaima et al. (1979, between pp. 18 and 19)—(see also Hockings, 1984; Lewis, 1988).

Life's activities required much knowledge and many skills (e.g., fisherman, cultivator, warrior, dancer, victuals preparer), some of them specialist skills (e.g., architect, canoe builder, composer, choreographer), and, as is not unusual in most societies (see Abrahamson & Fairchild, 1999), the exercise of these by *I-Nikunau* included attendant magic, spells and rituals—these circumstances are remarked on by Grimble and Clarke (1929), who advised their subordinate district officers that “[S]imple magic rituals and charms are the concomitants of every conceivable form of native activity” (p. 6). Each *te boti* had its totem, usually a real creature whom *boti* members held in high regard and, for example, were forbidden to hunt or eat. Magico-religious practices were integral to various critical life passages of *mwenga* and *kainga* residents (A.F. Grimble, 1989; R. Grimble, 2013).

After an inauspicious start in the 1870s, the pastors had mostly succeeded in the mission of conversion by 1890. Concomitant with this religious success, first, they achieved political success, bringing about an almost unfettered theocratic-colonial regime on Nikunau and across the southern Kiribati Islands; unfettered, that is, by either the vestiges of the traditional methods of rule or the British colonial authorities (see S4.7). And second, when the *Les Missionnaires du Sacré-Cœur* (or Sacred Heart) *de Jésus*, representing the RC Church, arrived on Nikunau in 1888, they initially repulsed them, and for the three subsequent decades, largely kept it at bay (Baranite, 1985; Garrett, 1992; Goodall, 1954; Grimble, 1989; Maude & Maude, 1994; Maude, 1967; Nokise, 1983; Sabatier, 1939/1977). Artefacts of this success include the churches, church *mwaneaba*, pastors' dwellings and the former church, now government, primary schools, as mentioned in S3.1, built then and since with labour and copra contributed by their congregations. The congregations also maintained these structures and took turns feeding and looking after the district pastor in their *mwenga* (Macdonald, 1971, 1982a).

The extent of the pastors' political success is outlined in S4.7; arguably, this was incidental to being successful in converting *I-Nikunau*, but vital to it nonetheless. The pastors gained influence among *atun te boti* and other *unimane* in *mwaneaba* and wholesale conversion of the population followed. As outlined in S4.2, the pastors were not unfamiliar with various aspects of *te katei*, including the ways of *te mwaneaba*, because some of the concepts underpinning these traditions also applied in traditional Samoa under *kerisiano fa'a-samoa* (Maude, 1963). Regarding *mwaneaba* in particular, the pastors eventually persuaded *I-Nikunau* to end the aforementioned practices relating to the relics of the founder and to afford them a proper burial.⁸⁰ In a related development, not only was the religious function of

district *mwaneaba* superseded by the use of churches for religious rituals but also church *mwaneaba* took over their function as a place for social gatherings; the traditional *mwaneaba* premises fell into disrepair,⁸¹ with the result on Nikunau today that a few standing stones is all that remains of them, except the one in Nikumanu (see S3.1).

Despite the success they had had across the southern Kiribati Islands, the Samoan pastors were criticised for their conduct by William Goward, in assuming the role of chief LMS missionary in 1900 (see S4.7); he described them as “inconsistent, incompetent and un-Christ-like” (Macdonald, 1982a, p. 89)—Goward’s criticism echoed much previous criticism levelled at Samoan missionaries by their *I-Matang* counterparts (see Munro, 1996). Using this pretext to reform the mission, Goward and his wife Emmeline trained *I-Kiribati* pastors, teachers and their prospective marriage partners at Rongorongo.⁸² This training helped renew the mission and localise the organisation. The curriculum extended to mission administration and to teaching in mission schools. The graduates were posted to Nikunau and the other islands, eventually replacing the Samoan incumbents—the reforms turned out to be a prelude to the mission expanding throughout the Kiribati Archipelago, and to Banaba, Nauru and beyond (Garrett, 1992).

The headquarters at Rongorongo was an additional call on the revenue collected on Nikunau by the pastors, in the form of copra mainly. It was used there to fund the LMS’s education and training activities, printing and publishing (e.g., *te taetae ni Kiribati* translations of the Bible (see Bingham, 1907), prayer books and hymnbooks⁸³) and general administration. This was besides what was spent on or provided in kind on Nikunau (see above). The political control of Nikunau, including through *te kabowi n abamakoro*, was important to this revenue being raised (see S4.7). Thus, under Goward, the quasi-political nature of the mission continued, but with an additional, more active, less distant, upper echelon. The sectarian persecution and discrimination towards anyone or anything to do with the RC Church also continued.

The RCs on Nikunau during the LMS’s political ascendancy included *I-Nikunau* who had been away labouring (Macdonald, 1982a) and traders, notably Frank (François) Even (see Nokise, 1983), an Irishman by the name of Harrison and Tom Day (or O’Day – see Munro, 1987). Indeed, it was they who encouraged the RC Church to send a mission to the Kiribati Archipelago in the first place and who assisted the missionaries who arrived on Nikunau but were expelled on more than one occasion (see Sabatier, 1939/1977—another trader, by the name of Smith, helped these missionaries escape from Nikunau in 1899). These RCs

persisted in their beliefs and practices, and it was this persistence and that of the RC Mission itself that, after the Colony Government brought the LMS's rule to an end in 1917 (see S4.7), helped the RC Church get established on Nikunau. The proportion of RCs reached 19% in 1931, 23% in 1947 (Pusinelli, 1947) and 29% in 1968 (Zwart & Groenewegen, 1968). Today, over 47% of the atoll's residents are RCs, compared with the over 49% who are KPC/KUC (Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012b)—barely 3% of Nikunau residents are other than KPC/KUC or RC, although many indulge in traditional beliefs as well, at least secretly.

During the intervening 100 years, relations between the two Churches and their adherents have been beset by conflict, hostility, rivalry, rejoinders and claims and counter-claims of sectarianism (see Maude, 1967; Sabatier, 1939/1977), albeit that these behaviours became less physically violent and more subtle as time passed—it is possible that some of this division, hostility and violence may have been a continuance of intra-island animosity existing before the Christians arrived, with people joining one church primarily because their adversaries had joined the other (Macdonald, 1982a). What is more, similar attitudes, albeit with ever-decreasing levels of physical violence, have been shown towards other Christian denominations and other faiths (e.g., the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Seventh-Day Adventists (SDAs), the Bahá'í Faith) since they applied to and were permitted to enter the Colony or Republic and establish premises on Tarawa—the first to do so were the SDAs in 1947 (Pusinelli, 1947); 10% of Tarawa's population is now affiliated with these others.

By virtue of the Colony Government posting a district officer to Beru in 1917 and assuming de facto control of Nikunau and the other southern Kiribati Islands (see S4.7), the LMS's streams of revenues from taxes and fines from Nikunau and other islands were interrupted; the LMS had been almost entirely dependent on this revenue, which had been coming from the entire population, not just the LMS's congregations (Macdonald, 1982a). It more or less made up for this lost revenue by expanding or re-designating some of the existing contributions from its congregations and having these congregations turn to other ways to gather revenue, or fund raise, for local and headquarters' uses. Thus, informal tithes on copra and cash remittances were instituted, social events were staged with fundraising appendages, handicrafts (e.g., coconut mats, fishing hats, knives of sharks' teeth) were produced and sent to Banaba and, later, Tarawa, for sale to temporary residents and visitors, particularly *I-Matang* (see Catala, 1957), and trade stores were operated—these are referred to earlier as

church *mronron*. The KPC/KUC continues this pattern of fundraising today, be it on Nikunau, Tarawa and in diasporic communities elsewhere, with some enhancements; for example, bingo sessions are popular among communities on Nikunau (Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007), Tarawa and in New Zealand. Across the Kiribati Archipelago, island congregations compete for the prestige of which island can send the greatest amount to KPC/KUC headquarters on Tarawa.

From the outset, this fundraising placed greater work burdens on *I-Nikunau* associated with the LMS, as they had to continue paying taxes, fines and, later, licence fees, etc. but to the Colony Government instead of the LMS. This led some to switch their allegiance to the RC Church (cf. Gilkes, 2006), joining those who had favoured it because the RC clergy paid its adherents, for example, in tobacco, for work done and services rendered, including building churches and supplying the clergy's domestic needs (e.g., victuals, house materials)—unlike the LMS, the RC Church had external, albeit meagre, benefactions to call on, and *I-Nikunau's* contributions were less involuntary (see Sabatier, 1939/1977). However, for several decades, the majority stayed with the LMS, and thence the KPC/KUC; it has only been during the last four decades that the proportion of RCs on Nikunau has approached its current level of 47%.

Spiritual conversion, and the political control that accompanied it by the LMS in particular, has had continuing consequences for *I-Nikunau*. Reflecting afterwards on what he found on taking up the post of district officer on Beru in 1917 (see S4.7), Grimble opined that when the Samoan pastors and then Goward were ascendant they had degraded anything about *I-Nikunau* that prevented promotion of Christian myths, superstitions and impostures as superior, heroic, etc. He opined that the clerics had made *I-Nikunau* and their neighbours “ashamed of his ancestry, ashamed of his history, ashamed of his legends, ashamed practically of everything that ever happened to his race outside the chapel and the classroom” (cited by Macdonald, 1982a, p. 133, and by Maude, 1989, p. xxiii) (cf. Bakre, 2004). Following time spent on Onotoa six decades later, Hockings (1984) claims that

the many physical manifestations of traditional communal spiritual activity—the *kainga*, the *bangota*, the *uma ni mane*, the initiate huts— have all but disappeared in this general process of the desanctification of everyday life, and in their place of stands the church. (p. 472)

However, to attribute these many changes solely to Christianity would exaggerate, just as to claim that they have all been negative is inaccurate. Many other factors were at work, associated with people other than missionaries visiting Nikunau and *I-Nikunau* returning

from working, etc. away with a changed perspective on life. Not only that but also the new religion(s) appealed positively to most *I-Nikunau*. The religions afforded opportunities to come together in ways different from the traditional *mwaneaba* (Hockings, 1984). They entailed stories about the outside world, and the introduction of knowledge, practices, etc. In producing written translations of the Bible, etc. in *te taetae ni Kiribati*, the English- and French-speaking missionaries (e.g., Hiram Bingham, Ernest Sabatier) adapted the Modern Latin alphabet to suit *te taetae ni Kiribati* in a way still ascendant today. *I-Nikunau* learnt to read and write, and quenched a thirst for knowledge, including at mission schools; at first, these catered for all ages, but then concentrated on children of primary or elementary school age and, later, of secondary school age. This was an alternative source of knowledge to *unimane* and *unaine*, and so satisfied a desire among some *I-Nikunau* to be less dependent on elders and less predisposed to their authority.

The missionaries instituted many other things with widespread and long-lasting consequences. They introduced new food plants, notably breadfruit and pawpaw (Nokise, 1983). They introduced the days of the week, including *Te Tabati*, and holy days, so imposing a new sense of chronological order on *I-Nikunau*, although even now keeping to time is not a strong point, even in diasporic communities. As indicated in S3.1, *Te Tabati* observance is still very evident, particularly among Protestants but among RCs too, but in their different ways, as are Easter and Christmas as religious festivals.

Several restrictions were placed on *I-Nikunau* stemming from what the LMS missionaries in particular regarded as “evils”, as listed by Grimble (1989, pp. 315–318). *I-Nikunau*’s practice of nakedness (cf. Officer on Board the Said Ship, 1767, pp.135–138) was banned in the names of modesty, etc. The obligation to wear clothes led to the import of cloth and acquisition of skills and equipment (e.g., needles, sewing machines) needed to make clothes; it also led to afflictions such as tuberculosis and skin diseases from wearing clothes unsuited to the climatic conditions (see the school photograph referred to in Note 82). Being modestly attired, also gave some freedom to post-pubescent young women to be seen and appear in public, whereas traditionally they had been confined, usually pending marriage (see Grimble, 1921).

Restrictions on abortion as birth control methods (see Veltman, 1982)⁸⁴ led to bigger families. These restrictions are still in place, although abortions are still performed in traditional ways. Birth control and family planning through contraception are encouraged, including that teams of specialists make occasional visits from metropolitan countries,

especially to Tarawa. Attempts to restrict *tibutibu* were withstood, preserving much of the social and economic benefits of this practice, which continues today. However, its misunderstood “informality” (e.g., lack of government authority and recognition in official documents) can present problems for families trying to immigrate to metropolitan countries.

The missionaries were concerned with the level of intoxication from alcohol and nicotine, especially among men. Restrictions on the import of alcoholic beverages were reasonably successful, as were those on locally produced ones, more or less—Nikunau was still *dry* when I visited in the 1980s. Today, among *I-Nikunau*, there are those who drink alcohol and those who abstain, with the latter being the greater proportion, particularly on Nikunau. In any case, kava drinking has become fashionable in recent years, particularly among groups of men, both in diasporic communities and now on Nikunau itself (National Statistics Office, 2013). While intoxicating, kava is often associated with lower levels of physical violence than alcohol, although opinions differ of this, and the after-effects on work, etc. are raising criticisms (Grace, 2003; Kiribati cabinet minister, 2013; Kiribati people ‘cursed’, 2017).

Similar restrictions on tobacco on Nikunau failed miserably, with the incidence of stick tobacco, pipes and self-rolled cigarettes still high, although even there, and far more obviously on Tarawa, these have given way over the past few decades to manufactured cigarettes. Whichever, smoking tobacco is still widespread among *I-Nikunau*—National Statistics Office (2013) reports 44% of the adult population of the Republic smokes tobacco—notwithstanding that many in metropolitan country diasporic communities have taken heed of the strong messages about its deadly consequences sent out by public health advocates and the price signals accompanying these messages—according to Statistics New Zealand (2014) of 22% of *I-Kiribati* who have smoked regularly since the age of 15, a third claim to have given up. However, in Kiribati, the messages are less strong and there are no such price signals; indeed, for a time the price of tobacco was controlled in similar ways to rice and other staple imports and school exercise books.

Curtailments of sexual promiscuity led to reductions in the activities of *nikiranroro* and the diminution of polygynous relationships, including *eiriki* (\cong sexual relationships between a husband and his wife’s unmarried sisters), and of customarily-sanctioned extramarital sex involving, or as entailed in, *tinaba* relationships (\cong sexual relations between a wife and her husbands’ uncles) (see Grimble, 1957, 1989; Hockings, 1984). They also impacted the forms and frequencies of dance, which LMS clerics often referred to as lewd acts, along with accompanying songs, poems and music (Macdonald, 1982a)—the RC clergy encouraged

more mellow forms of dance by incorporating them into the Mass (Nokise, 1983, Sabatier, 1939/1977). However, dance, etc. were never stamped out and, as indicated in S3.2, they have re-emerged as objects of national pride, with participation being widespread, including in diasporic communities (see Autio, 2010; Dambiec, 2005; Kiribati Tungaru Association UK, n.d.; New Zealand Kiribati National Council, n.d.; Whincup, 2005).

4.9 Educational Circumstances

I-Nikunau's educational circumstances can be clarified by distinguishing between traditional and modern, or as I call it here, formal. The formal, deriving as it does directly or indirectly from Britain, more or less, is common to *I-Nikunau* wherever they are located. It is organised into a system divided into primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This system comprises schools and other institutions, teachers, curricula, examinations or qualifications and similar at each level. Running beside it, in *te mwenga*, *te mwaneaba*, and corresponding places within communities are vestiges of traditional education; these are particularly important and significant in matters of social conduct, language and culture. *I-Nikunau* participate in both wherever they are located, although the mix of the two differs according to distance from life on Nikunau. In terms of being perceived by either adults or children as “education”, however, the formal is very much part of *I-Nikunau's* recent past and present (see S3 and S4.1) and now seems ascendant in all locations.

I have already referred to wider consequences that developments of formal education and participation in it have had for *I-Nikunau*, including emigration (see S4.1 and S4.2), political participation (see S4.7) and religious beliefs (see S4.8), and these matters are revisited in this section. *I-Nikunau* in Kiribati now participate in formal education up to Year 10 (i.e., 15–16 years of age) as a matter of course in primary and junior secondary schools on Nikunau (see S3.1), Tarawa and other islands where they are brought up. Those whose academic attainment is sufficient, as measured using common national examinations, go on further, including to senior secondary schools (Years 11 to 13), which are all on Tarawa, except for limited provision on Beru, Tabiteuea, Nonouti, Abemama, Abaiang and Tabuaeran. All these schools share a school year, February to December, to coincide with Fiji, New Zealand and Australia, and each has its weekly timetables of classes, conducted largely in classrooms by recognised, qualified teachers. Particularly above primary level, these classes are divided into year groups (i.e., the students are mostly sorted by age) and into subjects (e.g., mathematics, English, geography, science), which are defined in syllabuses, as reflected in mostly English-

language textbooks, other learning resources, examinations and other forms of summative assessment.

Success in the primary and secondary levels of the system, and indeed of the system, is predisposed towards individual students going onto the next level or stage, with stages covering a school year, and ultimately attending an English-language university overseas, thus reinforcing the importance of the outside world, English-language curriculum. Or, to put it another way, the system has been based consistently on pushing out pupils or students who fail at the end of a stage, and so the successful students are those remaining after the rest have been filtered out. Having said that, opportunities to leave the formal system with qualifications nowadays are probably greater than ever before. It is also now easier to resume formal education as an adult, and so obtain a second chance. However, this is much less the case than in metropolitan countries with diasporic communities, where adult education provision is far more extensive than on Tarawa.

For those who do succeed by graduating at the end of Year 13, some obtain aid donor scholarships to attend university institutions and similar overseas, including the main campus in Fiji of the University of the South Pacific or its law campus in Vanuatu.⁸⁵ Some scholarships are also awarded to *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* who are already employed in the public service, including enabling them to study for masterates and doctorates. Those without scholarships mostly have to make do with studying on Tarawa at the University of the South Pacific Kiribati Campus, sometimes with a view to obtaining a scholarship subsequently. Others who graduate from junior and senior secondary schools (i.e., having passed the Year 10, 11, 12 or even 13 exams) go on to Tarawa's non-degree tertiary institutions (e.g., the Institute of Technology,⁸⁶ Marine Training Centre,⁸⁷ Fisheries Training Centre, School of Nursing, Teachers' College).

In the diasporic communities, children invariably participate in the education systems of their place of abode. In the metropolitan countries, this is something most parents are highly desirous of, often advancing it as a reason for having immigrated, as Roman (2013) and Thompson (2016) find among *I-Kiribati* immigrants in New Zealand. These metropolitan country systems are mirrored by the formal system in Kiribati, for reasons given next, and so need not be described in more detail here.

The formal system in Kiribati reflects its introduction and maintenance by outsiders, whether under the auspices of religious bodies (since the 1880s), the Colony Government (between

the 1920s and 1970s) and Republic Government (since the 1980s), including with assistance from or influence of British and other *I-Matang* teachers, British and other foreign examinations boards, international professional teaching bodies, foreign higher and further education institutions, and aid organisations. For the most part, the curriculum derives from, and is mostly about, the outside world, there being little provision, if any, for knowledge and skills associated with living on atolls, either in quasi-traditional ways or otherwise, let alone about Nikunau or Kiribati in particular. Indeed, although most teachers are now *I-Kiribati*, the syllabuses, qualification standards, methods of teaching and learning, etc., along with the beliefs, values, knowledge and skills underlying their training in Kiribati and overseas, still reflect what the abovementioned outsiders, spiritual or secular, and particularly from Britain, New Zealand, Australia and the other Anglosphere countries, have regarded or now regard as appropriate for pupils and students of different ages (see Burnett, 2009).

In contrast, traditional education was all about *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau, whether in areas one might label curricula, methods of teaching and learning, knowledge and skills, values, beliefs or structures. The vestiges of the traditional system that remain on Nikunau reflect the ways *I-Nikunau* now live there, as recounted in S3.1 and in S4 so far. Education in traditional dancing is a prime, overt example of such vestiges, one that binds *I-Nikunau* there with *I-Nikunau* in all the diasporic communities, at times resembling what Autio (2010) gleaned from her study on Tabiteuea in 1999-2000. She observed schooling in dance as frequent and intensive, taking the form of dancing practices, arranged and conducted by *unimane* and *unaine* with expertise in choreography and dance instruction. In metropolitan countries, especially when a formal event is in the offing (e.g., a National Day gathering), the area of dance is similarly ascendant in the traditional education that goes on in people's home and in the community, led by those who have inherited this expertise. For some results, see British Museum (2017), EventFinda (2014) or PixMasta Studio (2017).

Notwithstanding, these vestiges of traditional learning are a far cry in content and method from the traditional system of educating boys and young men, and girls and young women in what each gender required to enable them to live materially, socially, culturally, etc. on Nikunau in past times, as pieced together by various authors (e.g., Grimble, 1921, 1989; Hockings, 1984; Teweiariki, n.d.). Ascendant probably up to the 1880s, this system was designed to initiate these young people into *I-Nikunau* society as adults, partakers in ceremonials, marriage partners, parents, domestics, fishermen, cultivators, crafts persons, warriors—for photographs and illustrations of a warrior and traditional weapons, see Alaima

et al. (1979)—dancers, etc. A notable aspect of the curriculum was knowledge of self genealogically, given the social categories of *utu*, *boti* and *kainga* being based on ancestry (Goodenough, 1955; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Maude, 1963). The curriculum also comprised ancestral traditions, customs, religion, rituals, stories, technologies, etc. Its gender basis was reflected in how *unimane* oversaw the teaching of older boys and *unaine* oversaw the teaching of young children and older girls; the teaching was conducted on *mwenga*, *kainga*, *buakonikai* and marine areas. A notable aspect of the structure was a distinction between some knowledge, skills, spells, etc. being generally shared among everyone and some of same being restricted to only select few. That is, for reasons of place in the community and honour, architecture and building construction (see Hockings, 1984), canoe building, composing and choreography (see Autio, 2010), medical practice, midwifery and similar were jealously guarded specialisms, knowledge, skills and spells being passed orally, preciously and secretly from a person of one generation to a kinsman of the next generation (Lawrence, 1983).

Aspects of the traditional curriculum system that were practical when it came to living on Nikunau survived for quite some time, some until now. However, the LMS Mission and, later, the RC Mission vanquished many aspects that they saw as perpetuating animism, paganism, heathenism, savagery, etc. (Macdonald, 1982a), or otherwise obstructed or impeded their aims of converting individuals and communities, and retaining those converts.

The LMS pastors put in place the forerunners of the present formal system, establishing and maintaining mission schools on Nikunau and neighbouring islands; these were vital to conversion. Reiterating S4.8, the schools gradually made children of primary or elementary school age their main concern; this occurred alongside providing something of the nature of secondary education for aspiring pastors, catechists and other teachers, perhaps at Malua but certainly at Rongorongo (see University of Southern California Digital Library, 2017). The mission schools combined religious instruction, and cleanliness, etc. being next to godliness, with reading, writing and arithmetic. The teaching had to be in *te taetae ni Kiribati*, more or less. The teachers comprised the pastors from Samoa and local catechists whom they trained, and then the graduates, both *I-Kiribati* and Tuvaluan, of the pastor and teacher training school at Rongorongo. Having vanquished much of the traditional system, the LMS's schools were as much part of its theocratic-colonial regime as the spiritual and political structures and processes the pastors had put in place as outlined in S4.7 and S4.8.

The LMS schools' ascendancy was virtually unchallenged until the RC Church gained a permanent foothold on the atoll in the 1920s. From then on, a dual system prevailed on Nikunau. Sabatier (1939/1977) explains that the two Churches were obliged to provide a primary school in every *kawa* "for fear of losing the young people" (p. 212) to the opposing camp. In the four *kawa* where both the LMS and RC denominations had converts, the LMS and RC schools, along with their churches and other buildings, were situated at opposite ends of each one; this was in keeping with the pattern in most *kawa* on most of the other islands, with "the big *mwaneaba* for dancing in the centre" (Sabatier, p. 320). The pattern followed tacit agreement between the two Churches but can be interpreted as characterising a continuing sectarian divide down to even this level (see S4.8). Teaching continued in the hands of church-trained teachers, except now some were RCs, including *I-Kiribati* trained at Manoku on Abemama (Sabatier, 1939/1977; Garrett, 1992).

The actions of the missionaries were reinforced by the Colony Government, many of whose policy philosophies still seem to persist under the Republic Government (Burnett, 2002, 2009). In 1920, it established an Education Department—this was based on Tarawa rather than the then Colony headquarters of Banaba—and stipulated that young *I-Nikunau* (aged 7–16 years) must attend primary school. However, as the Colony Government lacked a policy of, and funds for, development interventions (see S4.3), the actual schools and most of the funding were provided until the 1960s by the two church organisations, with parents being obliged to pay school fees to the churches. The training of primary school teachers on Beru (LMS) and Abemama (RC) from the early part of the 20th Century meant that these teachers have been mostly *I-Nikunau* or other *I-Kiribati* since, with *te taetae ni Kiribati* being the language of most teaching, although not all imported learning materials were translated from their original English form and English was taught as a subject.

The Colony Government took over primary education in the Colony in the 1960s, and so brought the religious division of schools on Nikunau to an end, since when it and then the Republic Government has operated the atoll's three primary schools, along with virtually all others in the country. The provision for the training of primary teachers also changed then, when the Colony Government established the secular Tarawa (now Kiribati) Teachers' College. Although many of the graduates of this college passed through KGVES, where English was officially the language of tuition for many years—almost all students, even those from Tuvalu, spoke *te taetae ni Kiribati* (confidential personal communications from a former teacher and former student, 1998)—the language they brought to the primary school

classroom has continued to be *te taetae ni Kiribati*.⁸⁸ Although scholarships for teacher education overseas has supplemented this training, only a minority of these have gone to primary level teachers, compared with those at secondary level. Some supplementing of *I-Kiribati* teachers has occurred at primary level on Tarawa and even on Nikunau, through an intermittent supply of *non-I-Kiribati* missionaries, contract teachers and volunteers, notably from the Peace Corps between 1973 and 2008 (e.g., see Myers, 2001).

The first post-primary (or quasi-secondary) education institution at which *I-Nikunau* could enrol was arguably the pastor training school established in 1900 at the LMS headquarters at Rongorongo on Beru mentioned above. The students attended as boarders, taking them away from Nikunau for months or years at a time, and even longer—pastors were usually posted to islands other than their own—perhaps even permanently (see S4.1). Same applied to the similar institution established on Abemama by the RC Church.

The first move by the Colony Government into providing schools was in 1922, when it established a post-primary boarding school next to the Education Department on Tarawa, which it named KGVS after the then king. Although seeming to break with the policy of not being involved in local social development, such development motives were not paramount in the idea for KGVS: instead, it was intended only to educate a limited number of *I-Kiribati* and Tuvaluan young men—the annual intake for the first several years was about 20—to perform clerical work for the Colony Government and British Phosphate Commission and to act as native government officials—a significant ingredient of this education was English, because graduates needed English to perform the clerical work for which their studies were intended to prepare them. However, these intentions were soon displaced by a more magnanimous approach, albeit after some rancour between two groups. The one group had initiated the move, it was somewhat conservative, comprising officials in London and the older Colony Government officials (e.g., Grimble, who was by then the Resident Commissioner) on Banaba. The other group, more liberal in its thinking, comprised the *I-Matang* teachers who had arrived from Britain and its dominions to establish KGVS, staff of the Education Department on Tarawa and some younger colonial officials (e.g., Maude) (Burnett, 2005; Macdonald, 1982a; Maude, 1977).

The conservative group expected that most *I-Nikunau* would spend their lives on Nikunau and pursue a *kawa* life (to fish, cut toddy and copra, be parents, contribute domestically, be Christians, etc.), perhaps going to Banaba, Nauru, etc. as labourers for short periods (see Burnett, 2007; Lundsgaarde, 1974; Macdonald, 1982a). They were concerned that, if too

many *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* were educated to too high a level, including in English, it could raise their expectations unrealistically, and cause social disgruntlement and political discontent. Indeed, restricting numbers and the curriculum was consistent with Resident Commissioner Grimble's Museum Policy, which, according to Maude (1977), was based on the belief that the Kiribati and Tuvalu Islands were incapable of development, and so best kept "a close preserve inviolate from European rapacity" (p. v). In a parallel development, Grimble compiled the aforementioned Regulations for the Good (1933), whose extended array of restrictions on various matters (e.g., *tibutibu*, canoe use and fishing, curfew, holding *botaki* and dance events, and entering the government station) provide "a classic statement of the paternalistic nature of the administrative structure that had emerged" (Macdonald, 1982a, p. 127) and, presumably, of the restricted curriculum envisaged in the formal education system, if and when it was secularised. The missions supported this group, believing advancing their education might reduce *I-Nikunau's* willingness to accept church discipline and, in any case, wanting to retain their roles as providers of primary education.

In contrast, the liberal group, especially the teachers, had other ideas, and it was these that prevailed, particularly once Grimble was out of the picture by the mid-1930s. They wanted to extend the curriculum and increase participation at secondary level, and revise the philosophic rationale of the system. Indeed, they sought a review of the Colony's capacity for development and of the Colony Government's roles in development (Macdonald, 1982a). Among them and their successors, they extended the KGVS curriculum to broader academic subjects than were required merely to clerk. Nevertheless, this curriculum included English as the officially prescribed medium of teaching, learning and everything else (Burnett, 2005, 2009; Macdonald, 1982a),⁸⁹ and it is only quite recently that English's officially prescribed exclusivity at KGVEBS has changed.

The teachers and their allies also steadily increased student intakes at KGVS, an expansion their immediate post-war successors continued; this expansion was despite shortages of funds, personnel and physical resources, both during the Great Depression and after the school was re-established beside the Colony being restored—indeed, delays occurred to a Colonial Development and Welfare Fund development project to upgrade the school in the early 1950s. Their post-war successors were also instrumental in establishing EBS, which eventually opened in 1959, also financed from the fund and after one or two deferments because of the post-war shortages, and notwithstanding conservative attitudes to the education of young women, including among *I-Kiribati*. Furthermore, although under its

project approval remit EBS was only supposed to educate young women in a manner seen as suited to their gender (Burnett, 2002), that restricted curriculum was also short-lived, and barely a decade later the merger occurred to bring about the co-educational KGVEBS, with a curriculum that distinguished a lot less according to gender roles than befitted local traditions, although conservative norms about gender roles then current in Britain did prevail (e.g., in areas of sports and technical subjects, and boys tending towards sciences and girls towards arts).

Places at KGVS, EBS and then KGVEBS soon became much sought after, and while the number of places were expanded, this expansion could not keep pace with demand for places. This led to the creation of an annual common entrance examination for all primary school pupils in order to select intakes. It also led the KPC/KUC and RC Church, and, later, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Seventh Day Adventist Church to establish co-educational schools in the secondary field; the KPC/KUC and RC Church's increased involvement in secondary education also coincided with their withdrawal from the primary sector. Most of this provision was on Tarawa although there were schools on Beru, Nonouti, Abemama and Abaiang. The churches' involvement was in part a response to insufficient secondary level places being available for their children, and a way for each faith to attract and retain young people, as had been the case in the primary sector area. The entrance examinations for KGVEBS also came to be used by these schools; they took the second cut, with the rest exiting the system after completing primary school (see Burnett, 2004). Gradually, however, the lesser status of some of these church secondary schools vis-à-vis KGVEBS has been changing, especially those that have gradually become more secular, so much so that one or two now compete with KGVEBS for the students topping these examinations. What is more, increasing proportions of their graduates have gained scholarships to enable them to go onto tertiary study.

Since their inceptions, KGVS, EBS and then KGVEBS have played significant parts in shaping Kiribati and *I-Kiribati*, including many *I-Nikunau*. Two matters stand out. First, KGVEBS in particular advanced the emancipation of women, especially on Tarawa, although on Nikunau attitudes to gender are still traditional and rather conservative (confidential personal communication, 2017, from an election candidate); this is despite longstanding community groups advancing the cause of women (e.g., *Reitan Aine Kamatu* or RAK, about which see Rose, 2014, and TaNiMwaRuTaMu – see Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, 2007).

Second, as already analysed in S4.1, the schools' location on Tarawa meant that *I-Nikunau* who succeeded in the entrance examinations, and the equivalents from the other islands, left their islands to study there. Although many returned home to Nikunau, etc. for each December-January break, shipping schedules permitting, they in effect lived on Tarawa while completing their multi-year programme, and so swelled its population. Furthermore, after graduating, the work and life they were most suited to was on Tarawa, and so their immigration there was likely to be longer term, if not permanent. A further twist arose during the 1960s, by when it was becoming clear that pass rates in the annual entrance examinations were increasingly skewed in favour of children schooled on Tarawa.⁹⁰ To take advantage of this occurrence, parents on Nikunau and elsewhere sent their children of primary school age, and eventually even pre-primary school age, to live with *utu* on Tarawa in order to be schooled there (Burnett, 2002; confidential personal communication from a former student who went through this process, 1987), thus swelling immigration even more.

Secondary education continued under the Republic Government as above during the 1980s. Except, it did attempt to provide most Outer Islands with community high schools, but this notion was rejected by so many parents that these failed to materialise; the parents objection was that their curriculum was oriented to practical subsistence, local vocations and young people remaining on their Outer Island (see Hindson, 1985). However, notwithstanding the expansion of KGVEBS, including through new school premises, and the activities of Churches, the demand for places continued to increase; besides, secondary education was still selective and not universal. This led to it establishing two other secondary schools in the 1990s and then, around 2000, establishing the junior secondary school system, with a school on most islands, including the one described in S3.1 on Nikunau. The two other secondary schools comprised one on Tabiteuea, which was intended to serve the southern Kiribati cluster of islands, including Nikunau, and the other on Tabuaeran, which was to cater for the increased new-settler population (including *I-Nikunau*) in the Line Islands. However, similar to the church schools named above on the Outer Islands, both are much smaller and less resourced than KGVEBS. The continuing smallness of the school on Tabiteuea derives from its unpopularity among *non-I-Tabiteuea*, including *I-Nikunau*. Although it is closer to Nikunau geographically than Tarawa is, this is not so in terms of convenient travel. What is more, most potential *I-Nikunau* students do not have *utu* on Tabiteuea, whereas they do on Tarawa. Both schools have often been unpopular also with teaching staff, who are used to life on Tarawa, rather than on Outer Islands.

Establishing the junior secondary school system was a major step in a Republic Government policy to make entry to secondary education from primary education universal and compulsory, rather than selective, based on examinations; it means that all children on Nikunau or wherever can now stay at school until at least Year 10, and need not leave their atoll to do so. Concomitant with their creation, the existing secondary schools were re-designated as senior secondary schools (Years 11 to 13), entailing an increase in the number of places available in these year groups. Even so, study at this level is far from universal, and an entrance examination is used for selection, presumably with a continuing bias towards graduates from junior secondary schools on Tarawa. Indeed, it might be hypothesised that the establishment of the junior secondary school at Rungata has made it even more difficult for *I-Nikunau* living on Nikunau to reach the ascendant schools on Tarawa because students who have studied on Nikunau for three years beyond primary are competing for places with students who have done likewise on Tarawa, including any sent there to live with relatives in order to go to primary or junior secondary school. In any case, those successful in the examination mostly attend senior secondary schools on Tarawa, even though the various government and church schools mentioned above as being on Outer Islands continue to operate. Reasons are given above for even the two of these that are closer to Nikunau than Tarawa geographically being unpopular; besides, the KPC/KUC school on Beru seems to be struggling to survive (Office of Te Beretitenti and T'Makei Services, 2012a).

The important role *I-Matang* teachers had in secondary education policy is related above. Such teachers continued at KGVEBS and other secondary schools well into the 1990s, although gradually *I-Kiribati* joined the staff of these schools, so much so that virtually all their permanent teaching staff are now *I-Kiribati*. Moreover, until very recently, most of these staff, especially the senior teachers, were themselves KGVEBS students in the period when most teachers were *I-Matang*, and so were inculcated in the ways of these times, albeit that they went on from KGVEBS to obtain degrees and teacher qualifications overseas. Even so, these teachers have localised methods somewhat, if not the syllabus contents, including that, as mentioned above, the language of teaching has increasingly become *te taetae ni Kiribati*, both for practical reasons, as teaching positions were localised, and as a matter of cultural policy, in keeping with markedly changed international attitudes to indigenous languages (e.g., Welsh, *Te Reo Māori*). Nevertheless, English is still important at school because most of the textbooks in use are in English, not to mention that the contexts they portray are Anglosphere ones. The delivery of the syllabus and the practising of English is helped by the

supply of missionaries, contract teachers and volunteers in the secondary sector being more extensive and dependable than in the primary sector. What is more, the futures of many students include English-language study at universities overseas and working for the Republic Government, etc. in written English, at least, and probably spoken English too (e.g., in dealing with aid organisations, international church groups). Besides, English is also the language of students aspiring to work overseas or to emigrate.

Opportunities for tertiary education study by *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati*, including local facilities within Kiribati, have been achieved mainly through a mix of Colony or Republic Government and aid organisation activities. Similar to even junior secondary provision until very recently, participation in tertiary study has invariably involved *I-Nikunau* being away from Nikunau, with consequences of many *I-Nikunau* staying away permanently, except to visit. Indeed, provision within Kiribati got underway only in the Colony Government's last decade or so, with the vocational institutions mentioned above for seafarers, fishers, teachers, nurses, clerks and tradespersons, and the University of the South Pacific Kiribati Campus opening as a one-room office on the KGVES campus in 1976 before moving to premises of its own premises in 1978. As with KGVES, etc., the administrators and teachers at these institutions were originally English or other *I-Matang*, and the language of tuition, etc. was English.

Before this local provision was established, *I-Nikunau*, along with other *I-Kiribati*, were going overseas to obtain tertiary education. This was initiated in the 1920s when a few *I-Kiribati* attended the Suva Medical School (now part of the Fiji National University) to train as medical dressers (see Fiji National University: College of Medicine, 2016; "Fiji Medicine Men," 1944; GEIC, 1957). This gradually expanded in numbers, subjects studied and places visited—most subjects are now studied across the sciences, arts, humanities and professions, and at bachelor, master and doctoral levels and in Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, Cuba, et cetera—and the local provision was added as demand and supply warranted. Even so, for a long time, numbers participating locally and overseas tended to reflect estimates by planners in the Colony Government (see GEIC, 1970), and then the Republic Government (see Government of Kiribati, 1983), of how many persons with particular specialist knowledge and skills were needed.

The norm of still going overseas for undergraduate and postgraduate studies is notwithstanding recent expansion at the University of the South Pacific Kiribati Campus. Although sometimes other foreign languages may be involved (e.g., medical training received

in Cuba is conducted in Spanish), English is the main language of study in the countries to which students are sent. The curricula derive from ideas, concepts, contexts, etc. relevant to the home countries of the institutions, as well as the English-language research literature and English-language textbooks. The lecturers, teachers, etc. may be from various countries, but not only will few, if any, will be from Kiribati, most are unlikely to know much about Kiribati, except as a likely casualty of sea-level rise, and many may not have even heard of it. These issues are also reflected in the distance-learning materials, etc. that comprise the increasing but still limited range of undergraduate courses available at the University of the South Pacific Kiribati Campus; a saving grace is that many are tutored by *I-Kiribati* in a mix of *te taetae ni Kiribati* and English. Demand for these courses has steadily increased because growth in numbers of Year 13 students has outstripped growth in scholarships, and so the proportion of who can obtain scholarships to study overseas is falling. Demand from Tarawa's large youth population has also been outstripping supply in the vocational institutions for some time, in part because their courses are seen as a means of facilitating obtaining work overseas, perhaps in an effort to emigrate. In these institutions, much localisation in staff and language has occurred, but perhaps not quite as much as in secondary education, particularly in the matter of advisors to the principals, rather than the teaching staff. Having said that, the position of director of the University of the South Pacific Kiribati Campus has been held by *I-Kiribati* for three decades now. A reason for the presence of foreign advisors is that aid organisations and the Republic Government have tried to raise the standard of qualifications to those in metropolitan countries, including by students taking assessments in common with students studying in those countries, with the intention that emigrants will find their qualifications are accepted by employers in the countries where they settle.

In the rest of this section, I deal with various issues arising from the developments of the formal system analysed above, and with assorted consequences. *I-Nikunau* have shown great enthusiasm for learning and knowledge about the outside world and their own world as interpreted by outsiders, as well as for the forms this knowledge can take, be it in traditional oral stories related by teachers from elsewhere or in written and cinematic forms, as introduced by churches, colonial and aid sources and commercial sources, and for the skills needed to access that knowledge, including reading, writing, watching, listening, interpreting, criticising and evaluating. As claimed in S4.8, this outside knowledge was an alternative to what *unimane* and *unaine* have had to offer; it enabled some *I-Nikunau* to be less dependent

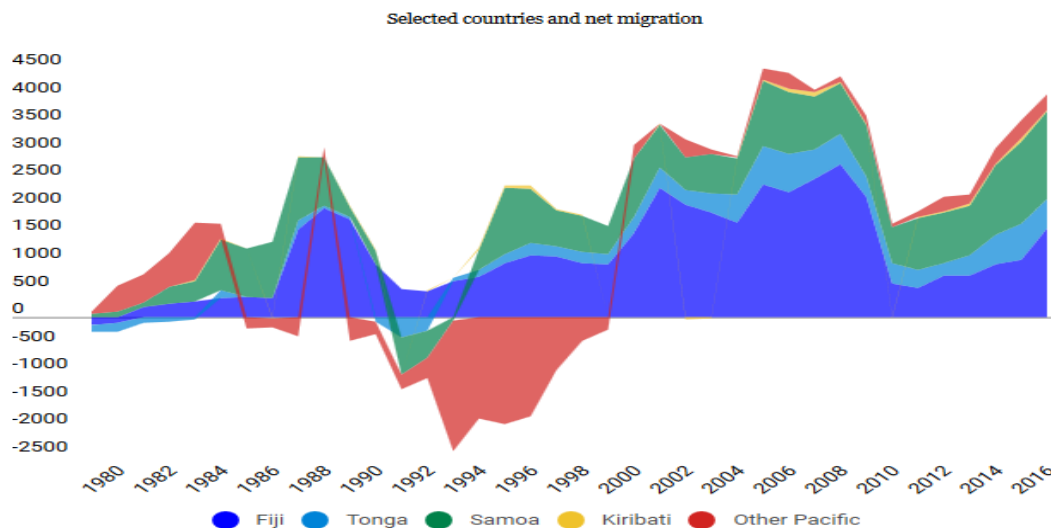
and predisposed to these elders and their authority, including to make inquiries, pose questions and find answers without offending these elders. Thus, curtailment of the traditional system was not something *I-Nikunau* resisted all that much, retaining parts that suited them, including the dance practices. Indeed, the latter are a subject in which demarcations between the traditional and the formal have long persisted, with traditional dance being learnt from one's elders not from schoolteachers (cf. Autio, 2010; Macdonald, 1982a). More generally, in Kiribati and elsewhere, *unimane* and *unaine* still figure in the personal development of young *I-Nikunau*, as remarked on in S4.8.

One issue of interest is how the mix between the traditional and formal differs according to where *I-Nikunau* are located. On Nikunau, the exposure to *non-I-Kiribati* learning of any sort is limited mainly to the school classroom, textbooks and, away from school, films and stories told by returning residents and foreign visitors. Indeed, the exposure to learning of an *I-Kiribati* nature, except as it derives from Nikunau, can also be rare, such as extending only to the teacher being from another island and having trained on Tarawa—this may be such that students on Nikunau know more about the outside, Anglosphere world of textbooks than they do about Tarawa or other islands in the Republic. On Tarawa, the potential exposure to *non-I-Kiribati* learning is undoubtedly greater than on Nikunau, including through access to the Internet and mixing with more returning residents and foreign visitors, but is still often dominated by what they meet at school; missing from this learning is very much about life on Outer Islands and knowledge and skills for surviving on atolls traditionally, other than through the stories of grandparents perhaps.

In metropolitan countries, the formal education received by *I-Kiribati* children reflects life in general around them more so than is the case in Kiribati; one reason for this is that the curricula and textbooks used, like those in Kiribati, reflect the Anglosphere world. At school, reflecting life in general away from the home or community, Kiribati barely rates a mention, either in the main curriculum or in extra-curricular activities, unless it is to do with global warming, and climate change (Bedford & Bedford, 2010; Fedor, 2012; Gillard & Dyson, 2012; Taberannang, 2011; Thompson, 2016). This applies in New Zealand, notwithstanding various idiosyncrasies, both among the dominant *Pākehā* and as a result of bi- or multi-culturalism. Notwithstanding exceptions arising through extra-curricular activities for so-called Pasifika (or Pacifica) students (e.g., Pasifika speech competitions – see Riccarton High School, 2017), *I-Kiribati* children's exposure in New Zealand to tacit and explicit knowledge

about Kiribati and *I-Kiribati* mainly occurs at home and during regular diasporic community activities, rather than at school.

In the aforementioned extra-curricular activities in New Zealand schools, Kiribati is somewhat incidental to Samoa, Tonga, etc. This state of affairs is understandable both from the points of view of the so-called Pasifika Community itself and of the New Zealand authorities⁹¹ and their schools. The population of *I-Kiribati* in New Zealand may be significant by Kiribati standards but they are only a small proportion of the population with affiliations to any of the Pacific Islands, as illustrated in Figure 12 (see Bedford, 2008; Bedford & Bedford, 2013; Wright & Hornblow, 2008). Moreover, *I-Kiribati* comprise barely 0.05% of New Zealand’s population, and so are a tiny minority, so much so that there is no separate box for them to tick on official forms, whether related to education or other governmental administration processes—*I-Kiribati* are expected to tick the *Other Pacific* box. In any case, in normal parlance at school, and elsewhere, *I-Kiribati* children, and adults, are often referred to as Pasifika or Pacific Islanders, rather than *I-Kiribati*. However, among the persons comprising the categories Pasifika or Pacific Islanders, *I-Kiribati* are gradually being acknowledged more as distinct, although even among these persons, the question, “Where’s that?” is still not unusual.



Source: Statistics NZ

Figure 12. Pacific migration 1979-2016 (Source: Edens, 2017)

Continuing on the theme of a mix of traditional and formal, while the two complement each other in some respects (see Garrett, 1992), they can also conflict. On Tarawa, let alone Nikunau, participation in formal education has meant outside knowledge of questionable

relevance displacing arguably still valid knowledge for *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati*. Two significant areas of *I-Nikunau*'s cultural circumstances are particularly concerning, namely, their knowledge of their material culture and sustaining life in general on Nikunau and similar places, and their legends, history and ancestry (cf. Republic of Kiribati, 2009).

In New Zealand, particularly in non-mixed *I-Kiribati* households, my observations suggest that *unimane* and *unaine* are concerned for the spiritual well-being and general discipline of the young in the face of the secular education rendered in the schools that most *I-Kiribati* children attend. This is consistent with some distance existing between learning at school and learning at home. The school curriculum encourages students to speak out, challenge, criticise and so on. As Roman points out, these qualities are not always appreciated by parents or grandparents, leading to confusion, even conflict, when children behave at home according to this curriculum. Further confusion arises at school when children behave as they are taught at home: their teachers are apt to criticise them for not participating in discussions and not expressing opinions—see point in S3.1 about *kamama* arising whether a person answers a question correctly or incorrectly, so discouraging curiosity and encouraging introversion (McCreary & Boardman, 1968).

A related dilemma for parents in New Zealand, according to Roman (2013) and Thompson (2016), is whether to encourage or discourage their children mixing socially with *non-I-Kiribati* children; some parents fear not only loss of language and culture but also exposure to undesirable activities, including roaming the streets at night and substance abuse. However, no matter what their parents' views are, children do mix at school, as encouraged by the school curriculum, be it in sports or whatever.

Another matter pointed out by Roman (2013) relates to relations between students, teachers and parents in New Zealand. He indicates *I-Kiribati* parents, fathers especially, are not used to the amount of parental involvement there is in raising children in New Zealand compared with Tarawa. This involvement ranges from participating in parent-teacher sessions at school to spending time with children at home or at sports or on outings. For example, parents find it peculiar to take children on tours of the countryside to look at flora, fauna, landscape and other geological features, or to visit tourist and leisure attractions with an educational slant, such as museums, art galleries and theatres.

Among parents and young adult learners, the aforementioned enthusiasm for learning knowledge about the outside world has been evident in their preferences for their children,

and even themselves, to study subjects and gain qualifications that might give them opportunities to leave Nikunau and the *kawa* subsistence life there—see mention above of the failure of community high schools—(Burnett, 1999, 2007; Dixon, 2004b; Geddes et al., 1982; McCreary & Boardman, 1968), or nowadays, to leave Tarawa, because of its adverse living conditions and insecure future (see S3.2). *I-Nikunau* have come to see qualifications as enablers of emigration on their terms, rather than under the categories *environment refugee* or *climate refugee* (cf. Smith & McNamara, 2015; Williams, 2008). This is notwithstanding the frequent experiences of recent immigrants that qualifications obtained in Kiribati (e.g., in teaching, nursing and various trades) not being recognised in New Zealand (see S3.3.2) or other metropolitan countries in which they sought to settle. Most of those affected have not always appreciated the problem until after arriving there, and they have usually had to accept low-paid, unskilled jobs, at least temporarily—the evaluation “low-paid” is by comparison with pay rates in the metropolitan country, not with the pay rates a skilled or qualified person might expect on Tarawa, which are generally even lower (Bedford & Bedford, 2013).

Thompson (2016) finds that, in order to obtain better jobs, many caught in this situation have either upgraded their qualifications to ones that are recognised or are intent on doing so. Or, they were studying for new tertiary education qualifications anyway; this was more often among adult women than their male partners (cf. McCreary & Boardman, 1968), as borne out in findings published by Statistics New Zealand (2014) about the gender of those studying.

The question of the language of tuition, textbooks, ideas, assessment, etc. is alluded to several times above, with *te taetae ni Kiribati* and English the prime choices. Burnett raises this matter in his work on school education (see esp. 2005, 2009), arguing that English as (one of) the languages of instruction is something of a double-edged sword. For the vast majority of *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati*, whether on Nikunau and other Outer Islands or on Tarawa, English, since it was introduced in schools, has only ever been a school language. As mentioned in S2, English has always presented difficulties for *I-Nikunau* taught on Nikunau, compared with anyone taught on Banaba and, later, Tarawa, and anywhere else where pupils have been exposed more to English than on Nikunau, while at primary school and, since 2001, at junior secondary school.

English as an issue also affects *I-Kiribati* beyond Kiribati, resonating with findings of studies of non-mixed *I-Kiribati* households in diasporic communities. Gillard and Dyson (2012) in particular raise the predicament of *I-Kiribati* in New Zealand in the matter of language, and whether parents should try to make English a household language, either beside *te taetae ni*

Kiribati or otherwise. With the prospect of children starting pre-school or primary school, parents can face a dilemma of how much exposure their young children should have to English beforehand; this is assuming that such exposure is possible in the home, which it may not be. The perception that lack of English will disadvantage their children when they start is often borne out by events, particularly when the number of *I-Kiribati* attending a school is tiny; indeed, they might be exposed to teasing or worse from children of other races (Thompson, 2016).

Even in diasporic communities, English competence raises issues. My experience at the frequent *botaki* in New Zealand is of some divisions between children, and adults, for that matter, of various ages who are either more comfortable in speaking either *te taetae ni Kiribati* or English, or less comfortable in either of these. Indeed, Statistics New Zealand (2014) reports that 230 (16%) of *I-Kiribati* born in Kiribati but living in New Zealand cannot speak English, compared with 420 (68%) of *I-Kiribati* born in New Zealand who cannot speak *te taetae ni Kiribati*. Among factors behind these differences are whether children were born in New Zealand, or how old they were when they arrived in New Zealand, and how long they and other members of their household have been in New Zealand. The language they are expected to use at home and the length of time they have attended school in New Zealand are other factors.

4.10 Social Circumstances

As *I-Nikunau*'s social circumstances are interrelated with their other circumstances, and so many have been dealt with already in passing in S4.1 to S4.9, I focus here only on selected social matters, adjudging them important and subsumptive of other relevant matters. I survey how these matters have been changing, and sometimes waxed and waned in significance. I also consider how they have come to differ according to where *I-Nikunau* are located, as exemplified by metropolitan New Zealand compared with urban island Tarawa, and compared with traditional Nikunau.

Among *I-Nikunau* socially, as well as in matters both economic (see S4.3) and political (see S4.7), *mwenga* comprise the basic kin units, although in observing the situations of Nikunau, Tarawa and New Zealand, for reasons of geographical separation and economic independence, among others, this may be clearer in New Zealand than on Tarawa, and then again clearer than on Nikunau. However, that is not to say that the situation of most *I-Kiribati* households in the several diasporic communities in New Zealand resemble even tentatively the norms of the Anglosphere society around them. Indeed, except for *Māori iwi* and diaspora

of other Pacific Island states (e.g., Samoa, Tonga), the sense of *mwenga* interdependence, helping each other out, cooperating, coming together and belonging as part of daily life (cf. Thompson, 2016) is much stronger and somewhat different in nature compared with most of the other ethnocultural groups among which these *I-Kiribati* diasporic communities live, including those originating, for example, in several of Asia's most populous countries.

It is arguable that this characteristic of *mwenga* interdependence, no matter whether on Tarawa or in New Zealand, reflects the social circumstances familiar to *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau, present and past, not only since *kawa* became the ascendant form of settlement but also before, when *kainga* were the ascendant form (see S4.2). For example, on occasions when I stayed in Tabomatang in the 1980s, *mwenga* of each *te utu* were at times so closely knit as to be difficult for the uninitiated outsider to distinguish. What is more, all *mwenga* were part of *te kawa*, and expected to contribute and participate in the frequent political, social and cultural activities going on in it. These communal activities were mostly in or near the church *mwaneaba*; they included *botaki* involving the whole *te kawa* or portions of it (e.g., residents from a particular area of *te kawa*, young men's groups, women's groups, *kawa* welfare groups), daily gatherings of *unimane* to eat, smoke and talk as one group, weekly screenings of films,⁹² *bowi* of *unimane* and passing the time, including with card and board games. Church-related activities were ubiquitous, including observance of *te Tabati*.

Another social feature of *mwenga* on Nikunau was the important place of senior women in their organisation, including in how these women organised the younger women and the children in domestic choring and such like (cf. Rose, 2014); all these women were involved in *kawa* and church activities, such as weaving mats, baskets, and fishing hats, and rolling string and cigarette "paper", and the children attended the *inter-kawa* primary schools regularly (see S4.9). For the men's part, the many that were able-bodied went fishing and worked *aba* belonging both to them and to those whose owners were working away or otherwise absent; infirm and old men stayed in *te kawa*, socialising in *te mwaneaba* or *te mwenga*. These patterns are reflected on Tarawa and in New Zealand, except men's work is often in waged or, even, salaried jobs and women too are often in employment, and *mwenga* rely economically on goods and services bought with cash, rather than on fish and crops caught or grown through subsisting (see S3.2, S3.3.2, S4.3 and S4.6).

The most memorable social activities from time I spent on Nikunau in Tabomatang, Tabutoa and other *kawa* took place in *mwaneaba* and resemble those analysed on Tabiteuea by Kazama (2001) and Autio (2010). Apart from almost daily, informal activities, they also

included several *botaki* to welcome, be hospitable to and farewell visitors, and to celebrate festivals; there was also a birth and a funeral, each held around *mwenga* of those affected, again including *botaki*. Reiterating S4.7, *bowi* of *unimane* were largely responsible for deciding the format and, if discretionary, the timing of these *botaki* and other special events, and on the distribution of work and the contributions from among *mwenga*. I have participated in many more similar activities on Tarawa (see S3.2) and in New Zealand (see S3.3.2). In both these, *botaki* and other community activities are timed and framed taking account of other aspects of life outside the diasporic communities that were not relevant on Nikunau. These aspects include employment and school commitments, and in New Zealand's case, travelling time and the availability of suitable venues (i.e., campgrounds, *marae*, etc. where overnight stays in communal sleeping areas are permitted). A further difference in New Zealand is that decisions about special events, etc. are the responsibility of committees of formal associations. Their membership include women and younger persons of either gender. On Tarawa, things began changing in the 1960s (see McCreary & Boardman, 1968) but they are still somewhere in between, with a person's education and status at work gaining significance in terms of who makes up *te bowi* and is involved in decisions.

Accepted behaviours and similar, as embodied in *te katei ni Kiribati* are a feature present at the events I have just recounted and more generally within *kawa* and diasporic communities. Persons' boundaries and obligations under *te katei* seem generally understood but if these are not clear, or are infringed, then it falls to whoever comprises *te bowi* (i.e., *unimane*, the committee, etc.) to decide or act. Looking much further back than the past 30 years or so of my observations, previous observers report that social controls, etc. of the 1820s were widely impressed by the traditional education system for initiating young people into society as adults, warriors, marriage partners, parents, etc. (see S4.9). *Te katei* evolved with the coming of the Churches and exposure of *I-Nikunau* to life and values associated with *I-Matang*, including at school and working away. Even so, the version on Nikunau was, and has remained, traditional, with communal obligations and expectations of individuals by age and gender being stringent, and boundaries set around potential individual freedoms. Indeed, as exemplified by observance of *te Tabati*, albeit in different ways depending on church affiliation, *te katei* was modified but not made much more or much less stringent by the missions.

This contrasts with Tarawa, where according to my observations and various informants adherence has weakened somewhat in the past three or more decades, and then again

compared with New Zealand. This weakening, or relaxation, seems attributable not only to the onset of modernity (e.g., tenets of formal educational, awareness and experience of values and general conduct in more liberal societies, social media, private possessions) but also because of population turnover and disconnect from the original source of the controls. What I am driving at is the proportion of the adult population on Tarawa who lack any experiential knowledge of life on Nikunau is quickly increasing, as is starting to happen in New Zealand in relation to Tarawa, and so the ways brought from Nikunau are being displaced by the ways formulated on Tarawa, or in New Zealand's case, the ways brought from Tarawa are being displaced by the ways formulated in New Zealand.

Concomitant with these various changes, especially the more recent ones, *I-Nikunau* became more conscious of their individual selves and being part of an immediate family, and of the responsibilities and obligations that accompanied these capacities. Although this individuality tends to be more evident among *I-Nikunau* as one moves away from Nikunau into urban island and then metropolitan country diasporic communities, individuality has never been totally absent among *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau. Indeed, there is every indication that, as among *I-Tabiteuea*, this individuality existed before *I-Matang* entered the scene (see Geddes, 1977) and their desires to be “differentiated” and “undifferentiated” are of long standing or part of tradition (see Autio, 2010). Furthermore, that this individuality, or differentiation, among a tradition of community, or undifferentiation, was based on *te I-Nikunau*'s holdings of *aba* and marine areas and the specialist knowledge and skills they secreted from generation to generation (Geddes, 1977). As indicated in S4.8 and S4.9, these individually held resources were as much social as economic, spiritual or political.

In pointing to its longstanding existence, Geddes (1977) claims that individuality among *I-Tabiteuea* had been obscured by their social, political and religious constructions (i.e., *boti*, *kainga*, *utu* and *mwenga*), which as discussed extensively in previous sections are also at the centre of *I-Nikunau* society. Changes involving traders, missionaries and Colony Government officials wrought the demise of *boti* and *kainga*, and caused major revisions to *utu*. When these events occurred, the heart of social control moved from the traditional *mwaneaba* (and *te kainga*) to the church *mwaneaba*, with the cooperative enterprises and *Te Tautaeka* (i.e., the Colony Government authorities, including its island-based subordinate bodies, the Island Council and courts) in the mix too (cf. Hockings, 1984). As a result, individuality that was previously obscured was made plainer. In particular, following the demise of *kainga* (see S4.2), individuals (e.g., *te I-Tabiteuea*, *te I-Nikunau*) assumed a greater sense of personal and

exclusive user rights to particular *aba* (Goodenough, 1955; Hockings, 1984; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; cf. Polanyi, 1957). Alongside this demise, however, four other developments subsequent to colonial contact brought out a greater consciousness of self, and I would argue that these too fuelled this innate individuality.

First, conversion from beliefs about *I-Nikunau* living on Nikunau and the spirits of their ancestors living on Matang, etc. (see Latouche, 1983) to Christianity entailed *te I-Nikunau* giving something of a personal reckoning to *Iehova* (see S4.8) and his Earthly representatives, rather than only a reckoning to *unimane*, who were expected to depart for Matang soon. Second, engaging in copra production, trade and paid work, as distinct from subsistence work around *kainga* (see S4.3), gave rise to *te I-Nikunau* participating in contracts and markets as an individual (see S4.3). Third, taxes (including the performance of communal workdays), school fees, fines, and licence fees were demanded from *te I-Nikunau* individually by governmental bodies (see S4.3 and S4.7). Fourth, the laws of the Colony Government, although cognisant of close family and households (i.e., *mwenga*), placed responsibility, obligations and restrictions on individual *te I-Nikunau*, and anyone who broke these laws was charged and tried as an individual (see S4.7).

These four still apply, albeit in more modern guises, particularly in diasporic communities. Furthermore, in metropolitan countries, *I-Nikunau* experience and are drawn into an individualism of a secular kind, which is rife in their ascendant Anglosphere cultures and easily rubs off on *te I-Kiribati*, particularly among those at school, where it is a deliberate aspect of their learning. Indeed, this is often a source of tension in *te mwenga*, particularly those spanning three generations, namely persons of school age, working age parents and the latter's parents. Members of the eldest generation can be frustrated to find that, having reached the condition of *unimane* or *unaine*, these lack the status of yesteryear (see S4.9).

Alongside bolstering individuality in among traditional societal constructions on Nikunau of *boti*, *kainga* and *utu*, *aba* comprising the atoll and marine areas adjacent to it were a significant social resource for generations of *I-Nikunau*, at least up to the third quarter of the 20th Century; this applied even to *I-Nikunau* absent from the atoll. *I-Nikunau* were born on their *aba*, and they conversed with each other, subsisted, worshipped, established *mwenga*, had children and were buried on them—indeed, Trussel and Groves (2003) give the translation of *aba* as land and people generally. Thus, this social significance of *aba* paralleled their economic (see S4.3) spiritual (see S4.8) and political (see S4.7) significance; moreover, they were prepared to defend their customary rights to them, physically or

litigiously (see Baaro, 1987; Lawrence, 1992; Lundsgaarde, 1968b, 1974; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Macdonald, 1971, 1982a; Maude & Maude, 1931; Maude, 1963; Pole, 1995; Roniti, 1988; Sabatier, 1939/1977; Thomas, 2001). One way these significances can be appreciated is from the number of terms in *te taetae ni Kiribati* that relate to *aba*. As these terms also bring out other important social relations in *I-Nikunau* society (cf. Grimble, 1989, re Butaritari), I shall enumerate them.

Ownership implied enjoying usufructuary rights to *te aba* and marine areas in life, and mostly to pass these rights on at death to a member of *utu ni kaan* as *te aba n utu*—for an elaboration of how this worked and its consequences in terms of landholdings and *boti-utu* relations, see Hockings (1984). However, there were exceptions and the list was extensive (Maude & Maude, 1981; Pole, 1995; Trussel & Groves, 2003), including the following. *Te aba n tibu* or *toba* was given for *tibutibu*, the adopted child obtaining the rights as if natural. *Te aba te bora* on *n tinaba* was given as part of *tinaba* relationships—these relationships were eventually stamped out by the Christians (see S4.8). *Te aba ni kakua* was given as a mark of gratitude for assistance. *Te aba ni mumuta* or *kuakua* was given as a reward for nursing. *Te aba n tangira* was a gift for other reasons. *Te aba n nenebo* or *nebonebo* formed compensation for murder, other serious wrongdoings, breach of promise of marriage, et cetera—this compensation ended when the Colony Government instituted the practice of crime against, and punishment by, the state.⁹³ *Te aba n toka* stemmed from wars, which led to *aba* belonging to the vanquished being shared out (and captured former owners being enslaved or driven away)—any wars in the Kiribati Archipelago (e.g., on Tarawa) were curtailed in the early years of Colony Government.⁹⁴

An important corollary of these social transfers of rights in *aba* and marine areas was the development of something akin to asset registers, which in turn made for an indigenous accounting of social, economic and cultural significance, the other facet of this accounting being genealogy or ancestry. This second facet stemmed from constructions of kinship groups and social categories running through society, namely, *utu*, *boti*, *mwenga* and *kainga*—that these are a form of accounting, social and otherwise, is supported by the striking similarities between them and those in Winiata's typology of *Māori* resources (see Gallhofer, Gibson, Haslam, McNicholas & Takiari, 2000), not to mention discussions of Gibson (2000) and Greer and Patel (2000) about accounting of Australian Aboriginals. Thus, this accounting integrated the ancestry of *I-Nikunau*, living and dead, with an inventory of *aba* and marine

areas associated with Nikunau; it recorded who presently had rights to each item and the history of how these rights had come about.

This accounting was supported by the keeping of the records, a process that was also significant to social relations. Said records were entirely oral and of longstanding, being passed from one generation to the next, both between affected individuals and between *unimane*. The records pertaining to an individual were passed to them as part of the rights of passage to adulthood (see S4.9) and to being accepted as a member of *te boti* (see Grimble, 1952). A young person developed the ability to recite those applying to him or her. This knowledge and ability was important to establishing one's place in society and in supporting one's claims to rights associated with *boti* and *aba*. Indeed, as indicated in S4.7, if a person was at some time to visit a *mwaneaba* district where they were not known, they could authenticate their *boti* by reciting their ancestry through several generations and have it compared with the local oral records and understandings of their *boti* kept by *unimane* at the place visited. Authentication entitled them to sit with their *te boti* during, for example, formal social, spiritual and political proceedings of *mwaneaba*, and to receive hospitality and accommodation from members of *te boti* in question.

The role of *unimane* in the latter is an example of how oral records and understandings were a source of their knowledge-power and status. *Unimane* were reputed to be able to recite genealogical records of their *boti* or *kainga* and *utu*, and to not only know the name of every *aba* held by members of their *utu* but also to be able to describe them, their boundaries and their history of ownership—for versions of these records recited by *I-Nikunau unimane* and recorded in writing, see Latouche (1983) and Uering (1979).⁹⁵ An extension of the knowledge-power and status conferred on *unimane* through the records was the authority they gave *bowi* of *unimane* in *mwaneaba* to adjudicate over disputes about *aba*, usually after hearing the litigants state their cases but occasionally through formal combat between the litigants under the control of *bowi* (Lundsgaarde, 1968a).

The Colony Government challenged to this knowledge-power and status of *unimane*, at least as far as *aba* were concerned. It instituted *kabowi n aba* (\cong lands courts) on each island to replace the judicial proceedings in *mwaneaba*, and *Te Kabowi n Aba* of today on Nikunau, and its equivalent on Tarawa, are the result. It made various attempts (see Townsend, 1951) to replace the oral with the written (e.g., *Register of Landowners and Lands 1908*), but the series of written registers that resulted proved less-than-successful (Pole, 1995), and so hardly diminished the importance of *unimane's* records of *aba* among *I-Nikunau* and as part of

proceedings in *Te Kabowi n Aba*. Indeed, for a while at least, these proceedings might not have seemed substantially different from those in *mwaneaba*. However, *Te Kabowi n Aba* involved fewer jurists, whose source of authority and appointment process were colonial not ancestral, and it covered the whole of Nikunau, not just one or other of the districts.

The Colony Government's less-than-successful attempts to replace the oral with the written have been followed since by equally frustrated attempts under the auspices of the Republic Government. Mostly, these have been at the behest of aid organisations, which see written registers as vital to transactions in land, and see buying and selling land as an important part of their recipe for economic development and efficient use of resources, including that such transactions are a necessary aspect of much potential foreign investment (cf. Connell, 1987). Said organisations are equally impatient about restrictions in *te katei* impeding these objectives (see Duncan, 2014; Government of Kiribati, 1983; Ministry of Works and Public Utilities, 2011).

The root of the restrictions in *te katei* is that the value of land to *I-Nikunau* is of a socio-cultural nature, rather than merely economic. What is more, trading in *aba* is likely to bring *kamama* on sellers: sellers would be putting themselves ahead of their descendants in order to make easy money, instead of making a living in ways by which usufructuary rights to *aba* would be passed on. As for the attempts to establish written land registers, these threatened the high regard in which the oral records and *unimane* have been held among *I-Nikunau*. In any case, their *I-Matang* compilers sought to base them on premises akin to British commercial views of land and of systems of land ownership. In these, land is primarily a commodity, whose source of, and reason for, ownership is predominantly economic, and on which a financial value can be put, using quantitative measures. Such premises were, and within most of Kiribati still are, far removed from *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* meanings and practices of *aba* ownership, uses and conveyancing. These acknowledge the social and kinship-ancestral significances of *aba*, as reflected in the traditional oral records and understandings, and in the continuing standing of these records even in the judicial system. If one wanted to assess the value of land to *I-Nikunau*, one needs to think in socio-cultural terms, using qualitative means (Baaro, 1987; Lawrence, 1992; Lundsgaarde, 1968a, 1974; Macdonald, 1982a; Pole, 1995).

The aforementioned impatience of aid organisations over the land situation in Kiribati is notwithstanding the customary restrictions on disposing and acquiring *aba* through trade being supplemented in the Constitution of Kiribati 1979 by restrictions on *non-I-Kiribati*

being able to purchase land in the Republic. These provisions have countered lesser laws and official policies proclaimed under the auspices of successive Republic Government administrations permitting and encouraging land sales in keeping with neo-liberal ideas, advice, etc. Thus, notwithstanding the formal legal possibilities, *aba* are still difficult to trade as if they were a commodity, although more so on Nikunau and the other long-settled Kiribati islands than on the recently settled Line Islands.

It is on Tarawa, however, where the aid organisations feel the restrictions particularly keenly, as far as the foreign investors, for whom they seem to be rooting, are concerned. There, although the social significance of *aba* may be diluted, it still applies, and so affects members of its diasporic community of *I-Nikunau*, along with diasporic communities associated with other Outer Islands. Indeed, most settlers reside on *aba* over which *I-Tarawa* still have rights or claim to have rights (see S4.4). However, because of its history as the Colony Government headquarters and now main political and commercial centre of the Republic, these rights and claims have gone through great upheaval and so are much more complicated and confusing than on the other islands (except perhaps Banaba). To some extent, *I-Tarawa* most affected have been appeased in practice by receiving lease payments at regular intervals, largely from the Republic Government (cf. Corcoran, 2016).

As genealogy and *aba* continue in importance among *I-Nikunau*, so does the use of oral records and understandings, albeit that their form, context, application and meaning are much adapted, particularly in diasporic communities. Already mentioned in this section is their use on Nikunau in *Te Kabowi n Aba* as evidence for settling disputes about *aba* and rights to them, and they are used too on Tarawa, as part of the disputes procedures just alluded to there, as well as on the other Kiribati islands. For *I-Nikunau* residing outside the Kiribati Archipelago with no practical intention of returning, the significance of their *aba* there, along with the matters with which acquiring *aba* was associated, are diminishing or have already been lost, and so too is their need of *aba* records. This is notwithstanding many *I-Nikunau* in diasporic communities, particularly in metropolitan places, still referring to having *aba* on Nikunau, but in socially and culturally symbolic ways, including identifying with Nikunau and being *I-Nikunau*, rather than as an economic resource on which they or their descendants might make a living in future (cf. Shuval, 2000). Concomitantly, in their prolonged absence, many of these *aba* are utilised by *utu*, and perhaps maintained and regenerated by them as per the concept of usufruct; as time passes, and one generation replaces another, their de facto

possession fuse with de jure user rights, and so ownership, as it is understood on Nikunau, including by incorporation in oral records and understandings of same.

The records and understandings of genealogy also continue to be used to check for consanguinity, particularly to avoid *karikira* in the choosing and approving marriage partners, which as alluded to in S4.5 has been a concern of longstanding (Grimble, 1989; Maude, 1963). More than that, given the spread of the *I-Nikunau* diaspora, knowledge of one's ancestry can be significant in making introductions among not only *I-Nikunau* but also *I-Kiribati* generally, and in joining a diasporic community. Thus, when meeting for the first time someone unfamiliar but who speaks *te taetae ni Kiribati* or is otherwise identified as *I-Kiribati*, one of the first things *I-Nikunau* do is to test whether they are related or ascertain which friends or acquaintances they have in common. More formally, if strangers are present at a *botaki* in New Zealand, the proceedings are usually opened by everyone forming a circle and each person in turn introducing themselves according to their ancestry and the island(s) whence these ancestors originated. These particulars are conditions for participating in community events and part of expecting and receiving accommodation and hospitality from seemingly distant relatives during a visit or extended stay (cf. Hockings, 1984). Nevertheless, given how liberally the status of *baronga* is recognised in diasporic communities away from Kiribati and especially in metropolitan communities (see S4.3), lack of kinship is unlikely to be used as a reason to turn away a visitor: being able to speak *te taetae ni Kiribati* or being vouched for by a mutual acquaintance is invariably enough to be accepted and accommodated.

The similarities between oral records of *I-Kiribati*, and the kinship practices they underlie, and those of *Māori* (see above) and some other settler peoples in New Zealand has helped in forming relations and developing mutual understandings between the diasporic communities there and the peoples they live among, for example in hiring *marae* for special events. Said similarities also mean the authorities in New Zealand have some familiarity with said practices, even if sometimes some are apt not to respect them, and compared with official policies, much of which still reflects New Zealand's dominion legacy and the approaches once utilised in Kiribati by the Colony Government.

Gender, age and categories of same (e.g., male-female, young-old) are other aspects of social circumstances that can be used to surface contrasts between past and present, and according to whether *I-Nikunau* are living in traditional island, urban island or metropolitan country settings. Gender roles and behavioural expectations in general are less marked today than at

any time previously, including in the knowledge and skills learnt and practised (see S4.9), and in the general conduct expected, permitted and tolerated because someone is male or female (see S4.3, S4.7 and above) (cf. Grimble, 1921; Hockings, 1984). Additionally, this is appreciably more so the further one moves away from Nikunau (cf. Autio, 2010), although, even on Nikunau, women are accepted in such former male roles as deacons, pastors and governmental administrators. However, it is probably significant that these examples are non-traditional roles arising from colonial interventions.

In the matter of relations between ages, while older people, particularly those accorded the status of *unimane* and *unaine* still command respect, these relations have altered such that worldly knowledge and formal qualifications count at least as much as age, and gender for that matter, particularly in urban island and metropolitan country settings where these criteria apply in other respects (e.g., positions in workplaces, determinants of income and wealth). Indeed, my longitudinal experience of the status of *unimane* on Nikunau is that from being ascendant in the late 1980s, this ascendancy seems to have deteriorated considerably barely 20 years later. However, I should add the caveat that my later observations were brief and not as well situated as my earlier ones were, when I resided in *kawa* for several weeks at a time. Indeed, extended fieldwork studies in the late 1990s on Tabiteuea by Autio (2010) and Kazama (2001) would suggest *unimane* retain not only respect but also authority. However, Tabiteuea is reputed to be more traditional than neighbouring islands (Autio, 2010), and so may not be a reliable proxy for how things stand on present day Nikunau.

I now turn to social resources of a colonial and post-colonial nature (e.g., hospitals and health systems, schools and education systems, prisons and penal and correction systems). Many such resources have been referred to in most previous sections, from which it is plain that, within Kiribati, they are far more abundant on Tarawa than on Nikunau, and that, notwithstanding some access issues for diaspora (cf. Arlidge et al., 2009), they are more abundant in the metropolitan countries than on Tarawa. Furthermore, beginning in the post-war decades, the extent of these resources within Kiribati has steadily increased but far more so on Tarawa than on Nikunau, largely because of centralisation policies, conscious (see S4.1) and less witting.

Besides, whereas much external capital, from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund and aid organisations, lies behind development on Tarawa, most of the capital for social resources on Nikunau has had to be contributed by *I-Nikunau*, usually involuntarily, an exception being the cooperative ventures referred to in S4.3; the involuntary nature of their

contributions was epitomised most by communal workdays (see S4.7). All well as contributions to state and church, *I-Nikunau* have had expend capital in order to comply personally with ever more stringent living regulations; for example, *I-Nikunau* had to gather materials for and work on maintaining and improving *mwenga* and *te kawa* to bring them up to *I-Matang* specifications (see S4.2).

Compared to their kin on Tarawa, the reality for most *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau has been, and still is, one of exclusion from the social resources now present within Kiribati but located on Tarawa. When in need of more than, say, basic primary education, or, nowadays, basic junior secondary education, or rudimentary outpatient or short stay medical care, most *I-Nikunau* residing on Nikunau have gone without. Except, that is, if they passed the school entrance examinations (see S4.9) or participated in specially arranged excursions (e.g., a visit for a group of *I-Nikunau* group to receive hospital treatment from a team of visiting Australian eye specialists). Otherwise, not many *I-Nikunau* can afford the passage by ship, assuming a convenient ship was to hand, and, even fewer, the airfare.⁹⁶

This dearth of social resources of a colonial and post-colonial nature on Nikunau is notwithstanding British officials in Honiara and London becoming concerned in the mid-1960s about torpor on Nikunau and the other Outer Islands, compared with relative vibrancy on Tarawa and, at that time, Banaba; they were also concerned about the increasing flow of immigrants to Tarawa. They instituted various projects to address these concerns, intent on restoring Nikunau and the other islands as attractive to live on; the projects extended existing infrastructure, facilities and communications, and improved education, health and welfare services. The structures included classrooms, clinics, staff houses, an island courthouse and Island Council buildings, localised water and sewerage systems, a deeper channel in the reef, roads and causeways, and the scheduled airline and telephone connections. Besides, new district facilities intended to benefit Nikunau and its southern neighbours were established on Tabiteuea and the district officer post was reinstated on Beru, after a gap of 30 years.

Associated with these physical and administrative developments were political ones, as alluded to in S4.7: after some teething problems,⁹⁷ these development led to renewed influence of *unimane* in choosing projects and in island governance more generally, through the re-constituted Island Council and courts, as well as trade, that is through *Te Bobotin Nikunau*. Following these measures, there was a slight change in how *I-Nikunau* regarded the Colony Government: that is less as an instrument of authoritarian control from Tarawa and more a means of constructive control and source of conditional external funds (Macdonald,

1972, 1982a). Perhaps somewhat ironically, however, the extent of developments and the effect of political processes waned after the advent of the Republic Government. Its priorities lay in establishing itself (see S4.7), with the consequence that Tarawa was once again the focus, to the detriment of elsewhere. Besides, immigration of *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* was giving rise to issues on Tarawa, to which the Republic Government, assisted by aid organisations, responded with projects, facilities, services, etc., prompting a reciprocal, or circular, effect of more immigration, more issues and more responses (see S4.1–S4.3). Hence, the gap between social resources on Nikunau and those on Tarawa regathered momentum and has continued to widen since.

For *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* even being on the periphery of Tarawa's economy has been preferable to remaining on their islands and being marginalised socially, as well as economically, politically and other ways. This marginalisation was plain during my last visit to Nikunau in 2009; buildings belonging *kawa*, churches, schools, trading and the Island Council showed neglect in terms of physical maintenance and uses (cf. Ortega, 2008), reflecting and corresponding with a noticeable number of *mwenga* being unoccupied (see S3.1). Neither the frequency nor importance of *unimane* gatherings were as obvious as they were two decades earlier, probably for lack of *unimane*: many *unimane* heads of *mwenga* were residing on Tarawa with their adult offspring, and their siblings still on Nikunau were reluctant or unable to assume their mantle in their absence—see Lundsgaarde (1978) for a similar situation arising on Tabiteuea from the 1970s compared with the 1960s. Concomitantly, communal social life in *kawa* seemed subdued for want of their leadership, as well as for want enthusiasm and even participants.

In metropolitan countries, the abundance of social resources, along with employment opportunities, have been the major attractions for singles, couples or families of predominantly *I-Kiribati* blood to immigrate, including so that children can access schools (cf. Thompson, 2016). Nevertheless, *baronga* and similar social aspects of diasporic communities seem at least as important for *I-Nikunau* to remain there, rather than returning to Kiribati. In any case, the availability of social resources for those settling in metropolitan countries has its less savoury aspects: their rights of access to these resources, along with perceptions of how much use they make of them, can be a reason for being resented by existing populations, some of whose members see immigrants as getting a freeride on these resources. The argument is usually along the lines that immigrants have not contributed any of the capital that has accumulated in the schools, hospitals or similar amenities. Coupled

with that, because of the menial, low-paid jobs they hold, they are perceived as not paying much tax; or are perceived as receiving unemployment and other social welfare benefits through being lazy and reluctant to work (e.g., see “Daily Mail Comment,” 2012; Slack & Brown, 2016). These jibes, some of them clearly cast with racist intentions towards “brown-skinned foreigners”, can deter *I-Nikunau* from taking up their full legal entitlement to, or otherwise making use of these resources, which does not stop the jibes.

4.11 Organisational Circumstances

I-Nikunau's present organisational circumstances can be clarified by distinguishing between two types of organisations to which I have already referred, namely, quasi-traditional organisations (see S4.7) and non-traditional organisations (see S4.1). In making that distinction, however, there is a case for *mronron* and KPC/KUC congregations to be regarded as more quasi-traditional than non-traditional, despite their derivations from commercial and religious organisations of external origin. In any case, *I-Nikunau*, wherever located, participate in more organisations nowadays than was the case traditionally and they are otherwise affected by the activities of even more organisations. What is more, the further *I-Nikunau* live away from Nikunau and tradition, such as on Tarawa or in New Zealand, the greater and more complex is the web of organisations around them or affecting them, and the more peripheral they are in the arrangements of how most of the organisations in question are run, certainly in the case of non-traditional organisations that is.

I-Nikunau's peripheral status vis-à-vis non-traditional organisations, whether commercial, religious, community or governmental in nature, is particularly relevant to the present day and the future, since these organisations influence their lives significantly. This peripheral status seems to derive from difficulties *I-Nikunau* have connecting with the range of economic, political, social and cultural matters with which many non-traditional organisations concern themselves, and difficulties they have comprehending the paraphernalia (e.g., types, structure, procedures, history, *raison d'être*, financing, legal status) involved in such organisations. A major source of these difficulties is that these non-traditional organisations were physically and socially constructed over decades, if not centuries, before *I-Nikunau* encountered them. Furthermore, the principals of these organisations were intent on effecting and achieving objectives they set and from which they derived benefit on their terms (e.g., commodity acquisition, trading profit, creating a source of labour, stamping out of one religion and conversion to another, subjection, order, civilisation and development), not on *I-Nikunau*'s terms; indeed, it has often been the case

that *I-Nikunau* suffered or were harmed, perhaps not intentionally but in ways that could have been foreseen.

Having alluded to circumstances and evidence for the above statements, claims, etc. in previous sections, here I review and synthesise those I judge important, starting with *I-Nikunau*'s traditional state. As first indicated in S4.1, traditionally, *I-Nikunau* lived as *mwenga* as part of *kainga* within *mwaneaba* districts. These organisations were involved with matters with which *I-Nikunau* chose to be, or were content to be, concerned, and were run by them according to *te katei* structures and procedures passed on in traditional systems of education, etc. As Hockings (1984) opines, the organising of *I-Nikunau* communities was founded on the *boti-mwaneaba* scheme, *boti* concerning themselves with the affairs of *kainga*. Concomitantly, *mwenga* affairs, including births, deaths, etc. were the remit of *utu*. When conflicts or disputes occurred, *boti* and *utu* were counterfoils in terms of power, especially as rights relating to *aba* and marine areas were widely distributed, and passed down through, within and among *utu*, rather than *boti*.

These traditional organisations were challenged and significantly changed or replaced following the arrival on Nikunau and in its vicinity (e.g. Beru, Nonouti, Tabiteuea, Tarawa, Butaritari, Banaba) of representatives of foreign commercial and then religious organisations, and eventually governmental organisations. The non-traditional organisations these outsiders established continued as offshoots or similar of the overseas organisations they represented. Further to what is related above about their objectives and histories, although varying in purpose, each possessed a logic derived from their similar place(s) of origin, places, logics that were quite different from any to be found on Nikunau or elsewhere in the Kiribati Archipelago in almost every respect one can imagine. What is more, before reaching or otherwise affecting Nikunau, their systems of personnel, procedures, ideas, purposes, interests and financing had spread far and wide, Nikunau being about as far as they might spread at the time, and probably still, Antarctica and the International Space Station excepted. Not only were *I-Nikunau* generally ignorant about these organisations, systems and the networks they constituted, and their history, but also the outsiders were not quick to enlighten them, perhaps not thinking it was important or realising such knowledge was of economic, social and political value to them vis-à-vis *I-Nikunau*. Even so, the organisations established on Nikunau and in its vicinity were adapted to fit with conditions among *I-Nikunau*. However, most of the adaptation was on *I-Nikunau*'s part, rather than the organisations' (cf. Lundsgaarde, 1966). Furthermore, for quite some time, *I-Nikunau*'s participation in the

activities of these non-traditional organisations, even on Nikunau, was almost always on the outside—marriage to traders led to a few exceptions perhaps—if not physically then socially, culturally, economically and politically. It took major events or similar offshore (e.g., the Great Depression, World War II, international pressures for European decolonisation) to change fundamentally *I-Nikunau*'s relations with each of the non-traditional organisation types. Furthermore, a lack of alternatives, other than for the organisation(s) to lapse, was often the reason that *I-Nikunau* or *I-Kiribati* were allowed to be more involved, or stepped in to fill a vacuum vacated by outsiders.

The organisation types in question, be they commercial, religious, community or governmental, were also subject to gradual changes from within, but increases in *I-Nikunau* or *I-Kiribati* involvement through these changes were selective and usually conditional on various inductive cum acculturation processes, many of them portrayed as education and training. For example, *I-Nikunau* offspring of *I-Matang* traders were trained by their fathers, etc. in the art of storekeeping and made familiar with ideas of private ownership, the business entity as separate from the person, profit and arm's length transactions (see S4.5). Prospective pastors studied at the LMS headquarters at Rongorongo and acquired Protestant ethics, or were expected to (see S4.8). Prospective clerks studied at KGVS on Tarawa and assimilated cultural nuances wrapped in the syllabuses of the various subjects (see S4.9). Even so, involvement of *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* led to some adaptation of these non-traditional organisations to reflect *te katei* and Kiribati beliefs, values and culture, as is exemplified next in the trade stores, as part of successive systems of maritime trade, and the Island Council, as part of a system of imperial governance and colonial administration. Incidentally, the churches on Nikunau, as part of the LMS-KPC-KUC system, could also be used as an example.

The history of the trade stores is set out in S4.3. After six decades in private hands, during which *I-Nikunau*'s participation in them and the succession of maritime trading networks of which they were part, economically and logistically, was largely restricted to the lowest levels of these networks—*I-Nikunau* were either copra cutters, supplying the networks from the outside, or employees, at no higher a level than store-workers, deckhands and other toilers (Couper, 1968)—*I-Nikunau* stepped in and took them over, so as to maintain their means of exchanging their copra for the goods and cash on which they had become somewhat dependent. District Officer Maude acquainted *I-Nikunau* with ideas around the cooperative forms of ownership, having seen and been impressed by them in Tuvalu (see Catala, 1957;

Maude, 1949, 1950). By applying these ideas, *I-Nikunau* were able to reconcile running the commercial stores with notions in *te katei ni Nikunau* of community and social undifferentiation. Each of *I-Nikunau's te boboti* was governed by an elected committee, on which *unimane* predominated, and they frequently convened *bowi* of members (e.g., a whole *kawa*). *Boboti* administration and accounting was performed, for little or no formal payment, by a few *I-Nikunau*, who had probably derived the requisite knowledge and skills from being involved in private and church trading and Nikunau Native Government administration.

In addition to addressing the immediate issue of the trade of copra for imported goods continuing on Nikunau, this change also marked cooperative ownership, with semblances of traditional organisations adapted to commerce, being the norm on Nikunau for over eight decades—this form is only now perhaps being threatened by the prospect of stores run along more proprietorial lines, including branches of those that have existed for three decades on Tarawa, mostly in the hands of naturalised *I-Kiribati* or those of mixed *I-Matang* or Chinese ancestry, and Nikunau-based businesses that resemble them. However, the life of the original *boboti* that were established on Nikunau was short lived, affected by the wartime pause in trade. With this war out of the way, the restored Colony Government, with Maude as resident commissioner, helped *I-Nikunau* establish *Te Bobotin Nikunau*, which became important to *I-Nikunau* not only in an economic sense (see S4.3) but also politically (see S4.7) and socially (see S4.10).

I-Nikunau generally saw *Te Bobotin Nikunau's* ascendancy for over 50 years as being for the common good, with community savings providing financial and social capital. Its authority derived from *unimane* from around the atoll being involved in its governance and enthusiastically so, and *bowi* of members being convened regularly. That authority was seen to be exercised in a broadly-beneficial, social way, rather than a narrowly-beneficial, economic way. Low prices were charged for goods, calculated usually on a standardised 12.5% mark-up, and, correspondingly, fair prices were paid for copra. Although surpluses, if any, could be distributed to members as cash bonuses, usually in proportion to purchases, they were mostly used for expansion, including into functions that were novel to *I-Nikunau*, such as providing a savings and loans bank and screening films and staging other activities that could be enjoyed by entire communities (Catala, 1957; Couper, 1967, 1968; Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014, esp. p. 694; Lawrence, 1992; Macdonald, 1971, 1982a; Maude, 1949, Roniti, 1985).

Te Bobotin Nikunau's decline over the past 25 years or so (see S4.3) might be linked to a string of interrelated economic, organisational, administrative ideological and cultural reasons, including the following. Although Nikunau's population has remained about the same over this period despite emigration, incomes from copra and remittances probably fell in real terms, as well as in relative terms vis-à-vis Tarawa and further afield. However, if this has happened, it not affected other trading entities continuing, or even starting up (i.e., *kawa* and church *mronron*, and, in one case, a proprietary store); indeed, these were now out-competing *Te Bobotin Nikunau*, including as agents authorised for handling copra on behalf of its single buyer, the Republic Government (see S3.1 and S4.3). Emigration has reduced the supply of intellectually able persons and *unimane* on Nikunau. The cooperative network of training and support across Kiribati has also declined, particularly on Tarawa. At the behest of aid organisations that became so influential in the structure of the Kiribati economy, the Republic Government has adopted neo-liberal policies, and these favour competition and disfavour cooperation; its cooperative oversight agencies responsible for regulation, development, education, training, etc., have been starved of funds and outside assistance, and allowed to run down.

The importing and exporting channels into and out of Tarawa, and the distributing of goods within Kiribati, were deregulated as part of these neo-liberal policies and several businesses became involved. For *mronron* and other trading entities on Nikunau, Tarawa and elsewhere, this has meant no longer having to go through the likes of *Te Bobotin Nikunau* in order to obtain goods for resale. The ones on Nikunau seem to have chosen to deal directly with businesses on Tarawa because *Te Bobotin Nikunau* has not responded to opportunities afforded by more goods being available on Tarawa for importing to Nikunau, and the equivalent has occurred on Tarawa. Although in number, if not in size, most of these trading entities on Nikunau and Tarawa are run along the cooperative lines disfavoured by the aid organisations, they have a stronger grassroots character in keeping with local culture, compared even with the likes of *Te Bobotin Nikunau*, which, when push came to shove, were more associated in *I-Nikunau*'s and other *I-Kiribati*'s minds with *Te Tautaeka* (see Roniti, 1985). Indeed, seeing *Te Bobotin Nikunau* decline, *unimane* and *I-Nikunau* generally reacted by switching their support to *kawa* and church *mronron*, and so hastened that decline. This switch may also be seen as moving away also from an atoll-wide organisation to district or *kawa* level organisations.

Whatever, *kawa* and church *mronron* seem to be seen by *I-Nikunau* at least as legitimate as *Te Bobotin Nikunau* for being run along cooperative lines. The ideas of private traders and private profits, favoured by supporters of neo-liberalism but resented during the pre-cooperative era, continue to be kept at bay, at least on Nikunau, if much less so on Tarawa, where some of the substantial trading and service entities the Colony Government handed over to the Republic Government have been either privatised or closed down, and their lines of business taken up by new private businesses. Even so, the Republic Government has had to sustain its role as a monopsonist in the trade with copra cutters (see S4.3), despite some ire from aid organisation representatives who see this primarily as economic interventionism and a form of agricultural subsidies. The intervention came about because *Te Bobotin Nikunau* and its equivalent on other islands declined so much that their cash flows were insufficiently buoyant to provide the working capital for the copra purchasing process. The guarantee that the Republic Government now gives copra cutters relates both to price and receiving cash on the same day as they deposit their copra (see S3.1 and S4.3). This intervention was a political, social and economic necessity; Outer Island MPs realised that the continuing support of copra cutters on Outer Islands, including responding to their demands for increases in the price paid for copra, was vital to their re-election.

The history of the Island Council, including *te kabowi n abamakoro*, the Nikunau Native Government and the associated island courts, is set out in S4.7, with additional material in S4.8, tracing its links to the Samoan pastors and their immediate successors in furtherance of their spiritual ambitions. The idea of a governmental based purely on territory, rather than *kainga–boti* kinship, not to mention its functions (e.g., island rules, island taxation), were new concepts or new applications. So too was the oversight it underwent from Beru after 1900, first from those at the LMS headquarters and then by the Southern Gilberts district officer. Nevertheless, it appeared that *I-Nikunau* controlled the council and courts, since they peopled the positions associated with these organisations, and the highest official positions (e.g., the island magistrate and *te tia-koroboki*) were held by other *I-Kiribati*, if not *I-Nikunau*.

But this appearance somewhat disguised the amount of authority lying with the district officer, who when all said and done was a single chief, a concept at odds with *I-Nikunau*'s tradition of distributed authority in which *uea* were tabu—hence Tabi(u)-te-uea Atoll. Financial control processes, which entailed, for example, approving council estimates and auditing council accounts (see *Nikunau Native Government Cash Book 1915–1933*), were

significant ways in which the district officer wielded his authority, apart from simply being *te I-Matang* (see Bevington, 1990)—that being *I-Matang* mattered is borne out by the district officer positions being disestablished almost as soon as they were localised (see S4.7). These processes, and the attendant reporting (see Grimble & Clarke, 1929) about *I-Nikunau*, their atoll and the Southern Gilberts District (cf. Ellice Islands District Report, 1936), were quite disproportionate to the quite paltry amounts of money involved as far as the revenues and expenditures of the Colony Government were concerned⁹⁸ (Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014). Thus, the means of control were arguably less about money *per se* than how a colonial official could oversee and intervene in organisations that the colonial authorities portrayed as belonging to *I-Nikunau* (cf. Neu, Gomez, Graham & Heincke, 2006; Newbury, 2004). As for the colonial authorities themselves, although their district officer was subordinate to persons further up a hierarchy (see Figure 11), geographical remoteness meant he could exercise much of their authority with little interference from them; indeed, the aforementioned reports were one of the few ways his distant superiors actually exercised theirs.

The parallels between, on the one hand, the council and courts and, on the other hand, the trade stores are noteworthy. Both were at the lowest levels of their respective systems, one of imperial governance and colonial administration and the other of maritime trade, and so subject to control by mostly *I-Matang* outsiders placed near and far—of course, it should not be overlooked that persons at upper levels of the two systems had common interests and often colluded. Just as the financial control processes over the council were significant in effecting this *I-Matang* control, so similar processes applied to the trade stores, first between *I-Matang* or Chinese trader and company, and then, and more so, when the stores were reformed as *boboti* under *I-Nikunau* member-governance and administration. What is more, for as long as the trade stores were run by *I-Matang* and Chinese agent-traders, these processes served largely commercial purposes, with principals using reports to evaluate the security of their invested capital and the profits and returns on this capital; thus, once the principals and their agent-traders, or the proprietary traders, evaluated that trade was no longer going to be profitable in the future, or were just stuck for cash because of the effects of the Great Depression, they cashed up as best they could, leaving *I-Nikunau* and the district officer to pick up the pieces (Maude, 1949).

Thereafter, on paper at least, control of *boboti* began to converge with how the council was controlled, especially once *Te Bobotin Nikunau* was in place and subject to the Co-operative Societies Ordinance of 1952. The financial oversight and other provisions of this legislation

afforded plenty of scope for political, as well as commercial, control (cf. Roniti, 1985). However, unlike the council, distant political control of *Te Bobotin Nikunau* was impeded by *unimane*'s enthusiasm for it in principle and because it was financially viable in its own right, as measured by its profit and loss account, and not dependent on Colony Government funding like the council—the council's dependence was a mix of the form of accounting, that is revenues and expenditures were budgeted and accounted for separately, and of it being burdened with recurrent costs of social development projects initiated by the Colony Government (see S4.7). Besides, between the late 1940s and 1970, political control of the council and cooperative by district officers was hampered by the latter being based on Tarawa, rather than Beru.

A further issue about non-traditional organisations is that despite how *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* have tried to localise and otherwise adapt them to reflect Kiribati beliefs, values and culture associated with *te katei*, etc., many of their colonialistic traits are still evident four decades after the Republic Government was inaugurated, making them distinguishable still from the much adapted traditional organisations. Retaining some colonialistic traits has arisen through the non-traditional organisations being part of bigger hierarchical and networked structures that go beyond Nikunau in particular and Kiribati generally (e.g., see Figure 10). Examples of these structures span religion, trade and government. *I-Nikunau* clergy and their congregations are incorporated into elaborate, worldwide networked organisations. The RC Church is a single organisation headquartered in the Vatican City, and the KPC/KUC is affiliated with the World Council of Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The vast majority of goods bought by *I-Nikunau* at trade stores run by *I-Nikunau* or other *I-Kiribati* are produced elsewhere and imported through commercial networks. *I-Nikunau* comprise the Nikunau Island Council and some are prominent in the governing and administering the Republic, a sovereign state that is part of some greater world order, including that its renewal and development involves supranational organisations and other aid organisations.

A further, continuing aspect of this colonial trait of networked, hierarchy is of quasi-traditional organisations exhibiting some subservience to non-traditional organisations, be it within Kiribati or in diasporic communities in metropolitan countries. However, whereas on Tarawa, the quasi-traditional organisations can exert some political influence, being a legitimate part of indigenous society, invariably elsewhere, the quasi-traditional are dwarfed by the non-traditional, just as the *I-Kiribati* population is but a small percentage of the entire

population, and where they are invisible politically (e.g., in New Zealand, they are outside the *Pākehā–Māori* model of New Zealand politics). But whether those on Tarawa actually exert this influence is a moot point, the question perhaps being why they would not do so. The answer seems to lie in continuing self-perception of inferiority, in knowledge and skills, technology, culture and race, inferiority that the different outsider groups (e.g., aid organisation staff, foreign politicians and diplomats, foreign business people, foreign religious body representatives) seem unable to address even if they wish to.

As to traits of tradition retained by quasi-traditional organisations, there are various examples. Although *kainga* were seemingly obliterated when the LMS and then the Colony Government sought order and control of *I-Nikunau* by resettling them in *kawa* (see S4.2), kinship relationships persisted through *utu* and *mwenga*. Indeed, the concept of, and the relationships entailed in, *baronga* arose based, in the case of Nikunau, on adjacency of *mwenga* (cf. Geddes, 1977), in the case of Tarawa, on home island affiliation and, in the case of metropolitan countries, on language and identifying with Kiribati. It is even possible to argue that the incidence of *baronga* relationships bears some resemblance to *boti*, the institution that seemingly lost significance alongside the aforementioned demise of *kainga* and was itself eventually obliterated.

The official structure and processes of quasi-traditional organisations exhibit other traditional traits side by side, usually complementing one another, but occasionally conflicting. Whereas tradition relies entirely on the oral for transacting business and keeping records, the quasi-tradition also incorporates the written, including by having written constitutions, written agenda, minute books, and written or electronic documents dealing with proposals for events and schemes, financial and other reports, and various records. Whereas gender and age mean a great deal in tradition, the quasi-tradition allows women (cf. Rose, 2014) and younger people not only to speak but also to carry the day in making and implementing decisions. Whereas consensus has to be reached in tradition to determine decisions—these are then spoken by *te tia-motiki-tueka* (\cong the speaker of decisions)⁹⁹ and everyone signals their willingness to accept, for example, by clapping in unison three times—the quasi-tradition allows decisions to be reached sometimes by a simple majority and it may be unnecessary (if inadvisable) for the minority to have to be persuaded and then signal acceptance. Whereas in performing roles or tasks, or implementing decisions, any special responsibilities and skills required in the tradition are exercised or organised by the kinship group who are the keepers of those special responsibilities and skills (see Geddes, 1977; Grimble, 1989), the quasi-

tradition provides for officials to be elected or appointed, and for the implementation of decisions to be assigned to them, usually implicitly, as an extension of making the decisions, and having the time, resources and abilities to do so, acquired independent of kin groups (e.g., at school, by consulting reference materials in libraries or on the Internet, using *non-I-Kiribati* contacts, such as weak ties mentioned by Thompson, 2016). Whereas everyone knows in tradition who is responsible for doing what, and if they do not do it, they bring *kamama* on themselves and their kin, to whom they know they will have to answer, without having to report, the quasi-tradition often provides for reporting and accountability to be more explicit. However, the latter provision is often ineffective because, in the tradition, anyone who brings *kamama* on someone else, by questioning that someone else's behaviour outside *te katei* understandings based on kinship relationships (see Geddes, 1977), actually brings *kamama* on themselves.¹⁰⁰

It is on Tarawa that the contrast between traditional and non-traditional organisations and practices is most conspicuous and conflictual nowadays. The traditional arises from the *I-Nikunau* diasporic community (and the equivalent communities associated with the other Outer Islands), and indeed *I-Tarawa*, having established organisations on Tarawa in which practices from their home islands are replicated. As well as *mwenga*, etc., they often establish *mronron* and church groups within the diasporic communities of the different islands and these traditional or quasi-traditional practices extend into these groups. The non-traditional arises from the Colony Government, which initiated an increasing array of activities in the names of post-war reconstruction and economic, social and, eventually, self-government development, and from the Republic Government, with no end of encouragement and incentives from officials, experts, consultants, etc. associated with aid organisations, who seem far more concerned with functionality, than with culture—they seem even to regard functionality as acultural—and so have little understanding of why things show signs of failing when they are present, not to mention falling apart after they leave.

The Republic Government not only continued the Colony Government's behaviour but also made it possible for non-traditional, private business activities to expand, and so, in the area of commerce, notably on Tarawa, there is an array of enterprises, ranging from ones owned by the Republic Government, or ones in which it is a joint-venture partner,¹⁰¹ to the many that are entirely private, be they either quasi-traditional cooperatives (i.e., *mronron*, etc.) or proprietary, and so lacking in much tradition other than for sake of appearance or similar "marketing purposes". Consistent with the claims above, the quasi-traditional organisations

on Tarawa just mentioned and others associated with the *I-Nikunau* diasporic community (and the equivalent communities associated with the other Outer Islands) sit beneath, or are subservient to, the non-traditional organisations also just mentioned.

In relation to diasporic communities, while the discussion above about non-traditional organisations focussed on these organisations bringing ideas, objects and similar into Nikunau and the other Kiribati islands, so these same organisations, commercial, religious and governmental, are also significant as the main vehicles through which, as early as the 1820s, *I-Nikunau* spent time away from Nikunau. In recent decades most of this going away has been tantamount to permanent emigration, whether intentional or through one thing leading to another, within and outside the Kiribati Archipelago, and so giving rise to the diaspora. These claims are illustrated in various places in S4.1 to S4.10, including the following.

I-Nikunau taking up positions as deckhands, etc. on the periphery of the 19th Century maritime trade proved to be the forerunners of *I-Nikunau* continuing to be involved in seafaring work, as facilitated for the past 50 years by the Marine Training Centre. *I-Nikunau* labouring since the mid-19th Century for commercial organisations engaged in mining and various forms of agriculture around the Pacific and beyond is exemplified nowadays by their participation in Recognised Seasonal Employer schemes in New Zealand, which are mostly associated with vineyards, dairy farming and fruit farming. *I-Nikunau* intent on the priesthood received education and training on Beru, Abemama, Abaiang and, later, Tarawa, and these atolls are among those on which the churches sited their secondary schools that selected *I-Nikunau* have attended since. *I-Nikunau* were among the native staff employed by the Colony Government as it expanded, particularly in the decades after World War II. In preparation for this work and for social development type reasons, *I-Nikunau* were admitted to secondary schools and tertiary colleges that the Colony Government established on Tarawa. These schools and colleges are now run under the auspices of the Republic Government, and the curriculum continues to be geared to *I-Nikunau* earning a living doing non-traditional work for non-traditional organisations, primarily Republic Government services and businesses, and mostly on Tarawa or otherwise away from Nikunau.

While working for non-traditional organisations has been the longest-lived factor in emigration, along with education and training to some extent in preparation for such work, significant instances of emigration have resulted from organised resettlement schemes. This applies to *I-Nikunau* establishing settlements on the Solomon Islands and Line Islands; the

two schemes in question were devised and implemented by the Colony and Republic Governments respectively, with financing from outside donors; both reflect long-held considerations and concerns, alluded to in S4.1, among some Colony Government officials and advisors about overpopulation of Nikunau and other Kiribati islands (e.g., see Autio, 2017; Maude, 1952; McCreary & Boardman, 1968; Veltman, 1982). Further schemes for *Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* are now being mooted among the Republic Government, aid agencies and others, as they weigh up the prospect of the atolls of Kiribati becoming uninhabitable through climate change, sea-level rise, etc. (see Kuruppu & Liverman, 2011; Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program, 2015). Incidentally, although the Pacific Access Category has the inklings of a bilateral arrangement with a foreign government around climate-induced re-settlement, it was devised by the New Zealand and Republic Governments more to assist New Zealand in addressing shortages of labour in urban services and agriculture, and provide relief from unemployment among *I-Kiribati* and a further stream of remittances for Kiribati, than with the likely outcome of sea-level rise for *I-Kiribati* in mind (Thompson, 2016).

While *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* interactions with non-traditional organisations increase after they immigrate to metropolitan countries, various traits of tradition are evident in many aspects of life in their diasporic communities, thus justifying the use of the “diaspora” label. This is particularly so in organisations they have established in their diasporic communities (e.g., Christchurch Kiribati Community, Kiribati Tungaru Association, Kiribati Waipounamu Community), whose quasi-traditional qualities are evident in the matters with which these organisations mainly concern themselves, how these organisations function operationally, and how they are constituted and governed (e.g., on the basis of *mwenga* rather than individuals). These traits and qualities contrast with those in local organisations, be they commercial (e.g., shops, banks), religious (e.g., Anglican churches), community (e.g., scout groups, philanthropic trusts) or governmental (e.g., territorial authorities or local councils, government ministries interested in the Pacific), which is most evident when the organisations in question have dealings, for example, in a diasporic community organisation applying for community grants, hiring campgrounds and other venues, or maintaining bank accounts. Such considerations also come into dealings in Kiribati between aid organisations and *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* organisations, including those associated with the Republic Government (see S4.7).

4.12 Distributional Circumstances

I-Nikunau's distributional circumstances can be considered in terms of three distributions of things (e.g., wealth, welfare, power, risk from sea-level rise): first, the distributions among *I-Nikunau* forming a community in the same social and geographical space (e.g., on Nikunau or in a single diasporic community); second, the distributions between *I-Nikunau* and other peoples with whom they occupy the same space (e.g., on Tarawa or where in New Zealand there is a diasporic community); and third, the distributions between communities of *I-Nikunau* in different geographical spaces (e.g., in New Zealand compared with urban island Tarawa and compared with traditional Nikunau).

As the examples above of things that can be distributed, distributional circumstances range across, and are intertwined with, the economic, social, political, environmental, etc.

Economically, the distributions are reflected in *I-Nikunau's* comparative material wealth, including personal belongings, *mwenga*, *aba* and similar, their comparative subsistence produce and incomes, and their comparative consumption and savings. Socially, they are reflected in, among other things, their relative status, welfare and wellbeing. Politically, they are reflected in their relative power, influence, rights and such like (Wheatcraft & Ellefson, 1983). Environmentally, they are reflected in, for example, their relative circumstances of demography and their relative prospects or risks in the face of expected trends associated with, say, climate change, etc. (cf. Thomas & Twyman, 2005) Thus, to analyse distributional circumstances, I draw on circumstances and occurrences that are economic, social, political, environmental, etc.

Among *I-Nikunau* forming a community, things capable of distribution, or the things that are distributed by virtue of events and situations, are part of the descriptions of the present in S3 and the analyses in previous subsections of S4; so too are how the present distributions have come about or how they are occurring presently. Age, gender, kinship groups and similar are among the factors associated with how distributions of these things vary in each community, just as they have been traditionally on Nikunau. But in addition, particularly among *I-Nikunau* living in urban and metropolitan diasporic communities, other factors besides these have come into play, notably education, employment and income, marriage and relations outside the community. As a result of so many factors, traditional and modern, and the interplay among them, and consequential factors too, the various distributions have gradually increased in disparity within communities.

Even so, it has been my experience that *I-Nikunau* and most other *I-Kiribati*, wherever located geographically or otherwise, have usually taken steps to avoid conspicuous displays of being advantaged or better endowed, economically, socially, educationally, etc. than others of their community in whichever diasporic community they are part of or happen to be visiting. This quality of avoiding conspicuous displays of greater wealth, authority, knowledge and similar endowments coincides with observations by Hockings (1984) and Autio (2010), among many other researchers and other observers and participants of life, of *kawa* and other traditional units, particularly in the southern Kiribati Islands; indeed, any such displays are usually greeted with mirth from one's peers, and so one is made *te bai n rang* (re urbanising Tarawa, see McCreary & Boardman, 1968). Concomitantly, those disadvantaged or poorly endowed, while accepting of support, are keen to maintain at least an appearance of self-sufficiency.

Even with the spreading of *I-Nikunau* away from Nikunau to form the various diasporic communities reported in this paper, adherence to these traditions and self-restraint or suppression are still noticeable, although they have been adapted or substituted by things more modern or in keeping with the circumstances that particular communities experience, according to their geographical situation, and so been weakened compared with behaviours on Nikunau. Arguably, there is a direct correlation between this noticeability and the number of community members who meet together regularly and the frequency with which these members deal with each other. *I-Nikunau* are commonly generous among each other with whatever they are able to give, and this is encouraged from generation to generation; and they expect the same of each other. This is done within the context of respect for form, tradition and kinship relationships, and an expectation that some effort is being expended in acquiring knowledge of these. A further feature is that the principle of *tabu te uea*, or there are no chiefs, is usually adhered to, infringing this being seen as a conspicuous display of authority and power; but this does not prevent someone from exercising specialist knowledge, skills or contacts on behalf of the community when these are called for.

In their dealings with other peoples, severally and jointly, *I-Nikunau* seem to hope for similar generosity, reciprocation and humility but have come to expect much less most of the time. This expectation has arisen from their past first-hand and other dealings with *I-Matang* and a few other peoples who, in matters of commerce, government and social relations, have pressed home such advantages as knowledge, skills, technology and rhetoric, and convey hubristically senses of privilege and social pre-eminence; stories passed onto them by their

forebears have added to these expectations. Thus, as alluded to in S4.3, *I-Nikunau* have shared in the economic benefits of trade, employment and exploitation of natural resources (e.g., whales, copra, phosphate, tuna) but invariably the lion's share seems to have gone to *I-Matang* or other outsiders. However, over time, the share accorded by outsiders to *I-Nikunau* in these various distributions seems to have been more respectful of the latter's position as the underdog, or on the weaker side of asymmetric relationships, and, more recently, of their human rights and their rights as "individuals".

Additionally, *I-Nikunau* can themselves be a barrier to this sort of change, being overly respectful still of *I-Matang*'s seemingly superior knowledge, technology and material goods, and continuing to defer to *I-Matang* as a people, as in colonial times (see Bevington, 1990), while tending to be embarrassed, even ashamed, of what they consider as either traditional or as their knowledge, etc. being inferior (see S4.8). For example, I myself encounter the long held notion that *I-Matang* men possess wide expertise in all technology associated with the outside world, being able as a matter of course to repair muskets, watches, car engines, computers, etc.

These mentalities of deference, acquiescence, interpolation, inferiority, etc. on the part of *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* are particularly significant in the sphere of development, resulting in the research, methods, findings, opinions, etc. of external consultants, who are usually *I-Matang* still, often going unscrutinised, unchallenged and misunderstood by *I-Kiribati* (cf. Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014), and so being given far more weight than would be the case among a conversation, meeting or audience of fellow *I-Matang*. Examples where this applies are law making, governance, macroeconomic policy, public administration and business practices, infrastructure and construction, education, health, environmental issues and deploying information technology, as mentioned or alluded to in previous sections.

Despite there still being room for improvement in attitudes towards *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* among *I-Matang* (and other *non-I-Kiribati*), and in the human status in the eyes of the latter, they have come quite a long way since Officer on Board the Said Ship (1767, pp.135–138) wrote about "naked indians". Similar since *I-Matang* warships were sent on patrol later to inspire "good behaviour" (Sabatier, 1977, p. 148) among "the various tribes of savages who are subject to no laws" to give "countenance and support to peaceful traders" (Wilson in general instructions to officers of British ships operating from the Australia Station in 1879, cited by Macdonald, 1982a, p. 65; see also Simmonds, 2014).

Concomitantly, notions of the Great Powers caring for and helping islanders, including *I-*

Nikunau, and stopping them from being abused, particularly through being kidnapped, abducted or lured on board ship (see Macdonald, 1982a) and while working away, led to legislation in Great Britain, notably the Pacific Islanders Protection Acts of 1872 and 1875 (see Ward, 1946).¹⁰²

A few years later, *I-Nikunau* were discussed indirectly and paternalistically by the officials of the Great Powers in terms of having a modicum of rights, but with said Powers there in a colonial capacity:

to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the conditions of their moral and material well-being, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the slave trade. They shall, without distinction of creed or nation, protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized for the above ends, or which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilization. (in Article VI of the General Act of 1885).

These sentiments among the Great Powers and similar persisted for some decades. Globally, they are evident in the Covenant of the League of Nations (League of Nations, 1919)—Article 22 mentions “a sacred trust of civilisation.” Alas, the civilising of said native tribes under these policies extended to appropriation and destruction of their lands, slavery and other forms of economic exploitation, obliteration of their beliefs and values, and genocide even (see, for example, Davie, 2000; Edwards, 2014; Gibson, 2000; Gowdy & McDaniel, 1999; Greer & Patel, 2000; Kearins & Hooper, 2002; King & Sigrah, 2004; Macdonald, 1982a; Neu, 2000; Neu & Graham, 2006). Locally, the sentiments were incorporated in the instructions to district officers issued by Grimble and Clarke (1929) (cf. Bevington, 1990; Macdonald, 1971, 1972, 1982a; Maude, 1977).

Notwithstanding the social hypocrisy and economic and political subterfuge associated with it, *I-Nikunau* experienced, under this civilising policy paradigm espoused by the world’s “leading nations”, the beginnings of the social and economic development analysed in S4.1 to S4.3, and the political development analysed in S4.7. Their social status also began to rise, although it was still heavy on supplicancy; they became what amounted to “subjects”, rather than “non-persons”. From these beginnings, and as the civilising policy paradigm gave way to a one of modernising, they were eventually accorded the statuses of “subjects capable of internal self-rule” and then of “citizens of a modern republic” (see Morgan, 1980; Tucker, 1999; Willis, 2005). Subsequently, under the neo-liberalising policy paradigm being

championed by selected aid organisations, they had their citizen status added to with such statuses as “customers”, “clients” and “rational economic individuals in a neo-liberal society”, at least in the writings of officials associated with said aid organisations, as they rolled out projects of structural adjustment, economic reform, privatisation, etc. (see Barokas & Rubin, 1988; Dixon, 2004a).

A further parallel development was that in metropolitan countries, *I-Nikunau* were recognised as persons eligible to obtain visas and immigration papers, and so be accorded such statuses as visitors, workers, students, permanent residents and citizens, with associated political, social and economic rights and obligations. The coming about and growth of diasporic communities in various countries of this sort indicate the extent to which applications have been approved and visa and other papers issued.

Similar trends of *I-Nikunau*'s rising entitlement to rights (and incurrance of obligations), social status, etc. are noticeable in numerous other respects. The following examples relate to trends in four areas, namely, conditions of employment, extraction of natural resources, participation in organisations and status of language, spanning the past two centuries.

First, since the 1820s, *I-Nikunau* have been involved continuously in working away from Nikunau (see S4.1). In the 19th Century many, including those who were indentured labourers, endured near-slavery, racism and similar economic and social exploitation (see McCreery & Munro, 1993; Munro, 1993). By the early 20th Century changes were becoming noticeable; in particular, wages, other emoluments (e.g., housing, rations) and other employment conditions on Banaba, and later Nauru, gradually became more favourable than hitherto and, contemporaneously, were probably better than for work elsewhere in the Pacific (cf. Shlomowitz & Munro, 1992), which in any case they were prevented from taking on (see S4.1); these changes went hand in hand with industrial or related disputes (e.g., over prices charged at the employer's stores) (see Williams & Macdonald, 1985).

These improvements to the conditions under which *I-Nikunau* have worked outside Nikunau, and more recently, outside Kiribati have continued; for example, they now prevail, at least officially, for *I-Nikunau* working worldwide as seafarers and, in New Zealand, on Recognised Seasonal Employer schemes. However, all the way along, wages, conditions have been inferior to those of white labourers, including, for example, in the phosphate industry in Australia and New Zealand. Nowadays, most of the work given to *I-Kiribati* on, for example, Recognised Seasonal Employer schemes is work that local New Zealand labour,

of whatever colour and ethnicity, is unwilling to do, including because wage rates are unattractive and, probably more importantly, conditions are unacceptable (e.g., having to live in remote places and work irregular, unsocial hours at different, scattered places). And there is still the potential for exploitation, intended or otherwise. Again, Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme workers are an example; they are at a disadvantage in dealing with employers, or at least feel so, and so are reluctant to exercise fully written contractual rights or legal protections under local employment laws (e.g., rights to a minimum wage, holiday pay, etc., health and safety protections) (cf. Reilly, 2011). In any case, some of these rights, if received in the letter, are eroded by excessive deductions for transport, accommodation and victuals—the abusive overcrowding endured in Blenheim by 22 workers on a Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme (“Kiribati workers go home”, 2008) is a widely reported example in which the *Pākehā* perpetrator was criticised by some but defended by others (see Van Wel, 2008).

The reluctance, etc. just mentioned on the part of Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme workers is notwithstanding potential and actual help from extant members of diasporic communities. However, although they may be more familiar with laws, rights and customs pertaining to work, accommodation and similar, they too suffer disadvantages and are open to exploitation in the workplace and in other aspects of life (cf. Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016). As *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* singles, couples and families arriving in New Zealand under the Pacific Access Category exemplify, it is one thing for a country to have laws about social equality, or against gender, racial or similar discrimination, but quite another for recent immigrants to be in a strong enough position vis-à-vis other peoples or the authorities to take advantage of such legal protections, or perceive themselves culturally, socially, politically or economically as in such positions (cf. Reilly, 2011).

As for their own distributional circumstances, these *I-Nikunau*, etc. arrive in New Zealand on a mix of work and accompanying family visitor visas, but with the prospect of permanent resident visas under the Pacific Access Category, provided they comply with their visas and attain the employment-related and income criteria laid down under this Category by the immigration authorities, as explained in S3.3.2. The work most take to satisfy these criteria is usually low-paid, resulting in them living at or below the poverty line for some time after their arrival, and can be with bad employers and at places where they must endure workplace discrimination, even from other workers of Pacific heritage (see Thompson, 2016). Although many move to better-paid jobs subsequently, just as many remain in the low-paid job sectors,

with adverse consequences for entire families, as enumerated in S4.3, S4.6, etc. Alongside raising further, similar issues in relation to having to rent poor quality houses let by bad landlords, Thompson (2016) notes language and similar personal inadequacies impeding access to official support. This support takes such forms as written information (e.g., Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, 2017) aimed at either preventing getting into predicaments in the first place or indicating what remedies exist for persons when they find themselves in such predicaments, and as approaching official bodies (e.g., the Tenancy Tribunal in New Zealand) that can settling disputes in landlord–tenant or employer–employee relationships.

Second, reiterating S4.1, whaling was conducted in the vicinity of Nikunau between the 1820s and 1870s, the ocean being exploited ruthlessly by whaling ships without any international legal recognition of *I-Nikunau* having any economic rights, and so of entitlement to any form of rent, royalties or similar—I doubt the very idea even occurred to anyone involved at that time, as was still the case on terra firma¹⁰³ let alone the high seas or the atmosphere. This is in complete contrast to *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* now receiving, through the auspices of the Republic Government, significant licence fees from the fishing fleets exploiting the tuna fishery within Kiribati’s EEZ (see S4.1 and S4.3).

Even so, these fees are a small proportion only of the reported value of the fish caught, and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing is perceived as a significant occurrence (Fedor, 2012), as an EEZ of some 3.55 million km² is difficult to surveil, even with assistance from the Royal New Zealand Air Force (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2015). Furthermore, unlike the mining of Banaba, *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* obtain very little employment from the fishery, either at sea or onshore, except for personal goods and services (e.g., present-day equivalents of *kaokioki* and *nikiranroro* – see S4.3) supplied to ships’ crews during onshore leave on Tarawa (see Bohane, 2006). What is more, many potential present benefits of the fees are foregone because the Republic Government has been persuaded by aid organisation advisers to contain its expenditure well below what this fees revenue might afford, and so run significant surpluses, which are then invested outside Kiribati—see S4.3 and outline of the Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund in Note 49.

In case the reader is wondering why I have not incorporated more about royalties from the mining phosphate on Banaba into this example of trends in *I-Nikunau*’s distributive rights vis-à-vis outsiders, the reason lies in Banaba being comprised of *aba* of *I-Banaba*, and so the main interest of *I-Nikunau* in Banaba being as a place to labour. Correspondingly, *I-Nikunau*

saw themselves as not much more than mineworkers, entitled to wages, etc., rather than entitled to a share in the phosphate deposits as a saleable commodity. Indeed, notwithstanding the two islands having been established by British authorities within the same single polity by 1900, and recognised as such by the other Great Powers, *I-Nikunau*, at that time and during the decades after, regarded Banaba and the other islands in the Colony as separate social and political entities from Nikunau—the idea of a national *I-Kiribati* identity was barely evident until the 1970s or 1980s, and then mostly among those educated on Tarawa and prominent in political and bureaucratic circles there (see S4.7). Thus, as far as *I-Nikunau* have been concerned for most of these decades, it has been *I-Banaba* who have suffered various wrongs at the hands of the British Government, the British Phosphate Commission and British dominion interests.¹⁰⁴ For their part, *I-Banaba* were probably as upset by what *I-Nikunau* did on their island as they were by what *I-Matang* staff of the British Phosphate Commission did, showing this in acts of protest even as the last of the phosphate workers were leaving in 1980 (confidential personal communication, 2009, from someone who, as young person, was among those boarding the last ship).

The degree of concern among *I-Nikunau* for the plight of *I-Banaba* seems to have changed in recent decades, in part because of greater identification with Kiribati as a national identity. But another factor in this seems to be greater awareness and appreciation of issues around human rights and care of the environment (e.g., land restoration after mining, greenhouse gas emissions), and of redress for past wrongs and their present-day consequences. This last matter is something that has come to the attention of diasporic communities in New Zealand through proceedings and settlements under the auspices of the Waitangi Tribunal (see Ministry of Justice, 2017).

Third, having been on the periphery of non-traditional organisations, be they religious, community, commercial or governmental, *I-Nikunau* have come to fill positions of greater responsibility and authority in each type, as related in S4.11. In Churches, having once been mostly confined to the flock, more became deacons, and some became, or now can potentially become, pastors and senior pastors, and priests and bishops. In government and politics, having largely been restricted to the status of native tribes and native subjects for the first several decades of the Colony Government, albeit with some men occupying native or island government positions of *kaubure* and similar and a few being Colony Government clerks, the gradual emergence of *I-Kiribati* self-rule and then the advent of the Republic saw

some *I-Nikunau* rise into senior administrative and political positions at nation-state level, and even join supranational organisations.

The above changes in relation to church and state notwithstanding, contributing to church and state infrastructure and administration and having to comply personally with ever more stringent regulations placed an economic and social burden on *I-Nikunau* during colonial times, as noted in S4.10. These burdens affected the daily activities in which *I-Nikunau* were involved, mostly to fulfil their obligations to their *utu* and *kawa*. These activities included obtaining subsistence produce from their *aba*, the reef and the ocean, and, through producing and selling copra, obtaining the various trade goods that were classed almost as necessities. Only a portion of these impositions was offset using imported technologies in order that activities could be completed more efficiently. Maude evaluated their aggregate effect as a “hitherto unsuspected degree of poverty” (1952, p. 66), noting that this effect was not entirely appreciated by the relevant authorities. These burdens continue on Nikunau and Tarawa, and have parallels elsewhere, including self-imposed ones relating to establishing and maintaining religious networks in metropolitan countries (see S4.8). Having said that, it is arguable that the burdens are significantly or more than entirely offset by their benefits.

In commerce, whereas marriage and mixed-race descent might have once been the only way into the business side of the copra trade or of acquiring similar commercial status, the way the trade was organised under the auspices of *boboti* saw *I-Nikunau* taking up official positions of governance and administration. Although their elevation in commerce came at a time of dire straits for copra and all the world’s other commodities, this predicament proved short-lived (see S4.3 and S4.11). Before, the incomes *I-Nikunau* derived from coconut oil/copra started out as barely 5% of the price that their produce realised elsewhere (i.e., New South Wales, New England, Western Europe, etc.). After, under *boboti*, it surely rose, although even then they probably hardly ever reached 15%. *I-Nikunau* were disadvantaged vis-à-vis *I-Matang* by ignorance of, first, what *I-Matang* were doing with the oil or copra (e.g., using it in the manufacture of soap, candles, butter substitute, explosives and livestock feed), and, second, of how *I-Matang* markets, trading and accounting practices worked. These particular disadvantages in commerce exemplify the nature of those prevailing still but in different forms, depending on location. That is, the actual vital knowledge needed on Tarawa or in New Zealand, say, has changed, but the idea that *I-Nikunau* lack such knowledge, understanding, etc. has not, despite formal education, scholarships, tertiary study and the rest, because these formal processes have not equipped them anything like

sufficiently in areas enumerated above and other sections where being disadvantaged and being in asymmetric relations are discussed.

Fourth, having been at various disadvantages with other peoples for lack of literacy and because English was the language of literacy, *I-Nikunau* have seen the status of *te taetae ni Kiribati* as a written language gradually increase, be accepted as a spoken language in non-traditional organisation settings. This has redressed some of the imbalance between *I-Nikunau* and *I-Kiribati* who are largely without English, and *I-Nikunau* and *I-Kiribati* who are comfortable with speaking and working in English but who use *te taetae ni Kiribati* in everyday life. Not only that but also this acceptance of *te taetae ni Kiribati* as not as inferior to English as it once was means that *I-Nikunau* are less excluded in dealing with outsiders (e.g., visiting representatives of aid organisations and of commercial and religious organisations) on grounds of the social status of their language. Even so, lack of English has meant *I-Nikunau* face practical limitations, such as in travelling, or trying to settle, outside Kiribati, and in accessing the myriad of external items (e.g., educational materials, entertainment) that have become increasingly available on Tarawa, a trend that has accelerated since the arrival of the Internet in the late 1990s. They also continue to be disadvantaged in Kiribati by the volume of reports, consultation documents, project proposals, job advertisements that presume formal and technical English, whereas lack of *te taetae ni Kiribati* does not disqualify someone from working as a consultant, advisor, etc. in Kiribati, although lack of English does.

In relations between communities of *I-Nikunau* separated geographically, while diaspora and circular migration have entailed reciprocity at different levels between such communities, their different locations, and so geographical separation, has given rise to rather obvious disparities in distributional circumstances. These disparities are brought out in previous sections, in which I have placed particular emphasis on comparing Nikunau with Tarawa environmentally, politically, economically, socially, etc., and then Tarawa with New Zealand—this allows for the pattern of *I-Nikunau* usually having moved first from Nikunau to Tarawa and then, perhaps a generation or more later, from Tarawa to New Zealand..

To recap what I said or inferred previously, the Nikunau natural environment is much more pristine certainly than Tarawa and probably than New Zealand, despite the latter's clean, green image (see Roper, 2012). *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau are much more politically autonomous, in complete contrast to New Zealand, where they are basically powerless; on Tarawa, *I-Nikunau* have as much power among *I-Kiribati* probably as they are a proportion

of the *I-Kiribati* population, although some of that power is curtailed by aid organisations being a major political force vis-à-vis *I-Kiribati*. While economically, life in New Zealand is more cash-based and costs of living there are higher, so too are incomes. Although some of those incomes are remitted to Tarawa and Nikunau, even after that, *I-Nikunau* in New Zealand mostly have more disposable income and belongings than *I-Nikunau* on Tarawa, and certainly have greater access to free and low-priced facilities, including education, health, welfare and social facilities, and these facilities are generally of a much better standard. On Nikunau, facilities and similar are scarce compared with what is on Tarawa, largely because aid organisation projects, and before that, Colony Government projects, have been heavily weighted in favour of Tarawa at the expense of Outer islands (Thomas & Kautoa, 2007); indeed, Nikunau did not even rate a separate mention in such plans as GEIC (1970) and Government of Kiribati (1983), and Outer Islands in general are referred to only in passing, incidentally or as if unimportant (cf. Connell, 2010). Moreover, reiterating above, *I-Nikunau* have had to provide many of the physical resources through which most of their atoll's infrastructure and administration has arisen, whether these be traditional, church or state.

4.13 Cultural Circumstances

That *I-Nikunau*, whether on Nikunau or in diasporic communities, inhabit a bounded world around shared habits, customs and general conduct, which are distinct from those of *non-I-Kiribati*, is abundantly evident. The same is so for *I-Nikunau* as distinct from other *I-Kiribati* on their various home islands, the more so as the others' islands are distant from Nikunau (Grimble, 1989; King, 1996; Macdonald, 1982a); indeed, this was part of my argument in S2 to justify my choice of *I-Nikunau* as the study identity, rather than *I-Kiribati*. However, it is arguable that because of homogenising forces (e.g., greater mixing of residents while away from their islands, informal and formal colonial rule, formal education) said distinctions have reduced over time, and so are not as great as they once were.

What is more, in their diasporic communities, including on Tarawa and, say, New Zealand, cultural and other distinctions between *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* are also much less clear, increasingly so as time elapses since leaving Nikunau, and leaving Tarawa, or being born into the diasporic community. Concomitantly, across the various places where *I-Nikunau* live, their shared habits, customs and general conduct have come to differ as those who have left Nikunau, or left Tarawa, have adjusted to their place of settlement, including mixing with the people, *I-Kiribati* and *non-I-Kiribati*, there. Furthermore, change in diasporic

communities, such as on Tarawa and in New Zealand, is also being driven generational change, including where the youngest generation was born and has been brought up.

I have tried to capture the above thoughts in the following paragraphs. The first two reflect my experiences and observations over quite some time. The third draws on findings of interviews conducted by Burnett (1999) during a study of secondary education, cross-referenced to anthropological, archaeological, ecological, ethnographic, sociological and other studies, indigenous accounts, etc.

At a *botaki* in *te mwaneaba* on Nikunau or at a public hall in New Zealand, many habits and customs, and conduct in general, would strike, say, new *I-Matang* guests as quite different from what they are used to. A profusion of symbolism is involved in both settings, reflecting what Hockings (1984) notes as intense investment by *I-Kiribati* in cultural symbolism. A cultural guide could describe, translate and explain the proceedings, interpret the meanings they hold among *I-Kiribati*, and otherwise enlighten the visitors. Even so, most visitors would probably still have difficulty “getting it”, for want of deeper background on *I-Nikunau* (or *I-Kiribati*) life experiences, and how these experiences interrelate and relate to things, material and intangible, with which they identify and hold as important, and on what “makes them tick”. Besides the reasons the guide gives for the proceedings may often be reduced to something to the effect of, “Because that’s the way we do things; it’s part of our culture,” the origins of the proceedings, symbols, etc. having been lost in time, space and logic. Similar applies to *I-Matang* as visitors to *mwaneaba* for occasions other than *botaki* and to *mwenga*, or as observers of conduct of *I-Nikunau* and *I-Kiribati* generally. What is more, *I-Nikunau* from Tarawa visiting Nikunau or New Zealand and participating in the same events, although seeing and hearing many things with which they were familiar, not least the language, might still require guidance, to either adjust to tradition on Nikunau or adjust to the New Zealand version of the proceedings in Auckland, Wellington, or on *Te Waipounamu*.

If combining their visit to Nikunau with visits to other Outer Islands, *I-Matang* or other *non-I-Kiribati* would notice many similarities going from island to island, particularly among adjacent islands, but if they took the trouble they would discern differences too, and might be able to link these differences with what marks out people from each island, including *I-Nikunau* from the rest. However, for these visitors to make these distinctions at a gathering on, say, Tarawa of *I-Kiribati* from several islands would be very difficult. This would be even more so in a metropolitan setting like New Zealand, where behaviour is some amalgam of the

habits, etc. from the different home islands, and is tempered further by a mix of absence from Kiribati and conditions in New Zealand.

The cultural and related circumstances of the peoples of different Kiribati islands, including *I-Nikunau*, have attracted outside attention from time to time over the past 100 or so years, in areas such as myths, legends and traditions, social organisation, kinship, identity, ancestry, custom, land tenure, maritime culture, material culture, architecture, diet and food preparation, and song and dance. I have referred widely to some of these studies in previous subsections. In the study referred to above, Burnett (1999) delved into cultural awareness among *I-Kiribati*, bringing out their perceptions of how their culture has been changing. The areas they singled out as those of greatest cultural change were oral traditions, magico-religious beliefs and practices (cf. Grimble, 1921, 1933, 1989; Kambati, 1992; Latouche, 1983; Sabatier, 1939/1977), trade and use of money (cf. Asian Development Bank, 2002; Couper, 1967), relationships and social organisation, including gender roles and children's roles (cf. Geddes, 1977; Goodenough, 1955; Lundsgaarde, 1966; Lundsgaarde & Silverman, 1972; Rose, 2014), *mwaneaba* (cf. Autio, 2010; Lundsgaarde, 1978; Maude, 1963) and diet (cf. Catala, 1957; Di Piazza, 1999; Grimble, 1933; Lewis, 1981, 1988; Turbott, 1949). More formally, a group of *I-Kiribati* writers (i.e., Baranite, Roniti, etc.) compiled the series of articles on cultural changes published in Mason (1985). Similarly, Alaima et al. (1979) comprises a series of papers by *I-Kiribati* writers in which they refer to culture and changes to cultural circumstances obliquely in writing about aspects of pre-history and history. More recently, Teaiwa (2015) attempts to question the structural ruptures to cultural circumstances caused by informal and formal colonial or imperial interventions, pointing out their far-reaching material, economic, political and spiritual consequences, desirable and undesirable (cf. Thaman, 2003).

So far this discussion of *I-Nikunau's* cultural circumstances is something of a mishmash of ideas, concerns, things, etc. is resemblant of a study by Sewell (2005), in which, having brought out the anthropological foundations of culture, which is whence most of the studies cited above derive, and recent extensions into many other disciplines, he argues that culture has come to be interpreted in two ways. Either, it stands for a bounded world of beliefs and practices, synonymous in many respects to a society, and so used in such phrases as Kiribati culture, Western culture, pop culture, material culture, etc. (cf. Kuruppu, 2009). Or, it is a theoretical category abstracted from social experience and its complex realities, and so is distinguishable from other categories, including economic, political, etc. Having criticised

both these, Sewell concludes that dialectic consideration of culture is useful in discerning “a sense of the particular shapes and consistencies of worlds of meaning in different places and times and a sense that in spite of conflicts and resistance, these worlds of meaning somehow hang together” (2005, p. 93).

By virtue of including this separate subsection on culture, I may seem to have adopted Sewell’s second interpretation; however, each of the other subsections throughout S4 contain many references to what can be construed as elements of culture, past and present. These references in other subsections also raise how elements of culture have been changing, including the changes brought about through *I-Nikunau*’s varying geographical circumstances, and so, taken together, accord with dialectic consideration of culture. For example, in S4.10, general conduct associated with interdependence is shown as ever-present, but alongside emergence or clarity of individuality. These matters are reflected in changes related in S4.3, among other places, including a continuing regard for cooperative forms of trade in the form of *mronron* but an increasing propensity for families to operate proprietary businesses and for individuals to do work for other *I-Kiribati* in employer-employee relationships.

More generally, analysis and discussions in those other subsections indicates that traditional objects and relationships, and habitual ways of knowing, interpreting, perceiving, doing, appearing and behaving, have been adapted, reconstructed, augmented, replaced or displaced. These changes and their cultural ramifications are reflected in, among other things, the mode of production (e.g., cultivating copra and trading it for goods and services), religion (i.e., converting to Christianity) and the political system (e.g., being part of a formal structure and process within the Republic and a semi-formal structure and process beyond its boundaries). However, despite apparent changes in particular circumstances (i.e., geographical, demographical), there do seem to be constancies, or at least some areas where cultural change is much slower than in other areas.

For example, *I-Nikunau* in Kiribati, whether on Nikunau, Tarawa or elsewhere, comprise quasi-traditional communities that are based around their *utu*, church, and, on Tarawa, home-island *kawa*, home island and, to a limited extent, affiliations with the name of their work place. As for *I-Nikunau* in New Zealand and other metropolitan countries, despite many exhibiting urban life styles, the diasporic communities they comprise retain various social and cultural practices reminiscent perhaps of Nikunau but certainly of a meld of various Kiribati islands. Indeed, as Firth (1973) implies about the Kiribati Islands before their

annexation by the British authorities and their subsequent political unification as the Republic, it is culture that binds these *I-Kiribati* communities; the formal organisation of these communities, with rules and being registered with, say, Charities Services in New Zealand, are mostly practical conditions for them functioning as an entity recognised under New Zealand law, and so able to obtain grants from funding bodies, hire venues, own equipment (e.g., for sports or playing music) or real property, etc. (see S4.8 and S4.11)

What is more, these constancies, or slower changes, along with deliberate attempts to maintain culture, are not a matter of chance but of choice and action, which for diasporic communities are significant facets of their formal existence. For example, the Kiribati Tungaru Association aims, among other things, to teach the young generation in Britain and elsewhere in Europe about culture and traditions of the Kiribati Islands through dialogue and dance (see Kiribati Tungaru Association, 2017). Similarly, *I-Kiribati* who have immigrated to New Zealand in the past decade or two have chosen to establish themselves there in a way that accords with their social and cultural values. According to Thompson (2016), this includes retaining *te taetae ni Kiribati*, continuing to show respect within *baronga*-based structures, dealing with others in the diasporic community on the basis of trust, friendship, mutual dependence and reciprocity based on kinship, *bubuti* and similar, rather than on English contract law, rational economic exchange at arm's length, caveat emptor, etc. And, according to Fedor (2012), it includes performing various forms of dance, along with music, songs and poems, and going to great lengths to source native materials for dancing costumes from Kiribati. In turn, *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau respond to the backward current of these adaptations conveyed from a distance, or even brought "home", by *utu*, etc.; for example, one sees dancing costumes, dwellings, furniture, etc. not only into which non-native materials are incorporated but also designs as well.

As exemplified in S3.2 and S3.3, *I-Nikunau* living away from Nikunau adapt elements of their culture according to conditions, etc. in their adopted places of abode, and reconstruct learnt relations with each other inside each diasporic community and across communities. These elements and relations differ from place to place because they take account of, and embrace or acquiesce to the influence of, the other peoples among whom they live in these different places (e.g., other *I-Kiribati*, *I-Matang*, *Pākehā*, Solomon Islanders) and things, material and intangible (e.g., dwellings, victuals, music, sports, modes of production, social relations), comprising these other people's differing cultures. Among *I-Nikunau* within diasporic communities, especially those in metropolitan countries, further dynamics arise

from, among other things, variations in their marital status, marriage partners, the ethnic composition of families and the composition of households, and in education, employment religious affiliation and immigration status. A further dynamic within diasporic communities and between them is in how one generation gives way to another, and so how one generation's experiences give way to those of the next. Thus, *I-Nikunau* living away from Nikunau on Tarawa are increasingly less likely to have been born and brought up on Nikunau, and in New Zealand, the proportion born and brought up there, rather than on either Tarawa or Nikunau, although still small is increasing.

The above exemplify how traditional elements of *I-Nikunau*'s culture continue to connect traditional Nikunau with urban island Tarawa and with metropolitan New Zealand. They also bring out how their culture is dynamic, and so increasingly diverse, because of the dynamics, or things influencing it, varying by location, etc. Thus, for example, one observes not only differences among *I-Nikunau* in the diasporic community on Tarawa than there is among *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau, and an even greater cultural range among *I-Nikunau* in the diasporic communities in New Zealand, but also a greater cultural range. This diversity is notwithstanding the continuing influence on social forms and practices, on Nikunau and away from it, of Autio's (2010) concept of undifferentiation as a cultural principle, which underpins the criticism *I-Nikunau* occasionally aim of "behaving like *te I-Matang*." This principle is clearly in evidence when *I-Nikunau*, or *I-Kiribati* in diasporic communities away from Kiribati gather in numbers for *botaki* or similar social purposes.

The drawing attention to juxtaposing of *I-Kiribati* dance and costumes of materials from Kiribati by Fedor (2012) in diasporic communities in New Zealand (see above) brings out the distinction between but interrelatedness of material and intangible culture. As far as the composition of *I-Nikunau*'s material culture on Nikunau up to the 1960s, Koch's (1965/1986) study on Nonouti, Tabiteuea and Onotoa seems reasonably reliable, in terms physical objects, their form, range, origin, novelty, changeability, etc., as is so for Hockings's (1984) study focused on buildings and other structures and their cultural ramifications (see S4.2). Further evidence relevant to culture of an intangible nature, often mixed with the material side, is provided, either purposefully or incidentally, from the different islands at various times by the mix of authors listed above (i.e., Autio, 2010; Catala, 1957; etc.).

The general thrust of this evidence is that culture on Nikunau and the other Outer Islands has been influenced from outside those islands in two interrelated and, arguably, just as important (Macdonald, 1982a; Rennie, 1987) ways; that is, by outsiders (e.g., whalers, traders,

missionaries, colonial officials) coming to the islands and by *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* returning to their home islands, having been away for work, schooling and other reasons. In a variety of ways, new beliefs, concepts, implements, knowledge, learnings and interpretations, skills and crafts, values, etc. made their way to Nikunau, and so extended *I-Nikunau*'s culture, intangibly and materially. For one thing, returning *I-Nikunau* and visitors told their stories to in *mwaneaba* and at other opportunities, in traditional ways that genealogy and history were shared, and so passed on knowledge of wherever they had travelled to or originated, including something of the nature of the lands the storytellers told about, and of the technologies, customs, economic systems, religions, social conditions, events, leaders, religious practices, etc. found there. Indeed, these stories incited some listeners to travel away from Nikunau themselves but one issue was that the stories often left out the storytellers' bad experiences and misfortunes (see S3.3.2, S4.1 and S4.4). For another thing, returning *I-Nikunau* and visitors introduced many of the implements mentioned in previous subsections, including victuals, seeds and plants, livestock, cloth, furniture, fittings, furnishings, money, books, writing materials, weapons, tools, utensils, lighting, push-bicycles, motors, machinery, generators, refrigeration, electrical appliances, musical instruments, audio and video players, computer devices and other equipment. Similarly, the knowledge, etc., which pertain, among other things, to fishing and cultivation, cooking, garment making, metalworking, carpentry, coopering, mechanics, reading and writing, education, playing music, conducting religious rituals, jurisprudence, politics, health and well-being, construction, baking, brewing and other local manufacturing.

Noteworthy in the past two decades is the increased incidence of entertainment equipment for screening movies, music videos and other videos at will, instead of the once-a-week reel-to-reel films formerly organised by *Te Bobotin Nikunau*. Mostly, this equipment, along with petrol generators and solar cells needed to power them, is owned by *kawa* or church groups, rather than a single *mwenga*, as is also the case of other big price items such as motor vehicles. The incidence of computers and related devices was barely in evidence when I visited in 2009, although the Island Council treasurer had very recently obtained a laptop for the first time; this was courtesy of the Republic Government, for whom she also carried out some agency duties. I understand that in the eight years since various devices (e.g., laptops, iPads, mobile phones) have become more evident on Nikunau, often gifted by *utu* on Tarawa and further afield. However, access to the Internet and similar is still limited, and so has not

had as significant effect yet as materials copied on CDs, DVDs, USBs, etc. have on youth culture in particular, or on culture in general.

The situation of Tarawa in regard to the Internet, computer technology and electricity to power equipment is quite different, with mobile devices having become commonplace and access to the Internet easier, more reliable and more affordable. As mentioned or alluded to in previous subsections, many things of cultural significance have been possibilitated by this development. One deserving particular mention is the use of social messaging applications at no or very low cost (e.g., Skype, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp Messenger); these have boosted contact among *utu* wherever they (e.g. Tarawa, London, Christchurch, Wellington, Honiara). Similarly, “friends” and “group members” can share daily events and circumstances through social media (e.g., see Nikunau Maneaba on Facebook, n.d.). People who a decade ago might not have seen each other for years, and only spoken to each other on the telephone intermittently and at considerable cost, can now see and speak to each other daily using these devices and applications.

Not only that but also these people share their knowledge, skills, crafts and experiences, and exchange electronic and physical goods more easily, and so their habits, general conduct and even customs can change, or existing or traditional habits, general conduct and customs can be reinforced. The possibility of producing videos of dancing and other events, and sharing these on YouTube or similar, adds to these possibilities; indeed, YouTube or similar gives access to *non-I-Kiribati* music, dancing, sports, and a whole host of entertainment, technology and the like, providing knowledge, skills and crafts capable of “catching on” and becoming part of culture on Tarawa, youth culture in particular, quickening cultural change there compared with previously.

However, that is not to say that previous cultural change on Tarawa was as slow as on Nikunau now. Since the 1940s, it has a much greater presence of *non-I-Kiribati*, many of them there to bring about change (e.g., teachers, engineers, consultants). The immigrants, such as *I-Nikunau*, it has received from other islands have been younger and more intellectual than the communities they left. The life for *I-Tarawa* and immigrants has been affected by the much greater infrastructure, facility and intangible developments there. Thus, the culture for many *I-Nikunau* on Tarawa has since the 1950s and 1960s included living in dwellings of non-traditional design and materials, including having walls, doors, windows and rooms; moreover, even most traditional dwellings have been on the mains supply of electricity since the 1980s and 1990s. That life has also included exposure to people originating from other

Kiribati islands and from other countries, and to their habits, customs, conduct and culture. And it has included the cash economy, and working for others for set hours in return for cash, and being overseen and instructed in their work by another person from outside their *mwenga* or *utu*. Etc. Etc. The advent of the Internet, etc. is a continuation of the developments that have been part and parcel of cultural change, as well as an accelerator of that change.

On changes to culture more generally over the past two centuries, these have accompanied the displacement of traditional knowledge, skills, and magico-religious and related beliefs among *I-Nikunau*, even on Nikunau, with some originating elsewhere and introduced, whether as described above by returning *I-Nikunau* or visitors, or as part and parcel of conversion to Christianity and the implementation of formal education (see S4.8 and S4.9). The literacy skills in the school system has been inextricably linked by their teachers, first *non-I-Kiribati* and then their *I-Kiribati* successors, with a curriculum established and maintained by successive parties who came from outside Nikunau and Kiribati. That is, the Churches, which regarded most of traditional culture as the antithesis of their religious mission; a colonial government, which was steeped in Britishness notwithstanding how it reflected developments in British ideas and practices since the mid-20th Century, including about education (Burnett, 2009); and aid providers, whose educational thinking has reflected further developments, particularly those expressed in the English-language.

Insofar as this curriculum has included knowledge and skills relevant to everyday life, perhaps unwittingly in many cases, the material, has been more about that life in places where the curriculum originated, than on Nikunau, Tarawa or similar; for example, the KGVEBS domestic science curriculum, in preparation for Cambridge Board examinations, featured preparation of everyday victuals, but everyday mostly in Cambridge! In regard to items associated with the material culture of Nikunau (e.g., see Koch, 1965/1986), and Tarawa for that matter, the incidence of, for example, imported implements (e.g., tools, boats), made from metal alloys, plastics and similar, has increased, and so use of skills in making locally producible items, and other knowledge connected with their use, etc., have at least declined and mostly been lost altogether (cf. Lawrence, 1983).

Before the 1870s or so, the older generation, that is *unimane* and *unaine*, covered the everyday life curriculum for living on Nikunau along with everything else on the traditional curriculum (see S4.9), and so it remained as far as the everyday life curriculum was concerned. Except this was done outside school hours and because increasingly tacit, rather than formal, especially in matters that mission and later teachers saw as unbecoming and

actively discouraged (see Grimble's criticism of the mission curriculum cited in S4.8). Moreover, the knowledge, etc. that *unimane* and *unaine* could pass on about traditional technology and non-traditional technology introduced in their generation was for ever being reduced in value or made redundant altogether because much technological change cum material culture occurred as successive *I-Nikunau* returned to Nikunau and outsiders came to Nikunau, both bringing further waves of new technology and knowledge of how to use it.

The upshot was for the speed of technological change, and where it was driven from, to undermine traditional ways of passing on technological knowledge and cultural knowledge together. What is more, each wave of new technology, despite much of the knowledge about using it not extending to the ramifications of sustaining it, seems to have been seen, at least implicitly, as a linear and irreversible improvement, with no prospect of future need for technological knowledge no longer in use, traditional or otherwise, and so no need to reposit that knowledge in case its significance and value were to recur. These losses of knowledge, or failure to hand down knowledge within generations, is notwithstanding oral traditions still being strong and substantial the literacy skills having been acquired in the school system. This decline can be viewed as a threat to *I-Nikunau* being able to sustain life in the very peculiar natural environment on Nikunau without the current level of outside support; nor does it bode well for the challenges of life on Tarawa either if the current level of outside support was interrupted (cf. Republic of Kiribati, 2009). Such proposals as organising training workshops and publish booklets on "traditional conservation skills/practices" (see Republic of Kiribati, 2009, p. 57) may be seen as a sign of this threat being appreciated, if not responded to very convincingly.

Regarding the fate of some parts of *I-Nikunau*'s intangible culture that were in the traditional curriculum but which mission and later teachers actively discouraged, the most notable of these are stories of myths and legends, history and ancestry, social conduct and social pursuits, including dancing songs and music. As with much traditional technology, many were not passed on in traditional ways from generation to generation, especially between the 1880s and 1980s, the period of LMS and British colonialism. The continued existence of much knowledge of this nature, when imperious outsiders have begun to admit its importance as a human right, etc., is due in no small way to the interest taken in collecting and repositing this knowledge by *I-Matang* anthropologists, historians, etc. (e.g., Geddes, the Grimble, Koch, Latouche, Lundsgaarde, Macdonald, the Maudes, Sabatier) (cf. Kambati, 1992). As to the future of this knowledge, interest in it among *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* has been

rejuvenated, notably in diasporic communities, where the methods and resources of education, anthropology and preservation of cultural heritage seem to have been melded with traditional methods (e.g., see British Museum, 2017; Tungaru: the Kiribati Project, 2016).

Dance is the most significant exception of knowledge having been transmitted continuously through traditional means, along with song and music (see Autio, 2010; Dambiec, 2005; Whincup, 2009), despite how critical some religious leaders were of it (e.g., William Goward of the LMS – see Macdonald, 1982a), and how traditional means of teaching learning have deteriorated at the hands of formal education and technological change. Having survived this prejudice and other impediments to their survival, dancing, etc. are not only common on Nikunau (see Teuea, 2010) and throughout Kiribati (Autio, 2010), what is more, they are a principal feature of all diasporic communities, including in collaborations with native institutions (see British Museum, 2017; EventFinda, 2014; PixMasta Studio, 2017), and so a mainstay of *I-Nikunau*'s cultural identity.

4.14 Societal Circumstances

To analyse *I-Nikunau*'s societal circumstances I make use of the notion of “socio-ties”, a word play on the now obscure verb “socie”, meaning to ally for some common purpose or to join or bind, and on “ties” in the form of powerful and pragmatic social constructs or institutions (see Quattrone, 2015, 2016). Ten generations ago, being isolated to an extent that is difficult to conceive today, albeit that there was some interaction and commonality with the *I-Kiribati* inhabitants of neighbouring islands, the possibilities of *I-Nikunau* constituting a society seem self-evident—even when they travelled, they always expected to return to Nikunau, except through marriage or to live with kin on other islands. However, this state of being together geographically, and away from virtually everyone else on the planet, was only one of many ties by which they were socioed to one another and that gave rise to the society in question, as may be implied from the histories related in various parts of S4.1 to S4.13.

Ascendant among these other ties were *I-Nikunau*'s social relationships based on kinship, including *boti* and *utu*; these figured in their demographical, political, spiritual, social and organisational circumstances, among others (see S4.2, S4.7, S4.8, S4.10 and S4.11). Further prominent ties were that *I-Nikunau* lived as and in *mwenga* situated on *kainga*, both being physically and socially similar. They shared in the same skills and crafts, and lived on the same victuals procured in similar ways from adjacent *aba* and marine areas. Their grasp of the world was shaped by what they heard, saw, smelt, touched and tasted on their atoll and the ocean and atmosphere surrounding it. They developed a common language to

communicate, and to express how, collectively and historically, they interpreted the observations, etc. just referred to, including how they imagined this world had come about, what they were doing in it and what happened to those who died. These interpretations and imaginings were an important part of the knowledge, understandings beliefs and values they shared. All the matters just enumerated were reflected in *I-Nikunau*'s long-established, but still dynamic (e.g., see Maude, 1963; McCreary & Boardman, 1968), myriad of common customs, rituals, etc. (i.e., *te katei ni Nikunau*) of 11 or 12 generations ago; these covered the roles they should play out in their lifetimes and how they should conduct themselves, collectively and individually.

About 10 generations ago, *I-Nikunau*'s ancestors encountered whalers and, since, all the circumstances of *I-Nikunau* as a people discussed in S4.1 to S4.13 have changed rapidly, and with them, their societal circumstances. The adverb "rapidly" is apposite when one compares how similar changes of equivalent substance and magnitude were spread across the history of many more than 10 generations of the race and societies to which these whalers belonged, namely *I-Matang*. This same race has featured most prominently in *I-Nikunau*'s subsequent history, be it as traders, Pacific labour trade employers, missionaries, colonial officials, phosphateers, World War II combatants, aid workers, consultants or the majority population in metropolitan countries where *I-Nikunau* diasporic communities now occur.

In discussing the types of circumstances covered in S4.1 to S4.13, a good many rapid changes to *I-Nikunau*'s societal circumstances are referred to or implied, including by reference to their encounters with *I-Matang* and other outsiders in the roles listed above. This rapidity of change to Kiribati society was observed by Sabatier (1939/1977) a century ago, and Macdonald (1982a) made a similar observation three decades ago; it is a pattern often repeated in many Pacific Island societies (see Nunn, 2013). Here I direct attention to the changes in question by concentrating on the changes in the ties that have soiled *I-Nikunau* over the past two centuries.

Geographically, *I-Nikunau* are still to be found on Nikunau, but in a far less isolated state; as well as sharing their atoll with other *I-Kiribati* and outsiders, many of them impermanent or transitory, their economy features imports and exports, and they have transport, postal and telecommunications links to the outside world. They are also to be found on Tarawa in sufficient numbers to constitute a diasporic community, but as the people around them on Tarawa are not that different in appearance, language and other social, cultural and economic traits, they exhibit integration (Berry, 1997, 2005) in that society quite strongly, as I claimed

in S3.3.1. New Zealand and Britain are two of the several other places where I-Nikunau now live and where they are part of diasporic communities. But these communities differ in two ways from the one on Tarawa: first, rather than only comprising *I-Nikunau*, these are *I-Kiribati* diasporic communities; and second, whereas the one in Britain exhibits a significant degree of integration into British society, owing to the couples who founded it being a mix of *I-Matang* and *I-Kiribati*, the ones in New Zealand exhibits high degrees of separation, being mostly comprised of I-Kiribati singles, couples and families and still expanding mostly through immigration from Tarawa (see S3.3.1., S3.3.2, S4.1 and S4.2).

Demographically, although not usually living on adjacent *aba*, except on Nikunau, *I-Nikunau* still keep close physically, where possible, and socially, adopting communications technology as rapidly as its availability and lowering of costs allow, and placing a high priority on having that technology. They also share their *mwenga* with others in their diasporic communities when the need arises. This is reflective of them continuing socially to value kinship highly, within each community and across their communities. That includes the continuing significance for *I-Nikunau* of *utu*, albeit adapted to modern circumstances, as is evident from the extent that *utu* is used in this paper in writing about the present (cf. Gilkes, 2006; Ratuva, 2014; Roman, 2013; Thompson, 2016). *Utu*'s survival as an institution is probably because it is mainly about blood ties, social and economic rights and obligations over land and other resources, and temporal knowledge, whereas *boti*, which is now virtually extinct as an institution, had much to do with pre-colonial religious, political and judicial matters, all of which were targets of colonial change. Indeed, particularly in the geographical absence of very many *utu* around them, *I-Nikunau* have come to also value *baronga* and similar strong or fictive kinship ties. *I-Nikunau* are also cognisant of how kinship is part of the societies in which they live (e.g., on Tarawa, within the *Māori* and range of Pacific Island peoples that form part of New Zealand society).

They share in the same victuals, now procured through subsistence and market means of production, distribution and exchange, depending on circumstances, the range of victuals having broadened and changed to some extent. Victuals continue to be as important socially as they are nutritionally, including at *botaki*. Indeed, *botaki*, *bowi* and similar remain a central feature of life on Nikunau and in diasporic communities, and where one can see demonstrations of quasi-traditional conduct, roles, custom, beliefs and values, as people come together for one purpose or another. In metropolitan countries in particular, but elsewhere also, this continuance of quasi-tradition is despite life's economic, social, political and other

pressures to behave differently, not only to survive economically but also to conform with local societal expectations in order to be accepted and “get on” permanently. This consideration of permanence in metropolitan countries in most cases reflects lack of any intention to return to Nikunau or even Tarawa, except to visit family and, perhaps, out of curiosity about whence one’s ancestors originated.

As to *I-Nikunau*’s present grasp of the world, this is even more widely shared than in the past among *utu*, *baronga*, etc. through stories based on personal experiences, etc., even on Nikunau. More *I-Nikunau* than ever before have more comprehensive stories, etc. about peoples and societies around them and at a distance, through media of various kinds (e.g., social, video and audio, broadcast, social, print). Supplementing this, and indeed of possibly at least equivalent importance, particularly in metropolitan countries, are formal education and said media. Nevertheless, how *I-Nikunau* interpret these experiences, stories, education and media sources and reach meanings from them individually and collectively is still bound by the language(s) they work in; in many cases, even among those living in metropolitan countries but not brought up there, this is chiefly *te taetae ni Kiribati*, albeit a modern version to which many words, terms and phrases have been added over the past two centuries, while, over the same period, quite a lot of words, terms and phrases have largely fallen out of use through lack of relevance or applicability. This experience, etc. of the world has led to many changes in beliefs and values, particularly reflecting the societies in which they live. Thus, particularly away from Nikunau through Tarawa and to metropolitan countries, egalitarian, democratic and individual freedom principles have become accentuated, and gender discrimination, gerontocratic authority and even religious observance is much reduced. Nevertheless, adherence to principles of self-reliance and of collective fairness, sharing and hospitality, and aversion to conspicuous personal displays of social or economic advantage still continue within and across communities, regardless of the societal circumstances.

Coming to a much changed grasp or understanding of the world has happened alongside *I-Nikunau* being inducted into an increasingly interdependent global society. This condition even applies to those remaining on Nikunau, as raised above already in some respects but worth repeating and expanding. Thus, they are socially interdependent with the other societies around them, whether *I-Beru*, *I-Tabiteuea*, *I-Tarawa*, etc. in Kiribati or *I-Matang*, *Pākehā*, *Māori*, Solomon Islander, Chinese, etc. outside it. They are economically interdependent, supplying labour and copra, and permitting foreign fleets, such as from Japan, Taiwan, Korea, the United States and Spain, to fish their Extended Economic Zone for

tuna under licence, for example; and in return receiving goods from Japan, China, Australia, etc., services and cash, including that received by the Republic Government and that it invests abroad under the auspices of the Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund. They are politically interdependent—some might say dependent—with Kiribati being a member of the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund, to name but two bodies that have some influence over *I-Nikunau* development—others include agencies, etc. associated with the governments of Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, etc. These conditions extend to spiritual interdependence, worshipping the same deity—E tuaña Aberaam (≡ the God of Abraham) (Bingham 1907)—as many others around the world, and adhering to the ethical and moral rules associated with the multiplicity of denominations within this religion. They are culturally interdependent, as is exemplified even in the case of diasporic communities in metropolitan New Zealand. The communities in New Zealand, as those elsewhere, seemingly maintain and re-construct their distinctiveness, while simultaneously acquiring footholds in the host community(ies); this is notwithstanding how much separation the communities there still exhibit (Fedor, 2012; Gillard & Dyson, 2012; Roman, 2013; Taberannang, 2011; Thompson, 2016) (cf. Agyemang & Lehman, 2013; Berry, 1997, 2005; Watkin Lui, 2009).

It is through these interdependencies that *I-Nikunau* have been increasingly able to emigrate from Nikunau, and now from Tarawa, to settle on Tarawa and in the Solomon and Line Islands, and now in metropolitan countries. Most of this interdependence is asymmetrical, the distribution of benefit favouring the hosts of the settlement; nevertheless, the settlers still regard their settlement as advantageous, such as in terms of greater access to cash and to secure their children's futures, as well as theirs. It is through emigration that *I-Nikunau*'s societal circumstances have changed and are changing, the changes not only affecting the emigrants but also those left behind, at least for the time being, but who many outsiders and increasing numbers of insiders believe will have to emigrate because of sea-level rise, or perish through drought, changes to living conditions, public health issues, etc. (e.g., see Kuruppu, 2009; Roy & Connell, 1991).

5 Conclusion

In this paper, I have set out to illuminate and stimulate interest in the demographical, economic, social and political dynamics of peoples associated with atolls, particularly in the Pacific. I focused on the *I-Nikunau* people for two basic reasons: first, for the reasons set out in S2, in which I indicated that although *I-Nikunau* more or less started out from one atoll, the majority now forms a diaspora, whose coming about is where much of the novelty and value

of this paper lies, compared with focusing on a territory, such as an atoll or an atoll nation state; and second, simply because I am in a position that Roslender and Dillard (2003) have labelled “privileged” among a culturally homogeneous group of people with indigenous ties to one atoll. I used empirical materials gathered in this position to construct a rough story. I then elaborated that story and, with help from ideas, concepts, evidence, etc. in a large collection I accumulated of secondary sources, many of them cited in the paper and listed in the reference list, turned the story into the descriptive, retrospective analysis and interpretation now presented.

The story is partitioned into the 14 themes as set out in Figure 7 and foreshadowed in introducing the analysis in S4. As indicated there, these particular themes, and the notion of breaking the whole down into such parts, reflects my predominantly *I-Matang* culture and thinking, informed by literature mostly written by people of that ilk. It contrasts with *I-Nikunau* culture, in which thinking, activities, things, rituals, etc. seem wholistic and inseparable (cf. Autio, 2010; Kambati, 1992; Whincup, 2010); this is notwithstanding the national motto *te mauri, te raoi, ao te tabomoa*, and how the three terms it comprises are used as a basis of analysis in Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs (2007). However, I have attempted to present my analysis and interpretation in a way that makes links to previous themes and their histories, without I hope being too repetitive. My intention is that the reader obtains a sense of the interrelatedness of *I-Nikunau*'s circumstances and, from that, appreciates the experiences through which *I-Nikunau* as a people have gone and are now undergoing are better understood when considered wholistically (cf. Kuruppu, 2009). Indeed, in leaving organisational, distributional, cultural and societal circumstances to the end, I hope to have provided some synthesising of matters covered in detail under the earlier themes, not only of where *I-Nikunau* are in these respects, but also how they have got there, in order to inform where they are going, not just geographically but in every sense of *te mauri* (demography, natural resources, water, environment, health, education, housing, social welfare and social infrastructure), *te raoi* (social capital, community life, local institutions, crime and the justice system, religion, political authority and governance), and *te tabomoa* (economic activities and economies, modes of production, transport and communications infrastructure).

On the question of what about peoples of other atolls, in Kiribati, in the Pacific more generally, and elsewhere? Has this paper anything to offer them and the researchers, etc. who are studying them? This is not the first paper to consider demographical dynamics of peoples,

or dynamics of demographic change or history, even in relation to an atoll, nor of economic dynamics of peoples, nor etc., however it is unusual, if not unique, for bringing these issues together in such detail, either for an atoll people or otherwise. One might therefore wonder why, and suggest that it is because it is of no importance. And yet, in using the accelerating accumulation of papers about Kiribati, or about *I-Kiribati* as immigrants or settlers, in diaspora, as mostly stimulated seemingly by interest in climate change, I cannot help but notice the countless references, incidental or more substantial, to many of the occurrences, events, enduring traditions, abandoned traditions, changes in circumstances, constancies in circumstances, etc. that I have elaborated in this paper. While one might question the relevance of including some of these matters in some of these papers, not to mention the validity and reliability at times, that so many researchers make so many references would suggest that they have some importance for grappling with the complexities of research about the future of peoples still inhabiting the world's atolls and facing whatever challenges this future may bring, climate-related and otherwise. It is on this basis that I commend this paper to researchers concerned with atolls as source of ideas and a research approach.

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Notes

¹ After Commodore John Byron, whose ships *Dolphin* and *Tamar* encountered the atoll during their voyage around the world (Officer on Board the Said Ship, 1767).

² The concept of diaspora has evolved over the past half-century or so (see Cohen & Van Hear, 2008). Here, I use it in the broad senses of a people who identify with a place, that is Nikunau Atoll in this study, and who have settled in groups elsewhere, and the collection of places inhabited by the groups and the actual dispersion processes. Regards the groups in each place, I refer to them as “diasporic communities” (cf. Shuval, 2000), using “community” in the sense of a body of people who live in the same place and have ethnicity or culture in common.

³ *Kiribati* (/ˈkɪrɪbæts/) is the local enunciation of *Gilberts*. The name arises from Captain Thomas Gilbert, who, in 1788, commanded a British East India Company ship that sailed through the Kiribati Archipelago bound from Port Jackson to Canton (Gilbert, 1968; Richards, 1986). Except when stating proper names or quoting other sources, Kiribati and Kiribati Islands (and Kiribati Archipelago) are used in this document in preference to Gilberts and Gilbert Islands.

⁴ *I-Kiribati* (/ˈi kɪrɪbæts/), like *I-Nikunau* (/ˈi nɪkʊnəʊ/), is a word in *te taetae ni Kiribati* (or Gilbertese), the Austronesian-type language unique to and spoken (and increasingly written) across the Kiribati Archipelago. The prefix “*I-*” attached to an island or group of islands (other examples are *I-Tarawa*, *I-Beru* and *I-Matang*) indicates persons with social and cultural ties to the island or group in question in an identifying or belonging sense, rather than a mere residential sense. In relation to Nikunau, *Kain Nikunau* has a similar meaning, although it may infer being normally resident on Nikunau. Incidentally, singular words in *te taetae ni Kiribati* are distinguished from plural ones by being preceded by *te*, and so to refer to a single person, one says, for example, *te I-Nikunau*.

⁵ The name arises from being thought at first to be from Matang, a place associated with fair people in some Kiribati Island’s legends (Grimble, 1989). *I-Nikunau* distinguish *I-Matang* by skin colour only; while there is some appreciation of language differences, say between English, German and French, differences of class, socio-economic status and Anglosphere country of origin are much less well understood.

⁶ I am grateful to Uentabo Mackenzie for bringing my attention to this document, one of a series dealing with most islands in turn using a the same contents structure.

⁷ A further elaboration is inferred by Maude (1963), who explains that a person’s *utu* is in theory an indefinitely extensible category of near and distant kindred, but in practice one bounded by knowing with whom one shares a common ancestor. In my experience, this often amounts to scores or even hundreds of people, given the still keen knowledge of genealogy among *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati*, the common ancestor being possibly several generations back and long dead. However, nowadays, *I-Nikunau* usually distinguish between *utu*, meaning *utu ni kaan* (≅ close kin), and *koraki* (i.e., broader-kindred *utu*) (personal communications from Hagnes Dixon and Dick Overy). Thus, depending on the context, the term *utu* is often used to refer to near kindred sharing a common ancestor, say, within four or five generations and exhibiting this solidarity; *koraki*, on the

other hand, are usually are more distant contemporary consanguine relatives, with whom the solidarity is not quite as keen but still strong.

⁸ According to Maude (1963), a generation corresponds to about 25 years. Generations were used in compiling a genealogical tree during this study for *ana utu [Name of person] ni kaan* going back six generations. The tree was compiled from oral sources among *te utu ni kaan* (i.e., [Name]'s closest kin). The birth year of the oldest man in the sixth generation was in the 1850s and the youngest female in the 1870s. This gap partly reflects male marriage partners being 5–10 years older than female partners by virtue of how males and females were seen, or initiated, as adults (Grimble, 1921); such a gap was also evident in official censuses a century later (see Pusinelli, 1947; Zwart & Groenewegen, 1968; Veltman, 1982).

⁹ The term “Outer Islands” refers to all the islands in the Republic of Kiribati apart from Tarawa. The term is widespread in the Pacific (see Connell, 2010).

¹⁰ I am grateful to the late Tiarum Tiare/O’Connor for letting his niece, Hegnes Dixon, and myself accompany him to this shrine.

¹¹ For photographs, see Alaima et al. (1979), Hockings (1984), Koch (1965/1986) and Whincup (2010).

¹² For photographs and illustrations of *mwaneaba*, see Alaima et al. (1979), Maude (1963) and Whincup (2010).

¹³ The name *Kiribati Uniting Church* (KUC) was adopted in 2014 by the bi-annual assembly of what had previously been known as the *Kiribati Protestant Church* (KPC). However, the validity of this name changing process is presently the subject of a court case lodged by some members of the Church, and it is possible that the Church in question might revert to its former name—another possibility is that it might split into two organisations. Thus, I use the acronym KPC/KUC to refer to this church.

¹⁴ The occurrence of buildings to which the name *mwaneaba* is applied is typical of most institutions and corporate bodies not only on Nikunau but also, and more so, on Tarawa; this is irrespective of the widening disparity in construction, uses and protocols applying compared with the traditional *mwaneaba* (see Whincup, 2010).

¹⁵ The two words *boboti* and *mronron* were first written by Bingham in the 1850s (see Bingham, 1907). *Boboti*, which roughly translates as a coming together of the people (see Trussel & Groves, 2003) is now used in reference to government-regulated cooperative societies. *Mronron*, which roughly translates as spherical or round (see Trussel & Groves, 2003), refers to informal or proto consumer cooperative societies.

¹⁶ Fresh sap obtained from inflorescence of the coconut palm.

¹⁷ Copra is the dried meat obtained by collecting, splitting and drying coconuts.

¹⁸ Stipulations in laws, etc. regarding entitlements and prohibitions on grounds of age are compromised still by the infrequency with which births were registered, certainly up to the 1980s and possibly even today; this is notwithstanding a legal obligation to register them dating from Revised Native Laws 1916 and facilities having existed on Nikunau to do so for almost as long.

¹⁹ As selling their copra, collecting their money and, often, turning this money straight into goods affects the routines of the men working as copra cutters on days when they complete these transactions, I shall detail these

matters here. The Republic Government as actual purchaser of the copra is represented on Nikunau by designated staff with offices in the Island Council administration building. During any weekday morning, a copra cutter can weigh in his (still all male) copra at one of the atoll's stores. The storekeeper records each weighing in and compiles a list of all copra received that morning. Around noon, the storekeeper takes the list to the Island Council office where it is processed by a clerk. As part of the paperwork s/he then does, the clerk calculates the total amount that should be paid to cutters on the list. The calculation is based on the guaranteed price per kilogram set by the Republic Government. The clerk hands the processed list to the Island Council treasurer, who then gives the storekeeper the amount of money needed to pay the cutters. The storekeeper returns to his store and, in the course of the afternoon, the cutters return to collect the money they are owed—by now, several hours will have passed since a cutter first visited the store to deposit the copra. The copra cutters either use the cash received to purchase goods there and then, or hold onto it to be able to meet other needs for cash.

²⁰ In terms of premises associated with social and political activities, these include churches, primary and secondary schools, tertiary education and training institutions, the large central hospital and a few smaller or even tiny medical facilities, the national library, the museum, coastal defences, embassies and high commissions, numerous offices of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), urban councils and government ministries, and the complex around *Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu* (i.e., parliament). Regarding commerce, they also include innumerable retail outlets, which range in size from hawkers' fish stalls and roadside kiosks (of which there are hundreds), to half a dozen supermarkets (the largest in 2009 had six aisles and three checkouts but I now understand from confidential personal communication (2017) that the supermarkets have, in total, 30–40 aisles and about 20 checkouts), a few garages, several bars and eating places, various construction and similar business depots, small works producing biscuits and processing seaweed and copra, business offices, storage facilities and workshops, two power generating plants, a few hotels and guesthouses, three or four bank branches, the container terminal, wharves and harbour buildings, and the international airport (an inventory is included in Castalia Strategic Advisors, 2005, although it is increasingly out of date).

²¹ The Colony Government went into exile in Fiji between 1941 and 1943 while war raged in the vicinity of the Kiribati and Marshall Islands. Its officials were evacuated from the Colony in 1941 along with British Phosphate Commission staff and other *I-Matang* in anticipation of an invasion by Japanese forces of Banaba, Tarawa and some other Kiribati islands—the Japanese intended to establish a forward military position in the central Pacific (i.e., the airstrip and port facilities on Betio) and restore Banaba as a source of phosphate, which the British Phosphate Commission had ceased supplying them with a few years earlier. A few Colony Government officials returned to Tarawa with the American-led Allied Forces who invaded it in 1943 to expel the Japanese forces of occupation in what became known as the *Battle of Tarawa*. Tarawa was subsequently decided on as the Colony Government headquarters, these previously having been on Banaba (Macdonald, 1982a; Resture, 1998; Wright, 2000).

²² By this term, I am referring to economic activities and social relations associated with the members of a society transforming natural objects into useful implements, and distributing and exchanging them. This is from Wickramasinghe and Hopper (2005), who explain that modes of production encompass work relationships and

exchange relations, and their consequences extend to urbanisation, cultural beliefs, ideologies, politics and social classes.

²³ These dwellings were erected at various times by various interests. The Colony Government erected some to house its incoming *I-Matang*, *I-Nikunau* and other *non-I-Tarawa* employees—these houses were graded according to status and those for native employees, *I-Kiribati* and Tuvaluans, were of a smaller, cheaper type, often arranged in closely packed rows. The Republic Government erected some for similar employment reasons and for social housing reasons, often in conjunction with aid organisations and as part of aid projects. Foreign governmental agencies, aid organisations and private companies have also erected some to cater for their staff on Tarawa. Some were erected by private citizens, usually of mixed ancestry and still having overseas connections.

²⁴ Most *I-Matang* and other *non-I-Kiribati* involved in the Colony Government and its agencies on Tarawa, and many working on contract in the 1980s and 1990s, were present for at least several months and often a few years, and so lived with their families on the atoll in houses built for this purpose. In contrast, many aid contracts involving *I-Matang* and other *non-I-Kiribati* are given nowadays to itinerant consultants. They visit Tarawa for only days or weeks at a time, rather than months or years, and stay in hotels and guesthouses. Their families rarely accompany them.

²⁵ Similar perceptions apply to victuals, clothing, equipment, almost everything in fact.

²⁶ For one reason or another, the once significant practice of victuals (e.g., dried fish, pulverised and pressed pandanus, *kamwaimwai*) being sent occasionally from Nikunau to *utu* on Tarawa has decreased significantly. Cash and imported goods used to be sent the other way but not as an explicit exchange, and this too has declined.

²⁷ Many readers may take this state of affairs of working for a living for granted, and may be bemused by it having to be said. However, seen from a traditional *I-Nikunau* perspective, it is still novel (cf. Lawrence, 1983); indeed, there are limits still to whom *I-Nikunau* regard as legitimate employers in the context of any *kamama* attached to working for other people or employing people to do work one should be doing oneself (cf. Duncan, 2014).

²⁸ These *mronron* may be formed by *utu*, various types of community groups, such as groups based on the settlement in which one lives on Tarawa, or particular church congregations in that settlement, or all *I-Nikunau* in that settlement, or *I-Nikunau* originating from the same *te kawa* on Nikunau.

²⁹ National Statistics Office (2006) reported average fortnightly household incomes on Tarawa were about AU\$450 in 2006. The rates of pay for most work seem quite low: pay within the public service is mostly higher than outside it, but the highest public sector salaries are under AU\$20,000 per annum (International Monetary Fund, 2014).

³⁰ The bananas are imported from Butaritari; they are perhaps the only commercial import of significance on Tarawa from any of the Outer Islands.

³¹ Throughout its duration, English was the official language of the Colony Government, including as the written language of the native governments, cooperative societies and island councils, although at least some

district officers came to speak *te taetae ni Kiribati* and some rules, etc., were translated from English into *te taetae ni Kiribati*; English was also the main language of the British Phosphate Commission. Today, English and *te taetae ni Kiribati* are both official languages of the Republic Government, with English ascendant in written documents, including in legislation (see Kiribati Primary Materials, 2017) and official documents (e.g., Government of Kiribati, 2016; Kiribati Government, 2016), and in information technology systems. English is also the oral and written language used in dealing with aid organisations. In contrast, *te taetae ni Kiribati* is the oral language within government, including in *Te Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu* and local and island government, where increasingly *te taetae ni Kiribati* has come to be used in written documents too. Without doubt, *te taetae ni Kiribati* is the oral language of everyday life, in which it gradually came to be written more widely than in the bible (Bingham, 1907) and other religious texts.

³² United Nations Children’s Fund (2014) claims that the United States of America had the largest, with New Zealand second, but I have not been able to corroborate the number it cites for the United States, that is 1,858; indeed, this number is far more than my Kiribati anecdotal sources suggest and is inconsistent with data in Bedford and Bedford (2013) and Roman (2013)—Roman puts the number as low as 76.

³³ For a detailed discussion of events and concerns of the British authorities regarding protectorates and colonies, see Munro and Firth (1986). Regarding the de facto status of the northern and central Kiribati Islands, and Banaba, they argue that the status of protectorate was short-lived in practice, and that the formalisation of colony status in 1916 was as much as 20 years after this status had actually arisen.

³⁴ Nikunau is 770 km from Banaba and 495 km from Tarawa.

³⁵ *Line* probably refers to the Equator. However, see Best (1983) for clarification of positions of whaling grounds.

³⁶ Unlike Banaba, Nauru was never part of the Colony, instead being administered by on the British Empire’s behalf by Australia from 1919, as per the territorial redistribution provisions negotiated at the Paris Peace Conference and set out in the Nauru Island Agreement 1919. Before, it was part of the Imperial German Pacific Protectorates and other German territories in the Pacific; these were shared out among Japan, Australia, New Zealand and the British Empire as Mandates by the League of Nations (Blakeslee, 1922).

³⁷ It was the practice of the authorities on Banaba and Nauru, that is the British Phosphate Commission and respective governmental authorities, to house families from each labour supplying island adjacently, thus forming, for example, an *I-Nikunau* community of mixed gender and varying ages. *Unimane* were contracted to liaise between a community and these authorities, who saw these extant cultural means as a way to maintain order and social stability.

³⁸ *I-Nikunau* continued working on Nauru until mining ceased there in the early 2000s.

³⁹ The physical process of remitting cash to Nikunau has been physically problematic and mostly costly; indeed, it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that there were any postal services on Nikunau through which money could be transferred telegraphically or otherwise. In any case, although it has become somewhat easier to transmit cash to Tarawa, through the Australian commercial bank and Western Union agents there, and thence to Nikunau, even today, cash is not that useful on Nikunau. There is only a very limited range of goods available from stores and their prices reflect the costs of shipping, etc. *I-Nikunau* working away get more for their money

by purchasing goods where they work. This was exemplified by those working on Banaba and Nauru, where they could shop in stores catering primarily for *I-Matang* staff, etc. and ship their purchases to Nikunau on the labour recruiting ships administered by the Colony Government. Nowadays, an issue faced by *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* working away are avoiding freight costs, excess baggage charges, etc. arising from transporting goods home themselves.

⁴⁰ By way of further explanation, whereas *I-Nikunau* were contracted to work on the phosphate islands for only two or three years at a time, during the last few decades of mining, the time they actually spent there lengthened. This arose because more skills were entailed in labouring jobs (e.g., because machinery replaced pickaxes and shovels), and so in order, for example, to save on training costs, the British Phosphate Commission renewed contracts as much as possible, especially to retain the most efficient and reliable workers. Thus, a family might be absent from Nikunau for as long as 10 years in a few cases. Children attended the British Phosphate Commission-sponsored schools, which, although no doubt well meant, did not provide learning relevant to living on Nikunau, and, as there was very little need or opportunity for families to engage in even a modicum of subsistence activity life (e.g., because they were supplied with rations, they did not own any land)—a few men would occasionally go fishing out of a yearning to eat fresh fish—neither boys nor girls learnt knowledge and skills associated with this life.

⁴¹ The report to the British Parliament refers to not only Manra (also known as Hull) and Abariringa (or Canton) in the Phoenix Group—Orona (or Sydney) and Nikumaroro (or Gardner) are omitted—but also to Christmas (now spelt Kiritimati) Atoll in the Line Islands (see House of Commons, 1940). However, it was not until the 1980s that some *I-Nikunau* were resettled on Kiritimati. Most of this resettlement was 20 years or more after its use ceased as a military base, including for testing nuclear bombs; indeed, some settlers were involved in its eventual decontamination clean up (Steadman, 2006).

⁴² The names of *kawa* on Ghizo Island are Titiana and New Manra; on Wagina Island, they are Kukutin, Arariki and Nikumaroro; and on Alu Island, they are Kamaleai and Harapa.

⁴³ The first official census was in 1931, when the atoll's population is recorded as 1,674 (National Statistics Office, 2013; Pusinelli, 1947). The most reliable numbers before that appear to be those calculated by Bedford et al. (1980).

⁴⁴ Further to Note 21, except for rare visits by Japanese patrols looking for Allied coast watchers and a visit(s) by Allied troops searching out any remaining Japanese troops, World War II passed Nikunau by at a distance. However, some activities in the vicinity were halted, notably the shipping vital to the copra trade and workers going away to Banaba. Indeed, it was *I-Nikunau* on Banaba when the Japanese invaded who were embroiled in the violence, notably as told by *Karongoa* and recorded in Maude (1991).

⁴⁵ Private customary rights over marine areas used to be vested in *te I-Nikunau* in the same way as *aba*. However, these private rights seem to have been eroded or have ceased altogether according to Hockings (1984). This appears to have followed on from steps the Colony Government took in the 1940s to curtail the rights to marine areas to fish traps only, leaving the rest as commons (Roniti 1988; Thomas, 2003).

⁴⁶ Hockings (1984) includes an account of how linkages arose through the travels of Taburitongoun (see S3.1) between *Te Atu ni Uea Mwaneaba* in Tabomatang on Nikunau and *Te Atu ne Uea Mwaneaba* on Onotoa.

⁴⁷ In relating that *mwenga* comprising *te kainga* could and would be of a few different *utu*, Hockings (1984) points out that this was more often because any consanguinity between *mwenga* was so many generations ago that it was forgotten than because of absence of any consanguinity at all.

⁴⁸ *Kawa* in the sense of settlements outside the ancestral *kainga* were a pre-1820s phenomenon but then were more piecemeal than those discussed here and were a result of overcrowding of established *kainga* (Hockings, 1984).

⁴⁹ Regarding the significances of land as ancestral, as well material or use-related, similar traditions apply elsewhere in the Pacific, including among Aboriginal Australians, as analysed by Gibson (2000) and Greer and Patel (2000); and *Māori*, as analysed by Kearins and Hooper (2002). These three analyses include the native people being blatantly dispossessed of land, among other things, in furtherance of European interests of one sort or another.

⁵⁰ The clear up resulted in scrap abandoned by the Japanese forces of occupation (1942–1943) and their American military expulsers being sold and the proceeds of a few hundred thousand dollars used to establish a now sovereign fund, the Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund, usually referred to as the RERF (GEIC, 1957). The Colony Government added some of the phosphate royalties it received in the 1960s and 1970s to this fund. However, the fund, now valued at AU\$871m (Kiribati Government, 2016), really prospered when the Republic Government began making substantial surpluses because of tuna fishery licence fees, and through investment income—the fund is invested in London and other stock market securities (but not in Kiribati businesses!)—being retained in the fund (Pretes & Gibson, 2008; Pretes & Petersen, 2004). Remarkably, neither when the fund was created or when it was added to did the Colony Government and others have any inkling about the great potential of Kiribati’s tuna fishery, particularly as a source of licensing revenue; this is evident in, for example, GEIC (1970), Government of Kiribati (1983) and Bertram and Watters (1984).

⁵¹ Even as recently as the 1980s, from personal experience, the way in which copra was taken to a trade store and exchanged immediately for goods meant that copra was cash as far as most *I-Nikunau* were concerned. Today, as per Note 19, the notes and coins that *I-Nikunau* receive from depositing copra with a trade store cum copra buying agency may only be in their possession for short periods before being used to make purchases or to pay other extant obligations—incidentally, Nikunau still has no bank branches, let alone automatic teller machines and debit or credit card facilities.

⁵² These women were generally unwanted as marriage partners by *I-Nikunau* men, their preference being for virgins, with consequences for young women being closely supervised before marriage by their *utu* (Grimble, 1921; McCreary & Boardman, 1968).

⁵³ For over a decade up to 1908, Tarawa had been the Colony Government headquarters. These headquarters were then relocated to Banaba because, at the behest of its principals in London, facilitating the mining of phosphate became ascendant in its official’s priorities. Although *I-Kiribati* labour was still vital once mining on Banaba resumed after the war, the British Phosphate Commission, now very much Australian-oriented, was less keen on the presence on Banaba of the Colony Government’s mostly British officials, and so was more than happy for the headquarters to be located on Tarawa rather than Banaba (Macdonald, 1982a; Williams & Macdonald, 1985). During the period when Banaba was the headquarters, Tarawa was still prominent in how the

Kiribati Islands were administered and as a commercial centre—Sabatier (1939/1977) describes Betio in particular as a “mini-capital” (p. 285).

⁵⁴ Perhaps strange at this distance in time is that the prospect of expenditure on economic and social development, or funding same, had not been part of the equation when the Kiribati Islands were annexed: such activities were seen as outside the remit of colonial activities in the 19th and early 20th Centuries (Morgan, 1980). This view only began changing during the Great Depression, particularly when it was realised that providing aid-in-kind to a colony would boost manufacturing industry in Britain and perhaps help a colony develop, hence the timing of the Colonial Development Act 1929 and the dual rationale for establishing the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund (see Abbot, 1971).

⁵⁵ As alluded to in S4.1, attempts to implement the original plan (i.e., GEIC, 1946), which was based on devolved development, rather than centralisation, turned out to be far from smooth (Macdonald, 1982a). Not only was the post-war period in the Pacific region characterised by shortages of personnel and physical resources but also, since its evacuation to Fiji in 1941, the Colony Government had been entirely dependent on subventions from the British Government, which was itself in dire financial straits following the war (Morgan, 1980). This dependence reduced as trade in the Colony was restored and as phosphate mining was resumed—the Colony Government facilitated a resumption in the supply of *I-Kiribati* and Tuvaluan labour to Banaba and the supply of same to Nauru grew in importance (Shlomowitz & Munro, 1992). By 1952, local revenue once again more than covered the Colony Government’s recurrent expenditures, as it had from 1895 to 1941, but as the possibility of subventions continued (until 1955), so did the conditions that accompanied them, including tight oversight of budgets, etc. from the Treasury in London, which Colony Government officials (and their counterparts in other parts of the Empire – see Morgan, 1980) found difficulty coping with administratively. Subsequently, during the 1960s and 1970s, local revenue was further boosted by the Colony Government persuading and coercing the British Phosphate Commission on Banaba to increase its per-tonne-of-ore contributions (Macdonald, 1982a; Weeramantry, 1992; Williams & Macdonald, 1985).

⁵⁶ The first fleet to pay such fees was from Japan in an agreement negotiated by the first-ever Republic Government led by Jeremia Tabai (Macdonald, 1982a). However, vessels from some other countries would not recognise any obligation to pay licence fees. This changed during the controversy following the Republic Government entering into an agreement for vessels from the Soviet Union to fish under licence (see “Cold War: Fishing,” 1986; Van Trease, 1993b). Part of resolving the matter to the satisfaction of the former colonial power and its minions and allies was that they persuaded the countries who had refused to pay to change their minds and agree to pay—for a historical and current list, see Williams et al. (2017).

⁵⁷ Whereas the amount of grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund and similar totalled just over AU\$2m annually (equivalent to AU\$12m at 2017 prices) in the mid-1970s (GEIC, 1976), the budget for 2017 (Kiribati Government, 2016) indicates that the annual value of development projects is estimated at over AU\$153m. This includes AU\$22m from the Republic Government’s own resources, with the rest mainly comprising the total of values put on aid-in-kind by the 30 or so external donors involved in projects. Each donor keeps accounts for their projects locally or at a distance, classifying them as grants for Kiribati, or occasionally as soft loans to the Republic Government, despite most of the money going to people in places other than Kiribati, to pay for fees, airfares, supplies, etc. (cf. Abbot, 1971).

⁵⁸ In 2009, I visited this junior secondary school at Rungata and one of the many on Tarawa, and so was able to compare them. While neither was resourced particularly well compared, say, to the New Zealand schools I am familiar with, the one on Nikunau lacked for things that on Tarawa were possibly taken for granted (e.g., teaching supplies, learning materials, mains electricity and lighting) and was in much greater need of repair.

⁵⁹ These operating grants are an extension of specific and general grants and subventions introduced by the Colony Government in the late 1960s around minor development projects. They entailed financially restrictive conditions, including in matters of process, reporting and audit, all of which meant a continuing lack of financial autonomy for the Nikunau and other island councils of the time (Macdonald, 1972, 1982a). While some conditions continue in form, their substance seems weaker.

⁶⁰ According to Macdonald (1982a), pregnancies arising from casual relationships with foreigners, commercial ones on board whaling ships, for example, were invariably aborted, and so mixed race children were not as common on Nikunau as they might have been before traders took up residence.

⁶¹ Nikunau is also reputed to have had a custom of marriage by rape (see Grimble, 1989), perhaps mostly symbolic and being equivalent to elopement.

⁶² Preparing food in pans for frying, boiling, etc. did not arise until after the 1820s. Before, food was cooked in earth ovens or on open fires, sometimes wrapped in leaves (Lewis, 1988; Di Piazza, 1999).

⁶³ Important differences between staff employed by the Colony Government, including teachers, doctors, etc., and aid staff, consultants and other workers arise from the latter usually only staying on Tarawa or elsewhere in Kiribati for shorter periods than the former, and increasingly so, and their families being unlikely to accompany them, for lack of accommodation, suitable schools, etc. This particularly applies to those proffering policy advice; they are apt to treat Kiribati as just another developing country, on which they can write reports about topics and situations they have struggled to evaluate adequately, especially from a local perspective, before moving onto their next assignment. Their perceptions of so-called problems and lists of recommendations can give impressions of being as concerned to tick various boxes on their contracts as to be effective in more magnanimous ways (cf. Bantekas, Kypraios & Isaac, 2013). These shorter stays also apply to operational trainers, installers of systems, construction staff and volunteer workers, and are for reasons such as containing costs and how air travel has made moving in and out of Tarawa much easier than even two decades ago. One consequence of these differences is the reduced number of mixed marriages occurring compared with the period from the 1950s to the 1990s, which led to the incidence of mixed couples in diasporic communities in metropolitan countries (see S3.3).

⁶⁴ Further to a reference in S3.1 to the Nikunau Island Council going under the title, *te kabowi n abamakoro*, as the title in question is still associated in many *I-Nikunau* minds with the KPC/KUC, I have been reluctant to apply this title to the Nikunau Island Council, and so have used the English title.

⁶⁵ This insistence was possible because of provisions in the aforementioned Declaration between the Governments of 1886. The Germans believed British annexation would guarantee the extant supply of labour from Nikunau and the other Kiribati islands to German plantations in Samoa. However, little over a decade later, this backfired on German interests: following the British Government acceding to requests from the Pacific Islands Company to support mining of Banaba, the Colony Government was instructed from London to

curtail such as *I-Nikunau* from travelling outside the Colony for purposes of work and, in effect, directing them to Banaba (see Note 28). The Germans, meanwhile, turned to Bougainville (or North Solomons) for their labour (Meleisea, 1976).

⁶⁶ The annexation was done reluctantly on the part of the British Government, there being great concerns among politicians and others in London about the Kiribati Archipelago in particular, and potential colonial territories in general, needing either subventions from London or taxes, etc. from British commercial interests in a territory, for purposes of funding a colonial administration (see Bush & Maltby, 2004; Davis, 1892; Macdonald, 1982a; Morgan, 1980; Morrell, 1960; Munro & Firth, 1986, 1987, 1990; Ward, 1946). Besides, there were concerns about the lack of competent governors and administrators to administer more colonies, and a view that Britain “already had black subjects enough” (the Earl of Derby cited by Tate & Foy, 1965). Incidentally, the prospect of expenditure on development was not even contemplated at this time (see Note 51).

⁶⁷ In practice, the tax copra making up these taxes of individuals and *mwenga* was probably collected communally. The collection would follow elaborate negotiations in each *te mwaneaba* about how much Nikunau could afford, given climatic conditions that affected copra yields, and how the burden should be distributed among *kawa* and *mwenga* (Grimble, 1952, 1957; Macdonald, 1971; Maude, 1963, 1977).

⁶⁸ The British Government was persuaded to annex Banaba by the principals of the Pacific Islands Company, which had wide commercial and political interests in the Pacific; this was soon after its representatives had discovered that it and neighbouring Nauru were rich in phosphate—the Company acquired rights on Nauru from the German authorities (see Shlomowitz & Munro, 1992). As the extent and importance of the phosphate deposits emerged, the company was able to exert even more pressure in London over the administration of the Colony, including having the Colony headquarters relocated to Banaba (see Note 50). Thereafter, London expected the Colony Government to facilitate the mining of Banaba’s phosphate initially by these private British capitalists (1900–19) and then by the British Phosphate Commission (1919–42, 1946–79).

⁶⁹ Economy, containing costs and being financially self-sufficient had been concerns for the Colony Government since the appointment of the first resident commissioner in 1894 (Morgan, 1980)—see Note 63 for the reasons behind this. It had successfully struggled to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency (i.e., local revenues were enough to cover its expenditures without subventions from London) from 1895 until the evacuation of the Colony Government in 1941 (see Note 52). It resumed this self-sufficiency in 1952 and maintained it thereafter; this self-sufficiency was maintained without the British Phosphate Commission contributing very much, at least not until 1967.

⁷⁰ With the establishment of the District Office on Beru, the status of the Nikunau Native Government seemed to change from merely de jure to de facto as well, taking over from the LMS-controlled *te kabowi n abamakoro*, a state that prevailed (except from 1941–48) until the change of English name to the Nikunau Island Council and change of responsibilities, etc., as per the Local Government Ordinance 1966 (Macdonald, 1971, 1982a).

⁷¹ The amounts of money spent from Colony Government revenues on Nikunau was never great, even after the idea of Outer Island social development gained some traction in the 1960s. Thus, a significant proportion of the tax paid by *I-Nikunau* on Nikunau must have been appropriated for Colony Government expenditure elsewhere,

which would have been mainly on Banaba and, later, Tarawa. At best, the benefit of this expenditure for *I-Nikunau* or their atoll was indirect and incidental.

⁷² Up to this time, the native governments of all the islands in the Colony had been separate accounting entities from the Colony Government; in particular, they had accounted for their revenues and expenditures and from these calculated their retained surpluses, which had thus accumulated as the Nikunau Island Fund, Beru Island Fund, Onotoa Island Fund, etc. By 1917, the total of these island funds amounted to some £17,000 (\approx AU\$1.4m at 2017 prices) and the cash representing them was in the supposedly safekeeping of the Colony Government. The Colony Government now sequestered this cash, using the pretext that over recent years the taxes it had raised from the Kiribati Islands and Tuvalu (as distinct from Banaba) had yielded insufficient revenues to meet the expenditures it had incurred on these islands—the sequestration followed representations made in London by the principals of the phosphateers in furtherance of their considerable interests on Banaba.

⁷³ This loss of autonomy vis-à-vis the Colony Government affected the native governments of all the islands in the Colony. Further to being deprived of their island funds, Native Laws 1917 and associated regulations provided for native governments to be accounted as a subsidiary of the Colony Government. This meant that all revenues collected by native governments belonged to the Colony Government and were to be handed over to its district officers intact, and that all expenditures incurred by native governments had to be authorised by the Colony Government, in effect through the resident commissioner, on the advice of the relevant district officer, approving each native government's annual estimates.

⁷⁴ This use of *Te Bobotin Nikunau* as a political instrument was despite how it was constituted by the Colony Government and so differed from pre-war *boboti*, whose grassroots, or *I-Nikunau* native, qualities were potentially stronger for lack of central control (see Hempenstall & Rutherford, 1984; Roniti, 1985). This central control features of *Te Bobotin Nikunau* arose from it being subject to legislation (i.e., Co-operative Societies Ordinance 1952), and to governance, operating, accounting and auditing rules that provided, among other things, for *I-Matang* registrars and other Colony Government officials to oversee its workings (e.g., approving annual estimates, performing audits and helping decide about distributing profits and appointing managers) (Couper, 1967, Macdonald, 1971, 1982a; Maude, 1949, 1950). These various rules were devised, codified and updated by the *I-Matang* commercial managers of organisations whom the Colony Government's senior officials had put in charge of importing, wholesaling and shipping between the 1940s and 1980s (see S4.3), in conjunction with said senior Colony Government officials; inputs from members, etc. of *Te Bobotin Nikunau* and its equivalents seem not to have been accorded much notice.

⁷⁵ Accounting is one technology of government in which I took particular interest, including as an accounting educator (see Dixon, 2004b). Accountings of one sort or another figure in the roles of *I-Nikunau* as politicians, public servants, citizens and people affected by government activities, sometimes acting more as barriers to participation in consensual governance than as part of pathways to greater involvement. Indeed, some accountings present in Kiribati today might be frustrating efforts of *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* to rule themselves as much as they might be helping such efforts. Examples of how accounting technologies do this include that for the most part they continue to use a foreign language, English. How they are applied, including what is calculated and how, barely reflects *I-Nikunau* or similar *I-Kiribati* values. The accountings have continued from the colonial period to be about *I-Kiribati*, but not to them, and they still have strong elements of

secrecy and preclusion. They favour external organisations and their officials and principals, and disadvantage *I-Nikunau*, *I-Kiribati* and the organisations they are supposed to be running, including by making many of these organisations impossible for *I-Nikunau* and *I-Kiribati* to understand (Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014).

⁷⁶ I have not been able to locate copies of either “Green, L. P., Bukhari, M. S., & Lawrence, R. (1979). *Decentralisation in the Gilbert Islands*. London: Development Planning Unit, University College London.” or “Pitchford, J. (1981). *Decentralisation in Kiribati*. Tarawa.” The two studies seem related and may be versions of the same study.

⁷⁷ Educational attainment was a major consideration in how the Colony Government appointed clerks and recruited labourers for itself and the British Phosphate Commission. However, in addition, a system of “home island” quotas persisted, to try to achieve some sort of fairness or equality in the distribution of paid work positions across the islands constituting the Colony. Even so, the Colony Government came in for criticism for seeming to favour Tuvaluans over *I-Kiribati* in administrative posts (Macdonald, 1982a).

⁷⁸ Nokise (1983, pp. 305–328) lists the following men as serving as pastors: Elia, Iakopo, Iopu, Iosefatu (also known as Lilo), Iosia, Iosua, Laofie, Lemuelu, Liuvao, Matafanua, Peni, Ta’ita’I, Uele, Kaisala and Kitiona. The names of their wives are not recorded, although they were active and influential (see Rose, 2014).

⁷⁹ Some *I-Nikunau* were converted to Christianity, both RC and Protestant, while away working in places under French, English and German influence. They returned with stories of their new religion(s) and wished to practice them at home, giving rise to clashes with longstanding traditional beliefs among *I-Nikunau* and, in the case of RCs, with the LMS missionaries still just getting established on Nikunau (Macdonald, 1982a; Sabatier, 1939/1977).

⁸⁰ It was somewhat ironic for me to visit a church on Nikunau in 2009 and be shown the relics of an early-arriving Christian clergyman.

⁸¹ There was also much some loss of skills through not building or maintaining *mwaneaba* using traditional materials and methods.

⁸² For photographs of Emmeline Goward conducting a class at the women’s school and other facilities at Rongorongo, see Alaima et al. (1979, between pp. 50 and 51) and University of Southern California Digital Library (2017).

⁸³ The translations were begun by Hiram Bingham on Abaiang Atoll in the 1860s. He worked for the Boston-based American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Its mission was performed in the northern Kiribati Islands until 1917, when the LMS took over its work, carrying it on until the 1960s, when the organisation now known as KPC/KUC became independent.

⁸⁴ Although infanticide is sometimes mentioned in this regard, Carr-Saunders, writing in 1922 (cited by Veltman, 1982) suggests that use of this method was very rare in the Kiribati Islands, let alone Nikunau.

⁸⁵ The University of the South Pacific was established in 1968 to serve the region whose name it bears. The Republic Government is now one of its principals, making an annual grant. As well as its main campus in Fiji, it has various subsidiary campuses, including the one on Tarawa, where I staged a few courses in 1989 and 1997 (see Dixon, 2004b).

⁸⁶ I worked at this institution in the late 1990s, staging courses in accounting, finance and administration (see Dixon, 2004b). However, most of its courses are focused on trades, including carpentry, mechanics, construction, etc., and on information technology.

⁸⁷ This institution was established in 1967 by Hamburg Sud in conjunction with the British and German Governments and the United Nations (Couper, 2009); it trains aspiring seafarers, who have long been associated with remittances (Borovnik, 2006).

⁸⁸ The one exception to primary schools using *te taetae ni Kiribati* as the main language of tuition is a small school on Tarawa that was originally established for children of *I-Matang* colonial staff and has over the years increasingly accepted locally-born children, perhaps of mixed race or whose home language is English, or whose *I-Kiribati* parents have opted for an English language education. However, the teachers there are usually *I-Kiribati* and the playground language is a mix of *te taetae ni Kiribati* and English (confidential personal communication from some students, 1997)

⁸⁹ Students were expected to use English everywhere on the campus, and so, as many were boarders, this meant day and night, although some broke the rules when there were no staff or prefects around (confidential personal communication from a student of the 1970s).

⁹⁰ This studying on Tarawa has proved advantageous for various reasons. These include the greater exposure students have to the English language, including because in the past some teachers were *I-Matang* and now because of the incidence of the Internet; the better physical resources available in schools there; the wider experiences of life on Tarawa in general; and the learning materials and similar available there about life outside the country, including through the national and other libraries, films, the Internet and broadcast television (Burnett, 2005).

⁹¹ Said authorities largely reflect the educated professionals among the dominant *Pākehā* people and culture(s), although *Māori* are acknowledged because of a recently found formal respect among increasing numbers of *Pākehā* for certain provisions in the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi (see Bennion, 2004).

⁹² During my stays on Nikunau in the 1980s, a film arrived each week via the internal air service and was screened on successive nights in the six *kawa* along the atoll: the seventh night was *te Tabati*, which was still observed strictly. The screenings were organised under the auspices of *Te Bobotin Nikunau* and had been initiated in the 1950s, when arrival of the reels of film was subject to the vagaries of shipping—the air service started in the 1970s. The social, cultural and other significances of these films should not be underestimated. For many *I-Nikunau*, they were the first opportunity to observe the world beyond Nikunau, neighbouring islands, Banaba or Nauru, albeit as slanted by Hollywood and other English-language filmmakers. Although few seemed to follow the dialogue or felt an inclination to relate to the plot, *I-Nikunau* attended enthusiastically at these screenings, and wondered at a world only a few of them had had chance to observe in person.

⁹³ The change to the legal system accounts for the prison adjacent to the Island Council area (see S3.1). First built about 1900, the prison reflected that serious criminal acts resulted in perpetrators suffering terms of imprisonment or, in the case of murder, execution. Formerly, under *te katei*, most of these acts had been civil matters and offended private parties had been entitled to compensation in the form of *aba* or, after 1870, copra, or even enslavement of the offender to that party (Grimble, 1989; Macdonald, 1982a). However, casting

offenders adrift, lashed to a log or in a canoe, was another punishment for certain sexual offences, including *karikira* (Grimble, 1921).

⁹⁴ I have not found out about any wars that may have occurred on Nikunau.

⁹⁵ Uering (1979) comprises a transcription by his niece, Aeren Tiare, of Uering's oral records; her purpose was to complete a school project. Uering, who resided on Nikunau all his life, visited his sister on Tarawa in 1979. While there, he recited to his niece his lineage back 17 generations (c. 1500), with numerous elaborations, such as the place names of their *kainga* and whence partners came. He could also have recited details of rights to *aba*, reef areas and areas beyond the reef (e.g. location and history of ownership), and skills and rituals (e.g. location and history of ownership) but these were not transcribed. I thank Aeren Tiare for allowing me to read through her transcription.

⁹⁶ Since their inception in the early 1970s, scheduled air services have been beyond the means of most *I-Nikunau* resident on Nikunau, if they were travelling privately. Most *I-Nikunau* travelling to Tarawa do so by ship, whose main function is to carry freight. These carriers work to what, at best, may be described as a changeable schedule, and so are unreliable to anyone wanting to travel privately from A to B within specified time limits. However, they do call on Nikunau as part of landing and collecting organised groups, such as children coming from and going to Tarawa between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next. *I-Nikunau* are used to fitting in with their erratic schedules, and seem to think nothing of “delays”, “inconvenience”, etc., things which do not seem to faze them on Tarawa or in New Zealand either.

⁹⁷ At first, projects were proposed mostly according to *I-Matang* ideas and designs, and so *I-Nikunau* often regarded them as being for *Te Tautaeaka*. Because of this, their approval often did not proceed smoothly—*unimane* were reluctant to agree to the tax increases needed to provide local contributions towards a project's costs—and few actually went ahead. Besides, had they done so, they would have depended a great deal on *I-Matang* project management assistance, which was in short supply. Realising its approach was not working, the Colony Government associated subsequent projects with the Island Council and consulted *unimane* and other residents of each *te kawa* about them. These projects did proceed, being seen as having community benefits: indeed, *unimane* proved adept at devising creative arrangements for raising funds for them under the auspices of *kawa* and churches. Gradually, the number of projects increased, giving rise to several new or revamped facilities (Macdonald, 1972, 1982a).

⁹⁸ This disproportionality is exemplified at different times as follows. In the 1920s, the annual expenditure on Nikunau was less than £400 (< AU\$32,000 at 2016 prices) (Nikunau Native Government Cash Book 1915–33), compared with the Colony Government's revenue and expenditure of about £55,000 (\approx AU\$4.4m at 2016 prices) (Macdonald, 1982a). In the 1950s, the Nikunau Native Government was still incurring expenditure of less than AU£1,000 (< AU\$35,000 at 2016 prices) annually (Island Fund Estimates – Nikunau, 1957–67), whereas the Colony Government's annual recurrent expenditures were about AU£450,000 (\approx AU\$14m at 2016 prices) and it was administering a further AU£35,000 (\approx AU\$1.2m at 2016 prices) annually of capital grants from the British Government for economic and social development projects (GEIC, 1957). In the 2000s, the Nikunau Island Council's annual expenditure is reported as around AU\$112,000 (Hassall & Tipu, 2008), compared with the Republic Government's annual expenditure of AU\$85m (Government of Kiribati, 2009). In 2017, the Republic Government budgeted recurrent expenditure is about AU\$150m, and the budgeted

development expenditure is about the same (Kiribati Government, 2016). Of that, less than 3% of the recurrent expenditure and only about 10% of the development expenditure is planned for all 15 Outer Kiribati Islands, of which Nikunau is only one.

⁹⁹ As indicated in Figure 10, this title was used to refer to the chair and chief official of the Nikunau Native Government. However, the English translation was magistrate (see Native Laws Ordinance 1917), indicating a quite different executive and judicial role from that actually found in *te mwaneaba*, and perhaps signifying how some *I-Matang* observers interpreted traditional *mwaneaba* proceedings as following their experience of monarchy, ruler, chieftainship, etc.

¹⁰⁰ This *kamama* is quite different from that recognised by outsiders, using such words as reckoning, accountability, answerability and stewardship. Two sources of these outside ideas are referred to above in discussing non-traditional organisations. The one source was nominally *Iehova* and his Earthly representatives, in distant Malua, Beru, London, and later Sydney and the Vatican City, which in practice meant pastors, priests and nuns residing on Nikunau. The second source was nominally the sovereign of Great Britain, and her or his high and resident commissioners, which in practice meant the district officer on his intermittent visits to Nikunau. That second source has been superseded by tenets of transparency and accountability, foisted on *I-Kiribati* through neo-liberal policies advocated by the more influential aid organisations (see Dixon & Gaffikin, 2014)

¹⁰¹ Most of the commercial organisations owned by the Republic Government, and the Colony Government before that, can trace their origins to the post-war restoration of importing, copra exporting and shipping by the Colony Government, and to its development project and other activities (e.g., around procurement, and building and vehicle maintenance). They have gone through various name changes and legal forms, including statutory boards, corporations, companies and enterprises (e.g., GEIC Copra Board, Colony Wholesale Society, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Development Authority, Kiribati Cooperative Wholesale Society, Bobotin Kiribati Limited, Kiribati Shipping Corporation, Kiribati Shipping Services Limited)—in the 2000s, the Republic Government let some close down through being insolvent, but the rest are still present one way or another, including one or two that have been privatised. However, *I-Nikunau* and other *I-Kiribati* seem never to have associated the organisations in question with other than *Te Tautaeaka*, be it in reference to the Republic Government or, before, to the Colony Government (Couper, 1967; Dixon, 2004a; Duncan, 2014; Macdonald, 1982a; Roniti, 1985).

¹⁰² This desire to afford protection to natives should not be confused with extending jurisdiction over British citizens through the creation of protectorates, as distinct from colonies (see Munro & Firth, 1986), although, in the Colony's case, the two did fuse de facto well before the Colony was proclaimed by his imperial majesty in London (see S4).

¹⁰³ For example, Williams and Macdonald (1985, pp. 38-39), in providing a facsimile of the written lease agreement of 1900 between the “king” of Banaba on behalf of the natives of the island and Arthur Ellis on the part of the Pacific Islands Company (see between pp. 38 and 39), allude to such agreements with indigenous landholders being unusual for the times. In the 80 years that elapsed before the phosphate deposits were exhausted and the mining ceased, the legal rights of landowners and similar were better established regardless of race, etc.

¹⁰⁴ These wrongs include dispossession and exploitation of, and banishment from, their land, and their deportation to and continuing exile on Rabi (e.g., see Edwards, 2014; Hindmarsh, 2002; Kempf, 2003; King & Sigrah, 2004; Macdonald, 1982b; McAdam, 2014; Sigrah & King, 2001; Silverman, 1971; Teaiwa, 2005, 2015). These wrongs were hardly made good when, under International Law and similar changes, indigenous landowners obtained rights to royalties and similar, or when the English courts found in favour of the cases brought by *I-Banaba* against the British Government (i.e., *Rotan Tito and Others v. Attorney- General* 1971 R. No. 3670; *Rotan Tito and Others v. Waddell and Others* (No. 2) 1973 R. No. 2013). The royalties were not only meagre (see Weeramantry, 1992) but also were shared between the Banaban Royalties Trust Fund (and its predecessors – see Tabucanon, 2012) and the Colony Government, whose share was in lieu of all taxes on profits, employees' remuneration, import duties, store sales, etc., as well as, eventually, for development of the Colony—it used some to increase the investments held in the Revenue Equalisation Reserve Fund, as per Note 49). Although the court's judgement (see Megarry, 1977) included monetary compensation, this was arguably not enough in the circumstances. What is more, the court chose not to order that any restoration work should be carried out on Banaba (Tabucanon, 2012).