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Transnational Pacific Islanders: Implications for Social Work

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Abstract

The Pacific Islander American racial group is smaller in terms of numbers relative to other racial groups and yet one of the fastest-growing in the United States. The complexity of their lives exceeds the implications of such small numbers, yet it reflects the contribution of their transnational ties and relationships in the Pacific and increasing multiple cultural identities as Pacific Islander Americans. Although this identity provides potential opportunities, challenges and struggles in navigating dual cultures and systems is a reality. Thus, commitment to culturally relevant social work practice with transnational Pacific Islander Americans is imperative. Social work practices that acknowledge and integrate indigenous ways of knowing and doing with consideration to the duality of their transnational identities will produce better outcomes. Emphasis on Pacific Islander cultural strengths is fundamental to generating positive health and mental health outcomes as these strengths have sustained Pacific Islanders through experiences of colonization, immigration, and historical trauma. This article discusses the multiple dimensions of the transnational experiences of Pacific Islander Americans and the implications for culturally relevant social work practice, policy, and research.

Keywords

cultural humility; culturally relevant practice; Pacific Islanders; transnational population

The Pacific Islander (PI) American group is the smallest in terms of numbers among the immigrant groups in the United States (1.2 million according to the 2010 Census) (see Empowering Pacific Islander Communities [EPIC] & Asian Americans Advancing Justice [AAAJ], 2014), but it is increasing at a rapid rate. The complexity of their lives exceeds the implications of such small numbers, yet it reflects the contribution of their transnational ties and relationships in the Pacific amid numerous challenges and barriers, and increasing number of multiple cultural identities as PI Americans (Vakalahi & Godinet, 2014).

PI Americans were originally included as part of the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) racial group, but in 1997 the Office of Management and Budget issued a directive that separated API into two racial categories: (1) Asian and (2) Native Hawaiian and PI (NHPI), and this recategorization was implemented in the 2010 U.S. Census. The change was spurred by the contention that data on PI ethnic groups were overshadowed by Asian populations that were larger in numbers and thus did not accurately illustrate the social, economic, and health profiles of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (Applied Research Center & the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, n.d.). Pacific Islanders are geographically grouped into three regions: Polynesia (Hawai'i, Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, Aotearoa, Tokelau), Micronesia (Guam, Mariana Islands, Saipan, Palau, Caroline Islands, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, Marshall Islands, Kiribati), and Melanesia (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands). A number of these Pacific islands and nations have political arrangements (U.S. territories, Compact of Free Association) with the "United States due to colonization and militarization of their home islands" (EPIC & AAAJ, 2014, p. 6). According to the 2010 U.S. Census, within the NHPI group, Native Hawaiians are the majority. They are the indigenous people of Hawai'i, which is the 50th state of the United States. Samoans follow in population. In the United States, this group includes those from American Samoa, a U.S. territory, and immigrants from the independent nation of Samoa. Chamorros, the indigenous people of Guam, also a U.S. territory, is the third largest group within the NHPI racial category (Godinet, Fong, & Urban, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The census data from 2000 and 2010 showed an increase of the NHPI population by 40 percent, with each ethnic group growing at higher rates than that of the general population. By 2030, the NHPI population is projected to increase to over 2 million (EPIC & AAAJ, 2014).

Pacific Islanders are great navigators, thus it is not surprising that they have made their homes in the global environment. Their migration patterns have expanded around the globe and into the United States (Hau'ofa, 1994; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Ambitions supported by technological advancement have resulted in the global migration pattern and transcultural identities of the over 1 million Pacific Islanders living in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Such population growth poses both opportunities and risks for health and mental health, education, socioeconomic status (SES), and other colonization- and immigration-based issues (Braun, Yee, Browne, & Mokuau, 2004; U.S. Census Bureau, 2012; Vakalahi, Godinet, & Fong, 2006). At the same time, PI Americans also contributed to the overall transcultural and transnational experiences in the United States with a strong sense of spirituality, collectivity, inclusivity, and reciprocity and as contributors to the economy through entrepreneurship and military service (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). As transnational and transcultural people, PI Americans are linked to their homelands and intimately connected to their new homes. It is this dual reality that emphasizes the need for culturally informed and balanced practices that are relevant to transnational PI Americans as they negotiate their commitment to their cultural roots while committed to succeeding in their new environment and home. This article therefore discusses the multiple dimensions of the transnational experiences of PI Americans and implications for culturally relevant social work practice and policy.

COMPLEXITIES IN TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY

Transnationalism refers to social networks and linkages between two or more communities across nations (Spoonley, 2000; Van Hear, 1998). People engage in transnational relationships for many reasons including remittances, travel to the homeland, providing resources to the homeland, and patriotism contributing back to the homeland (Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo, 2005). Transnational experiences can transform identities. Park (2007) emphasized the need for a different lens to conceptualize a transnational identity and the importance of family responsibilities and expectations in the transnational experience.

The identity of PI American transnationals is rooted in multiple spaces, times, and cultural structures as a result of exploration of the Pacific Ocean (Moana Nui). The transformational process of transnational identities was developed from a reciprocal process since the exploration of early voyagers. Not only were they affected by the places and people they interacted with, Pacific Islanders were also an influence as their values and customs infused and blended with certain cultural groups who were once distinct. However, the intersection of the immigration and colonization experiences resulted in added complexities in Pacific Islanders' transnational identities, particularly with indigenous people who have been colonized or immigrants who have been treated as less than equal. For instance, many Native Hawaiians struggle with colonization and being excluded in their homeland (Mokuau et al., 2016). In addition, Chamorros face cultural disempowerment and displacement as the U.S. military expands its presence in Guam (Natividad & Lizama, 2014). Likewise, many Samoans are challenged by their evolving dual identities as American-born Samoan immigrants in their homeland (Gabbard, 2014). In essence, the intersection of colonization and immigration affects transnational PI American identities, in which outcomes are often cumulatively passed on from one generation to the next. As transnationals, PI Americans must live, learn, and adapt to the demands and expectations of a global environment that transcends multiple cultures, nations, and people (Vakalahi & Godinet, 2014).

Transnational relations present opportunities for growth and partnership in and outside of the United States; however, their presence also brings about challenges and struggles in navigating dual cultures and systems. Consequently, negotiating between cultures across nations can be overwhelming when worldviews collide or conflict, particularly for PI Americans who are citizens or nationals of the United States but continue to maintain a bond to their land of origin, as many of the distinct PI groups see their identities as connected to the land of their ancestors (Crabbe, 2007; Howard & Kreif, 2014). It is therefore all the more relevant for culturally relevant social work practice to consider the unique circumstance of transnational PI Americans and all of those implications (strengths and challenges). Among many influencing factors, emphasis on PI cultural strengths is fundamental to generating positive health and mental health outcomes. These cultural strengths have sustained Pacific Islanders through experiences of colonization, immigration, and the resulting experiences of historical trauma. Social work practices that are embedded in indigenous cultural strengths and transcultural values, knowledge, and practices will produce better outcomes and ensure that PI American transnationals are a part of the future of this country.

Although challenges for PI transnationals are inevitable, undying hope and unquestionable work ethics instilled in each generation through spiritual and cultural groundings suggest that opportunities also abound. As PI Americans continue as transnationals in the United States, social work is called on to aid in negotiating between PI and western cultural perspectives as PI American families and communities adjust to new and changing environments.

Immigration and Colonization

The lived experiences of transnational PI Americans have contributed to the discussion on immigration and colonization, two conditions that have resulted in cultural identity displacement and the resulting language barrier, economic deprivation, and health and mental health struggles (Furuto, San Nicolas, Kim, & Fiaui, 2001). As connection to land and the environment is essential for Pacific Islanders, displacement of people from their native land due to colonization has been linked to a myriad of health and social well-being challenges (Kaholokula, 2009; Natividad & Lizama, 2014). In addition, historical trauma resulting from colonization and immigration experiences of mistrust of foreign systems, diseases, and foreign practices that destroyed indigenous people and cultures (Mokuau & Matsuoka, 1995), has continued to affect generations of PI Americans and Native Hawaiians (Kaholokula, 2009), particularly those who resist assimilation. Because of the existence of policies and programs intended to exclude certain groups, the struggles of previous generations become the struggle of current and future generations (Millett & Orosz, 2001; Vakalahi et al., 2006).

Acculturative Stress and Transcultural Adaptation

The literature on the impact of acculturation for transnational PI Americans is limited, yet it is critical to healthy adaptation and well-being (Vakalahi & Godinet, 2014). *Acculturation* has been defined as the change that occurs in the course of continuous and “direct contact between two or more different cultural groups and/or individual members” (Fox, Merz, Solorzano, & Roesch, 2013, p. 270; also see Berry, 2003). Thus, the inability of an immigrant to negotiate the demands of the host culture and culture of origin often leads to acculturative stress (Berry, 2003) manifested in reduced physical and mental health capacity (Kirmayer et al., 2011; Rogers-Sirin, Ryce, & Sirin, 2014) and sometimes rebelliousness against the host culture. Despite the attempt to strengthen the attachment to the country of origin, relying on borrowed memories from family does not fully address the daily struggle with dual identity among these immigrants (Falicov, 2005).

Furthermore, the emotional and physical stress of navigating dual cultures may obstruct healthy transcultural adaptation (Vakalahi et al., 2006). Such stress can negatively affect adaptation and sometimes the relationship between generations who live the traditional way and those who live in dual cultures such as immigrant grandparents speaking the native language and U.S.-born grand-children speaking English only (Bush, Bohon, & Kim, 2005). Particularly among Pacific Islanders, a point of disagreement between the generations is also related to cultural practices such as reciprocity and unconditional sharing of possessions. Conversely, assimilation can be devastating because it entails the loss of ethnic distinction and connection to the country of origin (Gowricharn, 2009). Thus, engaging in a selective

acculturation process whereby parents and their children are connected to both cultures (origin and host) has been suggested as a middle ground for preserving and passing on selected important cultural values and beliefs (Falicov, 2005) that serves as a protective factor against structural challenges such as discrimination (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Doing

Conceptualizing social work with transnational Pacific Islanders requires the consideration of decolonization and social and economic justice. For instance, Smith (1999), focusing on social justice and human rights, advocated for culturally informed research with indigenous Pacific people, community partnerships, appreciation of a people's history, accurate identification of needs, and knowledge of indigenous language and cultural protocols (United Nations, 2006). Furthermore, it is important to note that although cultures among PI American groups are heterogeneous, they are interconnected (Mahi, 2013).

Working with PI transnationals requires an understanding of their dual identities—their connection to different places, land, or nation as a result of colonization and voluntary or involuntary immigration. They are linked to these places and cultures either by ethnicity, heritage, history, or citizenship. Also important to note is the extent of one's depth of connection to the place of settlement and origin, which may depend on their reason for migration and the generation (whether first- or second-generation American). For example, a person who is a transnational because his or her land by heritage was overtaken due to displacement may be struggling with the impact of colonization while trying to survive in a society of the colonizer. Also relevant is the impact of time on one's identity development. For some PI transnationals, the renaissance of cultural empowerment and identity connected to place and land is a means to reclaim what was taken from them (Kaholokula, 2009). For others, their connection to the land of their ancestors has become distant as recent generations visit their ancestral lands more and more infrequently.

Family at the Core.—Family is at the core of PI Americans' transnational experiences, suggesting a deeper examination of familial meanings, relations, and responsibilities. Generations of PI Americans within a family are constantly grappling with the pull and push of dual culture demands. The Pacific family (*aiga* in Samoan; *'ohana* in Hawaiian) is a sophisticated system that extends beyond the core family unit to include community and society (Holmes, 1980). The PI family structure is rooted in indigenous definitions of collectivity, and thus cultural duality of PI American families often influences how the family functions and connects (Vakalahi & Godinet, 2014).

Despite the uniqueness of each Pacific group, common family values emphasize loyalty, spirituality, trust, love for children, respect for the elders, and communal responsibility. *Family* is defined as spiritual and blood relations, a place where love and support simply exist (Vakalahi et al., 2006). The family serves as protection from societal hostility and preservation of language, ceremonies, and core indigenous values (Millett & Orosz, 2001). These are critical elements for social work professionals to consider as they partner with PI families in their journey as transnational PI Americans. The following are a few examples of indigenous models in which family has an integral role.

Ifoga, a ceremonial conflict resolution and reconciliation practice indigenous to the Samoan culture, highlights the importance of forgiveness, compassion, and respect. The *Ifoga* process fosters healing and restoration of the spiritual and the biopsychosocial self. It is a formal meeting of two *aiga* (family/clan)—the victim's and the offender's. It is a setting in which the offender and his or her *aiga* apologize and take responsibility for the offense. The two *aiga* come together to discuss solutions and decide on the restitution, if any, and decide on the next steps to prevent the offense from future occurrence. The process attempts to restore to the victim and his or her *aiga* what was lost (psychologically and physically) from the offense. It is important in the process that forgiveness is requested, which is a reflection and admission of wrongdoing. For the process to continue, forgiveness must be granted by the victim's *aiga*. The process is initiated by the offender's *aiga*, which requires a mediator and is led by either one that is recognized as a leader in the *aiga* (that is, *matai* or chiefs, elders), or a respected person selected by the *aiga* (Jantzi, 2001; Museum of Brisbane Exhibition, 2004; Vakalahi & Godinet, 2008). Although the intent of *Ifoga* is to restore harmony among the rivaling *aiga*, forgetting the offense is still difficult for the victim and his or her *aiga*.

Fakalelei, an indigenous Tongan healing practice (the term means "to make right"), is similar to *Ifoga* as it addresses the spiritual, social, emotional, and biological domains of the self. Creating peace through healing of relationships among the families of the victim and offender is at the core of this healing practice. Accountability for the offense is still the responsibility of the offender and his or her family. With the intent to restore respect for the victim and his or her family, atoning for the offense is the responsibility of the offender and his or her family. However, the decision to accept or reject the apology and restitution is still a prerogative of the victim's family. The process is overseen by those in the family who are considered highly respected and of high rank (*ulumotu' a* or granduncle, or an elderly person in one's father's family) (Jantzi, 2001; Moana Ofahengaue, personal communication, March 30, 2004; Vakalahi & Godinet, 2008)

The Native Hawaiian practice of *Ho'oponopono* ("set right") is a family-centered, family-empowering, problem-solving model (Mokuau, 1990). Varying applications of this practice have been used with Native Hawaiian families and other Pacific Islanders involved in the child welfare system. *Ho'oponopono* meetings are usually facilitated by the *k punas* (elders). Because of their experience and knowledge, they are seen as teachers and leaders in helping the *'ohana* (family) to resolve existing challenges. It is an inclusive process that brings together intergenerational and extended family systems to learn the importance of cultural values and practices in conflict resolution and preserving and sustaining these values and practices for future generations.

With the family (*whanau*) as its core, a model with its roots in Maori culture developed by Tuti Aranui is the *Te Wheke*. The model was developed as a cultural framework in understanding health and human behavior from a holistic perspective. The concept of the octopus (*te wheke*) represents the *whanau* in which one's health and behavior is understood. The head symbolizes the individual, the eyes as well-being, and tentacles are dimensions that are conjoined and relevant to understanding and addressing the physical, social,

emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs. The suckers represent many facets that exist within each dimension (Aranui-Barrett, 1988).

Today, these models continue to be critical in problem resolution and decision making among transitional Pacific Islanders. They underscore the critical role of the family (*'ohana* in Hawaiian; *aiga* in Samoan, *whanau* in Maori) and value of cultural ways of doing and knowing in addressing challenges faced by PI transnationals. Each PI culture is unique in its practices of addressing social and health issues. However, what they do have in common is the significant role of the family and community as mediators and facilitators in addressing challenges of its members. They are also knowledgeable on ways in which they have resolved issues that are often rooted in their cultural practices. Thus, it is essential for social work practitioners to better understand the family, their culture, and context as means to empower families in partnerships that enhance the potential for the best outcome possible for the clients and their families.

Community as an Integral Component.—Community is not simply a concept among transnational PI Americans. Although each Pacific culture is unique, family and community affiliations are common themes in their collective identities (Vasta, 2004). The PI individual is significant in the context of the collective, and the collective is a necessity to survival. Core values of trust, reciprocity, interdependency, and respect are integral to PI communities. Communal relations are a means to secure physical, social, psychological, and spiritual resources for meeting needs. Investments in these relationships are reciprocal in nature, in that resources are invested into the community and when needs occur, that investment yields support and resources without conditions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Social work, a response to social and economic injustice faced by the vulnerable and oppressed individuals and communities, continues to be at the forefront of social justice advocacy and change. Although the field is conceptually aware of this key standard in our practice, historically it has not lived up to this standard in working with indigenous peoples (Mokuau, Garlock-Tuiali'i, & Lee, 2008). Recognizing this omission, the profession continues its efforts by not only engaging in the dialogue of social justice, but also furthering the discussion of implementation and practice reflective of social justice principles (Johnston-Goodstar, 2013).

For a profession with its roots in social justice and with the understanding of the value of families and communities within PI cultures, an empowerment approach that engages the community in identifying and addressing social justice issues becomes a fundamental component of practice. Thus, an egalitarian partnership is established that honors the people and their cultural context that can traverse the interrelated individual–macro domains.

Culturally Relevant Practice

Critical to social work practice is cultural competence (CC), as reflected in the Council on Social Work Education (2015) educational policy and accreditation standards and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2017) code of ethics, in serving diverse

populations. As defined by NASW, *CC* is defined as “the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes” (NASW, 2015, p. 13). How *CC* is conceptualized and realized continues to be a discourse within the profession as varying thoughts, perspectives, and worldviews are considered as relevant to the practice of cultural relevance in promoting social justice and well-being of minorities and the oppressed. *CC* has been criticized by those who argue that the focus on group culture may deter attention from the individual client’s unique context, identity, and rights. Critics have also pointed to the fallacy of generalizing information about an ethnic group, its cultural practices, and the impact on the group to individual members and their circumstances given the variation and changes in a culture (Johnson & Munch, 2009). Supporters of *CC* argue that focusing on the individual only ignores institutional racism and oppression that plague systems in which clients are served (Fisher-Borne, Montana Cain, & Martin, 2015; Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). For example, from a critical race perspective, *CC* is often practiced from a multicultural perspective that fosters color blindness and thus overlooks the significance of structural and systemic racism (Abrams & Moio, 2009). Adding to the conversation on *CC* is the notion of cultural humility that focuses on the “other” (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013), an approach that is similar to the social work practice of “starting where the client is at.” Cultural humility, however, moves away from the label “competence” as it assumes mastery of a skill (Isaacson, 2014) but takes the position that culturally relevant practice is a process and not the outcome (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Such an approach fosters an egalitarian relationship in working with clients, an approach that is emphasized in the strengths perspective for social work practice (Saleebey, 1996). Cultural humility highlights three attributes that are fundamental to serving diverse populations (Hook et al., 2013; Isaacson, 2014; Ortega & Coulborn Faller, 2011). First is commitment to an ongoing critical appraisal of self. Reflective practice encourages practitioners to explore their own assumptions and worldview and how these influence their work with clients (Lay & McGuire, 2010; Thompson & West, 2013). To appreciate the importance of cultural identity of others, one needs to be aware of one’s own culture and belief systems and the influence on one’s values and biases (NASW, 2015). Furthermore, it is also important to recognize one’s lack of knowledge of another’s context. For example, in working with PI transnationals, it is important to recognize one’s own values and biases regarding another’s allegiance or loyalties to different nations. A social worker who sees this as a limitation of a client’s circumstances will not fully appreciate the impact of this reality for PI transnationals and thus can hinder the working relationship and progress. The second attribute goes beyond the practitioner’s self-reflection to engage in developing an understanding of the client’s cultural and contextual views, values, and beliefs. This attribute resonates with the evidence-based practice model that indicates the importance of considering the client’s values, expectations, culture, and preferences as a key component to social work practice (Rubin & Bellamy, 2012). This addresses the power imbalance that occurs in a worker–client relationship as it opens the practitioner to a position of learner and the client as one who knows his or her circumstances and needs better than anyone else (Ortega & Coulborn Faller, 2011). Thus, working collaboratively in a manner that equalizes the power in the relationship can contribute to developing the best outcome possible (Waters

& Asbill, 2013). For many Pacific Islanders, competing cultures and demands given place and time can become challenging, thus affecting health and well-being when not effectively negotiated. Such is the case when a client is demanded by her or his elders and the chief of the extended family to follow cultural protocols that are in conflict with her or his values as an American. As mentioned in the second attribute of cultural humility practice, it is important for a social worker to recognize the importance of the client's cultural expectations, values, and preferences given the two cultures that are influential in the client's sociocultural context. It is important to understand and assess the demands on the client given her or his place in the worlds that she or he needs to navigate. The third attribute is affecting systems in which these services are delivered. How can cultural humility practices be implemented and supported at various levels of an organization, system, or community? We live in systems and as a part of structures that perpetuate cultural irrelevance, particularly if it's not part of the mainstream paradigm. The result has been detrimental to diverse populations who are fewer in numbers, less vocal, are at the lower end of the SES scale, and are less enculturated (EPIC & AAAJ, 2014). The third attribute speaks to systemic changes that need to occur for permanent changes to sustain.

As the conversation continues, the fact remains that culturally relevant practice is necessary for minorities and oppressed populations. Unfortunately, issues in health and economic disparities, and the needs of relatively small populations such as those of PI Americans are glossed over (EPIC & AAAJ, 2014). It is therefore imperative to call attention to the importance for culturally relevant social work practice with groups such as PI Americans as they are small in numbers relative to the other racial groups in the United States but are disparate in many social, economic, and health outcomes (see Table 1 for more detailed practice considerations).

Conclusion

As the transnational PI American population continues to grow, the impact of unresolved challenges will fester and compound. Whether they are natives of lands colonized or displaced by the United States or PI immigrants who are in search of better opportunities for their future and their families, the transcultural and transnational experiences are inevitable for PI Americans. Thus, these experiences must be front and center in the agenda for promoting the welfare of transnational PI Americans. The awareness of the multifaceted context of a transnational identity can guide social workers to better understand and assess the realities of a transnational PI American. Essential in this approach is a clearer understanding of the impact of colonization and immigration, the need to navigate multiple cultural identities and ties, an appreciation for indigenous cultural ways and knowing, and the importance of having a cultural humility mind-set. Part of this agenda should also include partnerships between the transnational PI community and social workers; and embracing the fact that although social work is new to Pacific Islanders, the values and foundations of social work align with the values of PI cultures (NASW, 2017).

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Table 1:

Social Work Practice Considerations with Transnational Pacific Islander (PI) Americans

Transnational Identity Consideration	Practice Consideration
<p>Rooted in multiple places and space. Connection to host nation and land of origin. For some PI Americans, host nation and land of origin may be one and the same.</p>	<p>Important to recognize this reality for PI transnationals and incorporate in phases of social work practice.</p>
<p>Identities connected to land vary by generation. Priority based on dual identity is different for individual based on generation.</p>	<p>As part of an assessment, it is important to recognize the fluidity of the transnational identity based on the individual's social ecological system that is also influenced by age, history, and status.</p>
<p>Multiple loyalties can be a strength.</p>	<p>Identifying strengths within multiple identities is a way to develop resources and assets to address identified issues and incorporating them into the assessment and service plan.</p>
<p>Cultural practices of society of origin should be valued and considered.</p>	<p>It is important to have an understanding and acknowledge the importance of the various cultural practices honored by the families. Some of these methods or ways may help address challenges faced by the families. (See also section on indigenous alternatives for specific cultural practices.)</p>
<p>Extent of divided loyalty to particular place can be based on political history of group (colonized, voluntary immigration, nonvoluntary immigration).</p>	<p>Important to recognize this reality as it has strong implications of how one perceives transnational identity.</p>
<p>Family is integral. Extended family plays an important role. Support network is vital and extends to the community (that is, churches, familial clan).</p>	<p>PI cultures' definition of family is different depending on the ethnic group. Despite the differences, family in PI cultures is different from the western definition. It is important to allow the family to define it for the worker and allow them to identify who in their support network are vital in helping them to reach their goals. Inclusion of family as defined by client system in all phases of social work practice (that is, identifying problems and issues, developing service plan, evaluating goals, and so on).</p>