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COLLECTIVE OR INDIVIDUAL—WHY NOT BOTH?

INEZ FAINGA‘A-MANU SIONE

*Griffith University
Village Connect Ltd.*

GLENDAN STANLEY

Griffith University

DION ENARI

Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau | Auckland University of Technology

ABSTRACT: Eurocentric scholarship often defines western cultures as individualistic and Indigenous cultures as collective. However, most research on collective and individual paradigms has been formed without the voices and knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples and their societies. Many of these frameworks have been imposed, further silencing Indigenous lived experiences, knowledge and wisdom. As Indigenous researchers, we see these frameworks on collectivism and individualism as both simplistic and inaccurate portrayals of the realities of our communities. Through talanoa (dialogue) with our communities, the SSAVI Collective-Individual framework was formed. SSAVI—spirituality, service, agency, vision and innovation—emerged as core values of how our communities thrive. In exploring these key values and approaches, this article presents holistic ways of being and the intricate complexities within our communities. We envision this work to better inform research both by and together with Indigenous communities.

Keywords: talanoa, Pacific methodologies, collectivism, individualism, Pacific community, talanoa methodology

As three early-career researchers from Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and First Nations people of Australia, we embedded the talanoa method into our doctoral research projects. Although talanoa (the sharing of ideas, experiences, histories, realities and aspirations) was a culturally appropriate way of engaging with our communities while providing a safe space for participants to share their experiences, we found that the talanoa methodology (Vaiotei 2006) did not provide a process to analyse the research data. As a result, talanoa was primarily used across our projects as a method of data collection and could not be used to analyse and interpret our findings. Instead, we had to turn to other methodologies, including thematic analysis, the Fala methodology (see Fainga‘a-Manu Sione this issue) and constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2006), for data analysis and interpretation. In this paper the term Pacific will

be used to describe the intergenerational diaspora of migrants identifying with Pacific Island nations that constitute Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia (Akbar *et al.* 2022; Enari and Haua 2021; Enari and Taula 2022).

As researchers with Pacific heritage residing in Australia, we conducted talanoa about our research journey with different Pacific and western methodologies and frameworks, reviewing the pros and cons of this scholarship. We agreed that many of the western models that we used in our studies were formulated without any input from Pacific epistemologies and ontologies (Leenen-Young *et al.* 2021). Interestingly, we also found many of the Pacific models and frameworks to be grounded in a different context to ours, as they were formulated either in our Pacific Island nations or in Aotearoa New Zealand, where close alliances are nurtured and legislated, in comparison to Australia, where focus in the Pacific region has only recently become a priority with the 2022 change in government (Australian Government n.d.). Deeper talanoa and reflection amongst ourselves throughout, and on completion of, the thesis journey revealed the need to formulate a framework for our communities that was grounded in the Pacific Australian context and reality.

WHO ARE WE?

We start by acknowledging God, and the First Nations people of Australia who are the traditional custodians of these lands on which we reside. These lands where we write from are unceded—they were, are and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands. As Pacific researchers, we acknowledge the strengths, struggles, loss and fight of our First Nations People in Australia and stand with them in solidarity (Enari and Haua 2021). In a culturally appropriate manner, we now share who we are, our connections to these lands and our research focus.

My name is Inez Fainga'a-Manu Sione, living on land of the Yuggera people, whom I acknowledge and pay my respects to. I was born in Fiji to Tongan parents, Ilaisia and Fatai Fainga'a, from Vava'u and Pea, Tongatapu. I migrated to Australia at the age of 1, where my family and I were adopted into the Gumatj clan (one of the First Nations clans in Nhulunbuy, Northern Territory). We lived on a Yolngu mission in Yirrkala, Northern Territory. My research project emerged from the multicultural coordinator role I held for Queensland Health, where I managed 13 Māori and Pacific staff located across Queensland tasked with improving the health of Pacific families. Prior to this role, I had no idea there were health issues among our people as I was deeply immersed in my Pacific ways of knowing, being and doing, especially with the perspective that big is beautiful and skinny is sick.

My qualitative research was conducted with three generations of Pacific peoples, elders, parents and teenagers, with a total of 29 participants of Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Cook Island and Māori descent. One-on-one talanoa

was held with 12 elders from various Pacific communities across Brisbane, and gender-specific talanoa groups were held with parents and teenagers. The research explored factors influencing the health choices of Pacific communities in South East Queensland, how and why these factors influenced such choices, and what the implications of the findings were for developing healthier lives and greater longevity for Pacific peoples. I developed two models from this research, namely, the Dominant Pasifika Perspectives of Wellness and the Alternative Pasifika Perspectives of Wellness. The knowledge of my participants and community has informed my research work, which has provided the foundations of my current Community Research Fellowship. I continue to harness this value of co-creating knowledge with my community and fellow authors as we navigate these uncharted waters within our Pacific Australian context and beyond.

My name is Tagaloa Glenda Stanley and I am the daughter of Saipai Fitu from Samatau, Samoa, residing on Yuggera and Yugambah land in Australia. I was born in Tutuila, Amerika Sāmoa, and raised as one of 13 children in Australia and New Zealand by a strong single mother who valued education, and yet I still dropped out of school at the age of 16. This backdrop strongly shaped my desire to work closely with Pacific high school students in South East Queensland to better understand their aspirations for university study, with the actualisation of those aspirations being the focus of my PhD thesis. Thirty-one Pacific students, predominantly Samoan, participated in six semistructured year-level-specific talanoa circles. Of this group, eight students participated in semistructured one-on-one talanoa three years later, which provided rich insights on their lived experiences that either supported or did not support their participation at university. It is these learnings that I now consciously embed in my teaching and within my talanoa sessions with my co-authors as we continue to grow in this space together.

My name is Lefaoali'i Dion Enari, the son of Malaeolela Adele Enari from Malaela and Fa'alafitele Faupapa Enari from Vaiala. I was born in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), Aotearoa (New Zealand), was raised in Australia from the age of 10 and have returned to Tāmaki Makaurau after 22 years. As a child, I wanted to learn more about my Samoan language, as I could not speak it, and my Samoan culture. Learning Samoan as a second language and seeing its transformative power sparked the desire in me to explore the perceptions and practice of the Samoan culture among other Samoan people residing in Australia (Enari and Taula 2022). Twenty-three participants engaged in one-on-one semistructured talanoa as part of my PhD research (Enari 2021). Of this group, ten participated annually in talanoa over five years, providing deep insights into their lived experiences and perceptions of the Samoan culture. It is these learnings that I draw upon amongst my family, village, people and co-authors as we traverse this space together. The

first learnings from our individual doctoral research was the development of an efficient term that best reflected our journey as early researchers from a Pacific Australian context. This term was “collective-individuals”, which will now be defined.

WHAT IS A COLLECTIVE-INDIVIDUAL?

We acknowledge that we are the first in our families to be in these spaces of advanced degree research, in a country where there are few Pacific academics or researchers in the university sector (Ravulo 2019). Jioji Ravulo, the first Fijian professor in Australia (2015), highlights that only 0.7% of people of Pacific heritage hold postgraduate degrees, in contrast with 2.9% for the Australian population. These reflections led us to more deeply explore how we were able to disrupt the “norm” in our Pacific Australian context and successfully navigate the western academic systems. We reflected on terms in the literature that would describe our positionalities and identities. It was evident that none of the available terms, such as insider-outsiders (Wolfgang-Foliaki 2016) or edgewalkers (Beals *et al.* 2019), resonated with us. These terms did not describe our context as they were perceived as defining our sense of belonging. This framing implied that insiders were included and outsiders were excluded. Furthermore, we did not believe we walked on the edge of the Pacific or western worlds, as such terms also suggested that we too did not belong in either space, but merely existed on the edges or in the middle.

Samoan scholar Tanya Wendt Samu defined her experience of being a minority as a Pacific woman in a New Zealand university, stating, “Pacific women theorised their marginal or liminal position as an empowering space where they could respond proactively and participate with strategem” (2014: 205). It is from this place of empowerment and a desire to respond with “strategem”, meaning a plan used to outwit an opponent or gain an advantage, that our extensive talanoa took place to find a term that would adequately define our journey. How had we broken out of the norm within our Pacific Australian families and communities to enter into higher-degree research? Our talanoa and prayer led to the term we coined, collective-individuals, as it best reflected how we navigated both the Pacific and the west, by reimagining the dichotomies of collectivism and individualism (Hofstede and Bond 1984). To successfully navigate the higher education space, we had learned how to occupy both the collective and individual paradigms simultaneously (Henderson 2016). We intentionally positioned the word “collective” first as it was the collective good that motivated the individual, and not the other way around.

Through talanoa we acknowledged the times we needed to be individualistic, which required us to pull away from the collective in order to commit to the demands of studying and writing. For us, this would often result in

feelings of guilt and shame at neglecting our responsibilities to the collective; however, through individual reflection, we were able to resolve these tensions by reassuring ourselves and each other that for now, we needed to focus and journey alone, as the collective could not sit our exams or complete our assessments. This ongoing deep tension was often unexpected as it was rarely discussed within our family and community or the university settings. It also felt significantly lonely at times, but with our deep spiritual beliefs, coupled with our hearts to serve our people through academia, we used agency and vision to persist in this individual work. We leaned on each other as our collective team of like-minded people, encouraging our commitment in times where we had to do individual work in line with the overall vision for ourselves, our families and our communities. At the development of this term collective-individual, we then refined the values and factors that we, and some of our participants, had carried to pioneer change within the dominant environments, be they Pacific or western. As a result, the SSAVI Collective-Individual framework was formulated.

BEING SSAVI COLLECTIVE-INDIVIDUALS

Although talanoa was used only as a method of data collection during our study, we also applied it in our own reflection and development to deepen our learnings as early researchers. The objective was to reflect on, unpack and identify the strengths, challenges and experiences we and our participants had, for the purpose of developing a framework that may be of use to support other researchers. This provided the rich data used to develop the SSAVI Collective-Individual framework which was reflective of our Pacific Australian context.

The first “S” is for spirituality, in recognition of our Pacific framework, which is deeply rooted both in Christianity and spirituality (Ihara and Vakalahi 2011). Participants within our research projects expressed their perceptions of the Australian western environment as being strictly secular, Eurocentric, scientific and devoid of spiritual practices which are familiar to them, such as prayer or incantation. This lack of spiritual focus within mainstream services creates a barrier for our Pacific participants, who perceive the system as critical, clinical and divorced from their Pacific context. This results in a disengagement from western services. An example of the importance of spirituality was found in Stanley’s study, with participants sharing how their strong faith was a fundamental key to continuing their studies despite challenging circumstances such as serious parent illness, family break-up or having to defer studies to supplement the family income.

Spirituality was also a core factor in Fainga’a-Manu Sione’s research. A significant finding with her elders regarding their perspective of the western term “health” was their rejection of the word as it was perceived as being devoid of spirituality. Elders preferred the use of cultural terms which were

rooted in spirituality and referred to holistic wellness. The Māori elders used terms such as *wairua*, which means spiritual or spirituality.

Whilst Australia does not have holistic health models that incorporate spirituality, participants referred to their lived experiences in Aotearoa, where there are holistic health models that include spirituality and reflect Pacific perspectives of wellness that inform service delivery, which has increased their engagement (NiaNia, Mana, *et al.* 2017; NiaNia, Tere, *et al.* 2013). A Pacific health model created by Pacific communities in Australia has not yet been developed, despite the overrepresentation of Pacific peoples being hospitalised due to type 2 diabetes complications, at a rate of seven times higher than the overall Queensland population (Hardt *et al.* 2020; Perkins *et al.* 2016). Queensland Health assessments reveal that Pacific communities suffer from health concerns related to diabetes complications, amputations, vision impairment and coronary heart disease at a rate nine times that of the Queensland population at large (Perkins *et al.* 2016; Queensland Health 2011). As emerging Pacific researchers living within a dominant western environment, it was imperative that we upheld our Pacific cultural values, beliefs and practices. In our research with Pacific communities spirituality was incorporated in *talanoa* with participants and stakeholders alike by way of prayer, singing cultural hymns, sharing food and laughter (Akbar *et al.* 2022; Durham *et al.* 2022).

The second “S” represents service (Fa‘aea and Enari 2021). Vaioleti (2006) emphasises reciprocity, which is embedded in *talanoa* and “raises the expectations that participants and researchers have of each other” (p. 26). He also states that *talanoa* allows for power sharing, which negates the power dynamics that often exist between the researcher and participants (p. 24). As emerging researchers, we agree with Vaioleti; however, we were unprepared for the urgent importance of continuously serving our participants. In Australia, there are significant barriers that our communities face due to legislative restrictions for Pacific peoples, many of whom hold New Zealand citizenship that restricts access to some health, disability, employment and educational services (Akbar *et al.* 2022). Furthermore, there is a lack of culturally tailored services for Pacific peoples in Australia. It was evident that our position as researchers came with an immediate urgency to support and serve our people (Fa‘aea and Enari 2021). Our role went beyond the scope of our research; however, it was important to include the provision of practical ongoing support and service. This involved regular meetings with participants to help elders navigate the western health systems and providing information to community leaders on how they could confront their complex challenges with their local not-for-profit boards. We also supported students and parents in making their way through tertiary pathways and university systems, along with resume writing for parents seeking to move out of factory work.

To reflect our cultural values and contexts we had to tailor the western boundaries of researcher and participant. This was a challenge for the authors, as our Eurocentric tertiary institutions did not offer insight into Pacific cultural approaches and the expectations of research being a form of community service which begins immediately, as we are members of our community doing research with our people. Importantly, whilst our studies were by Pacific researchers with our Pacific communities, all our supervisors were non-Pacific. As a result, there was a reciprocal process of educating our supervisors on the complexities of our cultural roles and responsibilities to family and community, but also in the thesis process, the cultural values and nuances that often created tension with, and contradicted, the western paradigms and narratives (Nabobo-Baba 2008), for example, the belief that big is beautiful and skinny is sick. We rarely discussed these challenges with our institutions due to our perception that they would not understand our context, and importantly, the additional efforts required in explaining and challenging these notions would detract attention from our own writing and thesis focus, only to be given the western textbook response. For Enari, he was advised against using his research to help his community but to use the community to gain a PhD. Alternatively, we used *talanoa* amongst ourselves to support one another to navigate these complexities. Although there is Pacific scholarship on the importance of research reciprocity and ensuring research is gifted back to the communities (Futter-Puati and Maua-Hodges 2019; Goodyear-Smith and 'Ofanoa 2022; Thaman 2012), this scholarship does not address how emerging researchers can navigate the competing demands of service to the community and their individual research project. From our collective experience, our research projects were grounded in service, and the researcher's position was that of a servant to the community (Fa'aea and Enari 2021). This was most prominent given the Australian Pacific context where there are minimal culturally tailored services for Pacific peoples, resulting in a sense of being invisible (Moosad *et al.* 2022).

Service, to us, was a commitment we made to our communities not just to conduct research “with” our participants and to write recommendations drawn from our research, but to serve our community with our research as defined by our participants and their families, churches and community. Some participants revealed that there had been a “use and abuse” process where those from outside the community, family or church sought to build relationships to benefit their own personal agenda with minimal-to-no intention of working in a reciprocal manner. It was an extractive and one-way relationship forged to benefit the researcher. Hence the reason why service was imperative to our practice, living within our own communities where our studies were being conducted.

The letter “A” is for agency. Hewson (2010) identified three components of agency: intentionality, rationality and power. These three aspects ensured that we were able to manoeuvre the competing demands we carried as Pacific community members serving our participants, immersed in church, family, community, employment and studies. It required negotiating between the many worlds (Durham *et al.* 2022), with the power and responsibility that this academic journey can have for our people and communities. As a result, we had to find ways of being intentional, which helped us develop boundaries that were culturally appropriate and were not originally taught to us by our tertiary institutes. Enforcing our culturally grounded boundaries was significantly challenging given the strong ties we had with our participants, our ongoing engagement within communities, and the sense of guilt we felt when we had to explain that sometimes we could not be involved in the varying requests, celebrations and events as we needed to commit to the demands of our research. We had to develop a rationale that could be understood by our people. It involved a simple message of, “I’m so sorry I am unable to attend or do what you’ve asked now, as I need to finish the research work to better serve our community”. At times, these messages were posted on our personal social media, emailed or sent by private message. This was consistently communicated to our various stakeholders (participants, elders, parents, church, community and families). We had to enforce our own individual and collective agency and hold each other accountable, often intervening to remind each other of the collective reward for our people when completing our research projects. We had to carry vision.

The letter “V” stands for vision. Like many of our Pacific peoples, our parents were the first to leave the islands. They were motivated by a clear vision of a better future, which our grandparents and parents selflessly sacrificed for. We had to distinguish between the times of serving participants, family, church and community and the time needed to isolate and complete the research. None of our universities had targeted programmes to nurture and support emerging Pacific researchers. We learned quickly how to create time and space for deep thinking and writing, despite simultaneously having work, family, church and community responsibilities. In this context, we had to establish and nurture the sacred, silent space required to focus and write as individuals away from the collective. This meant funding our own regular writing retreats. We also created a strong collective support system amongst ourselves to keep each other accountable to the research work, which included other Pacific and non-Pacific academics and people willing to mentor, support and coach us through the research process.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 in the Bible best captures this learning for us: “God has made everything beautiful in its time.” It was important to know how

to manage our time by identifying what was important versus what was urgent, as there were ongoing incidents that were perceived as urgent. Vision created a strengths-based perspective of the bigger picture centred upon a better future. Talanoa with our participants were often deeply confronting and overwhelming in terms of the challenges they faced. Yet their phenomenal power to carry vision despite the barriers were profound. For example, Stanley's study on student aspirations into tertiary education revealed that a parent's health had become a significant barrier to high school students transitioning to tertiary education. As a result of parents' illnesses, participants delayed commencing university study as they chose to care for and provide financially for family members. Some of our participants or their family members died over the course of our research projects. At times such experiences were deeply emotional and traumatising. We witnessed the sacrifices being made by individuals to serve their family. Endless tears were shed and we continued the talanoa through this experience by documenting our reflections and journal writing, because the weight was at times too heavy to carry. It was the power of vision that kept us hopeful and persistent to continue on and to finish the research work. Vision gives birth to innovation.

The letter "I" is for innovation. It requires new ways of knowing, being and doing. Innovation is important because of the complexities when moving between the Pacific ways of being and doing, which are deeply immersed in a collective culture, in contrast to the west, which is perceived as being dominantly individualistic in nature (Henderson 2016). This concept of innovation was developed through a twofold process. First, we used talanoa to reflect on our own individual journeys, as early Pacific researchers. Secondly, we used talanoa to further reflect on some of the stories of our participants and their families where we could identify individuals working innovatively with other like-minded people to drive change, despite the dominant norm they were in. Examples of innovation we saw among our communities include new Samoan language programmes and place-based Pacific Australian health initiatives driven from a grassroots context.

The SSAVI framework of spirituality, service, agency, vision and innovation is intertwined with being a collective-individual as the need for innovation often emerges out of a desire to reimagine the dominant norm. At times this was strongly working within or against Pacific and/or western ways of being and doing. From our own context and what we identified with some of our participants, that change was often instigated by a collective-individual. A collective-individual is a person that strategically works collectively with a group of like-minded people; they are "rebels with a cause", so to speak. Drawing from the individual paradigm, they are individuals who are willing to go against the norm, for the purpose of

pursuing a greater good. They are often pioneering something new within or against a dominant norm, either in a Pacific or western context. Making the decision to go against the dominant norm, in either Pacific or western practices, may come with significant backlash from elders, families or community, as such innovation may be unfamiliar and therefore resisted. Hence the importance of drawing on the SSAVI framework of spirituality, service, agency, vision and innovation to pioneer the change.

The SSAVI framework was evident in our own academic contexts. If during the times where we had to individually focus we were perceived as being selfish by some, because we were not able to attend significant celebrations such as weddings, funerals, birthdays and milestones, then so be it. It was our deep anchoring in spirituality, service, agency, vision and innovation that kept us steadfast with these decisions to momentarily withdraw from the collective to work on our innovative research projects, for the sake of adding new knowledge to the world and to better serve our people. The SSAVI Collective-Individual framework was also visible in the lives of some of our participants that were forging change beyond their dominant norm.

Talanoa was used to reflect on our participants' experiences, which showed that there were often participants working as SSAVI collective-individuals. An example of innovation by a participant using collective-individual agency within the SSAVI framework came from Fainga'a-Manu Sione's project. In Pacific culture, food is our love language, and to offer it abundantly is an expression of respect and honour towards our guests (Akbar *et al.* 2022). A senior Samoan pastor went against the Pacific cultural practice of holding a feast to adequately celebrate the tenth anniversary of the church. His rationale was the desire to choose a healthier option and to minimise cost for the people and the church. A decision was made by the senior pastor (individual), which was further supported by his church leaders (collective like-minded people), to offer small meals in supper containers as opposed to a feast. This decision was met with significant disapproval from the Samoan elders (the dominant norm), as they were ashamed of the cultural implications of not providing abundant food to mark such a significant milestone (Akbar *et al.* 2022). It was the stance of an individual, the senior pastor, using collective agency through his senior church leaders that created a new and innovative way of being. There was backlash as a result of this innovation, which could have caused the senior pastor and his collective like-minded agents to retreat; however, they persisted with their decision. Etueni, the senior Samoan pastor of a multicultural congregation, shared, "Everyone was given a container of food. The Samoan people were not happy. Even if you say, 'It's gonna be healthy. It will save money', other people's mentality is still very different, a very cultural mindset. They're

embarrassed to invite their friends to a church function, 'Oh, I'm ashamed that my church is serving us this, such a small plate of food'." This process began a new, innovative way of celebrating within the Pacific church that was not inherently reflective of their previous cultural practices regarding church celebrations. The SSAVI framework continued to encourage the collective-individuals to persist in their decision to change from feasts to small plates of food, despite the backlash from the dominant Pacific norm upheld by the elders for the benefit of the congregation.

Enari's research project identified how individual participants used the values and ways of being they had learned within their Samoan culture to navigate western dominant corporate workspaces (Enari and Matapo 2020; Enari and Taula 2022). Some of Enari's participants used their skills in Samoan oratory within their Australian workplace to develop cultural awareness, giving voice to the minority staff members with Pacific heritage. Other participants in Enari's research project used their cultural dances and songs for team-building activities to strengthen relationships with their non-Pacific work colleagues. Cultural pride instigated by Pacific individuals, for the sake of the collective, was the vehicle used to establish equity, diversity and inclusion. What gave the Pacific participants courage to change the dominant western norm was their strong spiritual beliefs and their desire to serve the team members using individual agency, because of a vision to develop a sense of belonging for all, especially for other Pacific work colleagues that were a minority in that corporate workplace.

Through our talanoa, these various examples from our research projects emphasised the role of the individual from within the collective. In the Fonofale model (Pulotu-Endemann 2009: 1), which is prominently used in Australia when working with Pacific communities, the individual is not identified—only the collective through the family. Defining ourselves as being collective only negates the spirituality, service, agency, vision and innovation actioned by individuals from within the collective. There was an ongoing interplay of both collective and individual factors when developing innovative ways to create change amongst the dominant norm, whether it was that of Pacific or western ways of being and doing. Working only as an individual without the collective was also limiting, as it did not acknowledge the service, responsibility and capital that lies within the community for and with the individual. The SSAVI Collective-Individual framework better reflects the ongoing navigation between the Pacific and the west, as well as the collective and the individual, which creates a capacity to harness the best of many worlds. We open ourselves up to becoming unlimited and accessing the capacity of our ancestors who navigated the open seas to harness diverse opportunities.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF BEING SSAVI COLLECTIVE-INDIVIDUALS

The literature on values-based frameworks that have emerged from using the talanoa methodology has identified values such as respect, reciprocity, collective responsibility, humility, love, charity, service and spirituality (Maniam 2022). Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2014) also include values such as emotions and empathy. Whilst these values were also experienced within our Pacific-Australian context across our three projects, we include agency, vision, innovation and the importance of collective-individuals that motivate and drive change from that which is the dominant norm. Vaoleti (2006) states that talanoa “holistically intermingles researchers’ and participants’ emotions, knowing and experiences” (p. 24). It is Vaoleti’s (p. 24) notion of weaving together the emotions, knowing and experiences of both the researchers and participants that has resulted in the development of this SSAVI Collective-Individual framework. Terms such as spirituality, service, agency, vision and innovation, inherent in being collective-individuals, define how the authors alongside our participants and community have harnessed their collective-individual capital to thrive, despite the challenges, which include restrictions within a dominant western environment. The SSAVI Collective-Individual framework offers a focal point when engaging with Pacific peoples to identify innovative practices that have been initiated by participants from a strengths-based, culturally grounded standpoint, despite the challenges. This provides the capacity to harness the many worlds, often from the ground up.

Durham (Durham *et al.* 2019) alluded to this in her study with 30 Pacific participants aged 16–24 years from Logan, South East Queensland. One of her study participants spoke of their capacity to be a “Poly with Polys and an Aussie with Aussies” (p. 7), meaning that they have had to learn how to function in both a Pacific and western dominant environment. The young person shared, “Ways of being and ways of doing things at home is still more close to the culture. And yet, a majority of time is spent in school in a different world again. ... the education system ... is a whole different philosophy or ways of thinking and being. ... There is always that battle” (p. 7). The talanoa that emerged from the research projects revealed the presence of collective-individuals who were effectively battling and harnessing many spaces simultaneously. This confirms Mila-Schaaf’s (2010) concept of Poly cultural capital within the New Zealand context—also evident in the Pacific Australian context.

The SSAVI Collective-Individual framework offers a lens through which we can focus our perspective when working alongside our community. For Stanley, when exploring the aspirations for university study of her participants, there was a search to understand how participants were not just naming their aspirations but also manifesting them. In Fainga’a-Manu Sione’s research regarding perspectives of health, the SSAVI Collective-Individual framework motivated a deeper analysis of the data to see if there were any signs of

participants making changes within their own wellness. Such probing proved effective as it revealed that despite the dominant perspectives of Pasifika wellness incorporating abundant food, faith, culture and prosperity, there was a cohort of participants navigating these strong Pacific practices as SSAVI collective-individuals that resulted in diet changes and increased physical activity. For Enari's participants, SSAVI collective-individuals were using their cultural capital to bring awareness and inclusivity within the western dominant corporate environments as they harnessed their Samoan culture as their point of difference and empowerment within Eurocentric spaces (Enari and Taula 2022).

In conclusion, this article presents the SSAVI Collective-Individual framework co-developed from our use of talanoa within our varied research projects. It reflects both the lived experiences of our communities and ourselves as emerging researchers. The Australian context has been highly complex as experienced by Pacific communities due to legislative restrictions limiting access to New Zealand citizens for certain government-funded health, education and employment services (Stanley 2020), all of which are grounded within dominant Eurocentric systems and services (Moosad *et al.* 2022). Despite this, talanoa enabled us to shine a light on the strengths that flourish among our Pacific peoples in Australia. Hau'ofa (1994) best captures this resilience and strength in his declaration that the future belongs to the people of Oceania to define the way forward. The concept of the SSAVI collective-individual offers a framework to amplify this narrative as written by Pacific researchers with and for Pacific peoples from our Australian context. This is best expressed by Leila, a female Samoan participant in Fainga'a-Manu Sione's research:

We have become accustomed (conditioned) to sit, listen and be told what to do. This system brings a sense of powerlessness that we cannot change. We are not the masters of our own destiny. The new way of working is very empowering: instead of us being told what to do, we are being invited to lead, own and co-design a new way.

This is what it means to be SSAVI collective-individuals; however, we will not wait for an invitation to lead, own and co-design a new way. We are (I am) the master(s) of our (my) destiny. We will continue to lead the way forward by being SSAVI collective-individuals, for we are both.

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AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Inez Fainga’a-Manu Sione, Pathways in Place, Griffith University, Logan Campus, L03_2.21, University Drive, Meadowbrook, Queensland 4131, Australia.
i.faingaa-manusione@griffith.edu.au | <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4479-5509>

Corresponding Author: Glenda Stanley, Centre for Systems Innovation (formerly The Yunus Centre), Griffith University, Logan Campus, L03_2.21, University Drive, Meadowbrook, Queensland 4131, Australia. g.stanley@griffith.edu.au
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3696-5088>

Dion Enari, School of Sport and Recreation, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, New Zealand. dion.enari@aut.ac.nz
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3239-699X>

