waka kuaka

SPECIAL ISSUE:
RE-VISIONING PACIFIC
RESEARCH METHOD/OLOGIES

Cover image: The beautiful lalava (lashings) created by
              Sopolemelama Filipe Tohi in the Fale Pasifika
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SPECIAL ISSUE:
RE-VISIONING PACIFIC RESEARCH METHOD/OLOGIES

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A Reflection on the Special Issue

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Marcia Leenen-Young is a senior lecturer in Pacific Studies within Te Wānanga o Waipapa at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland. She completed a PhD in ancient history and has since transitioned to focus on the history of the Pacific. Her research interests include the historical relationship between New Zealand and the Pacific, Indigenous Pacific ways of telling history, Pacific research methodologies and Pacific pedagogies. Marcia has received a number of awards for her teaching excellence in tertiary education, including national recognition with a Te Whatu Kairangi Award in 2022 alongside an Enhancing Pacific Learners' Success Endorsement. Marcia is also the first editor of *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society* who is of Pacific descent.

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RE-VISIONING PACIFIC RESEARCH METHOD/OLOGIES

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ABSTRACT: Pacific research methodologies have global relevance. As they inform research across national sectors and the training of emerging scholars in Aotearoa, their impact continues to ripple outward abroad. In this introduction to our special issue we weave genealogies of Indigenous, Māori and Pacific advocacy and epistemological inquiry to situate this growth and acknowledge the full and rich lineage of our academic predecessors. These genealogies provide necessary context to this present moment and offer us the opportunity to critically engage with and extend these conversations. Subsequently, we outline our approach to this special issue, which included developing a unique double peer-review process shaped by Indigenous Pacific values to support robust scholarship and a communal approach to building knowledge. Finally, we provide an overview of each article contribution, divided into three themes: first, a call for deeper recognition of place and context; second, critical reflection on the practicalities of existing methods and methodologies in new contexts; and third, the reinvigoration of existing or building new methodologies and methods.

Keywords: Indigenous research, Pacific research methodologies and methods, Pacific epistemologies, Indigenous knowledges, Pacific scholars, early-career researchers, peer review

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Pacific research methods and methodologies have gone global.[1] Pacific research approaches have had a wide-ranging impact as interventions that speak to foundational questions of knowledge production; the impact of world views, positionality and perspective; and how we know what it is we think we know about Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean). In Aotearoa New Zealand this can be seen in the plethora of guidelines on research with Pacific peoples produced in the previous 20 years by government ministries, councils and universities, evident in the shaping of public policy from health to education to restorative justice and beyond. The efflorescence of Pacific research methods and methodologies is part of a larger epistemic shift, and although they are well known in local research conversations (particularly in Aotearoa, Fiji and Hawai'i), that they are increasingly being deployed elsewhere points to both their global significance and the reality of shifting frameworks of knowledge production both in Aotearoa and abroad. This shift

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is also evident in Aotearoa with the increasing centrality of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems) in the university research landscape. Although treated by some as a "new" idea, not only is it a longstanding philosophical and practical approach to knowledge in te ao Māori (the Māori world), it has been with us for decades now as a research intervention. The positioning of mātauranga Māori front and centre in the country's changing research landscape speaks to the historical moment in which we find ourselves, with universities attempting to indigenise flagship campuses and incorporate the Vision Mātauranga policy into applications and evaluations in prestigious funding bodies like the Royal Society (Hoskins and Jones 2022). These epistemic shifts in the research landscape in Aotearoa have significant implications for Pacific scholarship, heralding this point in time as one where we can and should seek to re-vision what we do as Pacific scholars and how we conduct research with and for our communities.

This special issue grows out of longstanding discussions we have had about teaching Pacific research methodologies in our programme in Pacific Studies at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland. To support robust and ethical research with Pacific communities, our students need to have sound training in research methods and methodologies. How do we teach students to research? Are our students familiar enough with the research landscape to navigate it successfully? Do they understand Pacific methods and methodologies enough to make informed, deliberate choices in their work without forcing methodologies to "fit"? Our students need to be confident in their understanding of how Pacific and other Indigenous approaches stand in relation to mainstream (especially qualitative) research approaches; understanding *how* and *why* they were developed is important. In engaging with this work, Pacific researchers should be aware of not only their own personal academic ancestry but also the scholarship and advocacy that influenced the development and acceptance of Pacific epistemologies as part of the academic landscape. Pacific research methods and methodologies were not created in a vacuum: they were and remain intimately connected to an era of (anticolonial, antiimperialist, antiracist, antisexist) questioning of approaches to knowledge that were based on normalised (colonial, capitalist, imperialist, patriarchal) projects and world views. The backdrop of Pacific research, and Indigenous research more broadly, is the further exploration of these challenging ideas linked to a wave of resistance against previously accepted western frameworks of knowledge and research. This wave made visible the assumptions, shortcomings and systematic silences that marginalised Indigenous thought and Indigenous communities, regrounding the significance of our own knowledge systems (Fig. 1). Do our students understand this genealogy? (Do we?) Do we share enough with them to understand the connections, contexts and ethical imperatives that shape our work today?

Figure 1. Leone Samu Tui responds to the question "Why is Pacific research important?" in this diagram she created for the University of Auckland course PACIFIC 714: Pacific Research Methodologies and Practices. Included with permission of the author.

These were the questions that occupied us as we reflected on teaching our students how to research. We also found that while there was an abundance of research models developed by Pacific peoples for Pacific communities over time, they offered an approach to research that still left many questions for emerging scholars around how to carry out research informed by these models. How might the approaches be different in island villages and metropolitan areas? What kinds of considerations around cultural protocol and adaptations were relevant? How might one navigate different hierarchies (status, rank, gender, class, education, age and so on)? Further, how might we

combine model and method in ways that suit different projects while ensuring they are philosophically and practically aligned? How might one distinguish between the use of one (talanoa, for example) as method vs. methodology? And then how might one ensure alignment with chosen analytical lenses and approaches? Finally, what kinds of embodied experience, cultural knowledge and relationships are necessary or helpful? We are not the first to ask these questions, but they are becoming increasingly important as Pacific research methodologies and methods gain momentum.

Scholarship on Pacific research methodologies and methods is mature enough at this point in time not only to ask these questions but to further probe and critique these established processes in order to identify gaps and new directions, and pursue clarity with the benefit of experience (Sanga and Reynolds 2017; Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). Emerging academics are at the forefront of this effort, as they are of a generation of researchers being trained in the wake of significant shifts in research methodologies and methods, including major developments in Indigenous research broadly. Emerging scholars working with Pacific communities are increasingly expected to employ Pacific research methodologies and methods in some facet of their work, particularly in Aotearoa. Yet there is much less scholarship on the experience of employing Pacific research methodologies and methods in research to inform existing knowledge today than there is scholarship delineating paradigms, theorising and drawing on philosophical tenets or metaphorical models.

This special issue marks this historic shift in research practice and approaches for and by Pacific peoples and is intended to contribute new knowledge about how Pacific research methodologies and methods are being used (alone and in conjunction with other research approaches and methods). The contributions in this special issue help to illuminate the mutually constitutive relationship between theory and practice by sharing critical reflections and practical adaptations by early-career researchers who are raising considerations appropriate for the contemporary moment. In building on current knowledge, some deepen our understanding while others elaborate new approaches. At the same time, the contributions illustrate the kinds of embodied knowledge and emplaced positionality that are crucial to using these methods and methodologies not just appropriately but successfully. We hope that together the contributions to this special issue will benefit established scholars and help guide emerging scholars in their work with Pacific communities. We also hope they will start new conversations about Pacific research methodologies and methods and push existing conversations further, informing how we approach knowledge production with, by and for Pacific peoples.

TRACING OUR SCHOLARLY GENEALOGIES

At the turn of the last century, a critical mass of scholars were questioning canonical approaches to research, posing epistemological questions as they began to reckon with the challenge Indigenous epistemologies presented. There are deep roots to this discussion that can be traced through early efforts to disrupt the dominance of western thought in academia, through the work of feminist, postcolonial and Indigenous scholars (see, e.g., Abu-Lughod 1991; Anzaldúa 1987; Collins 1986; Haraway 1988; Harding 1992; Mohanty 1988; Spivak 1990; Wilmer 1993). In tracing these discussions about the nature and validity of knowledges in academia, neat linear divisions are facile and insufficient, but it is important to sketch broadly some of the major shifts that provided the foundation for the scholarship we see today as context to the development of Pacific research methodologies and methods. We offer these as generative rather than definitive genealogies, and encourage others to write into these spaces.

Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019) point to the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples[2] as a bolster to the efforts of Indigenous communities to push beyond colonially oppressive ideas of knowledge and embrace nonwestern knowledge systems, but even before this Indigenous academics had been working towards this goal (Powell and Newman 2022; Sanga and Reynolds 2019; Thaman 2003; Vaioleti 2013). This push against western paradigms of knowledge production gained transnational momentum as global concerns of decolonisation, nuclear testing, war and social issues encouraged Indigenous peoples to gather, collaborate and discuss the growing demand for recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples. Research, as put so poignantly by Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999: 1), has been a dirty word for Indigenous peoples. The need to refocus research led our academic predecessors, faced with the issues of their time, to work toward decolonising and reindigenising research practices for the benefit of Indigenous communities.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) is often identified as a key milestone in this conversation, and for good reason (see Fig. 2). It is one of the most cited texts on Indigenous research and has shaped generations of scholars since its publication.[3] For the co-authors of this article, its influence was profound. When Uperesa was considering doctoral work but still deeply dissatisfied from her undergraduate research experience and concerned about the history of extractive research in Oceania, *Decolonizing Methodologies* gave voice to those experiences and reservations. But it also offered a language and vision that held future potential and the possibility of empowerment. For Leenen-Young, *Decolonizing Methodologies* drew clear lines between and through her
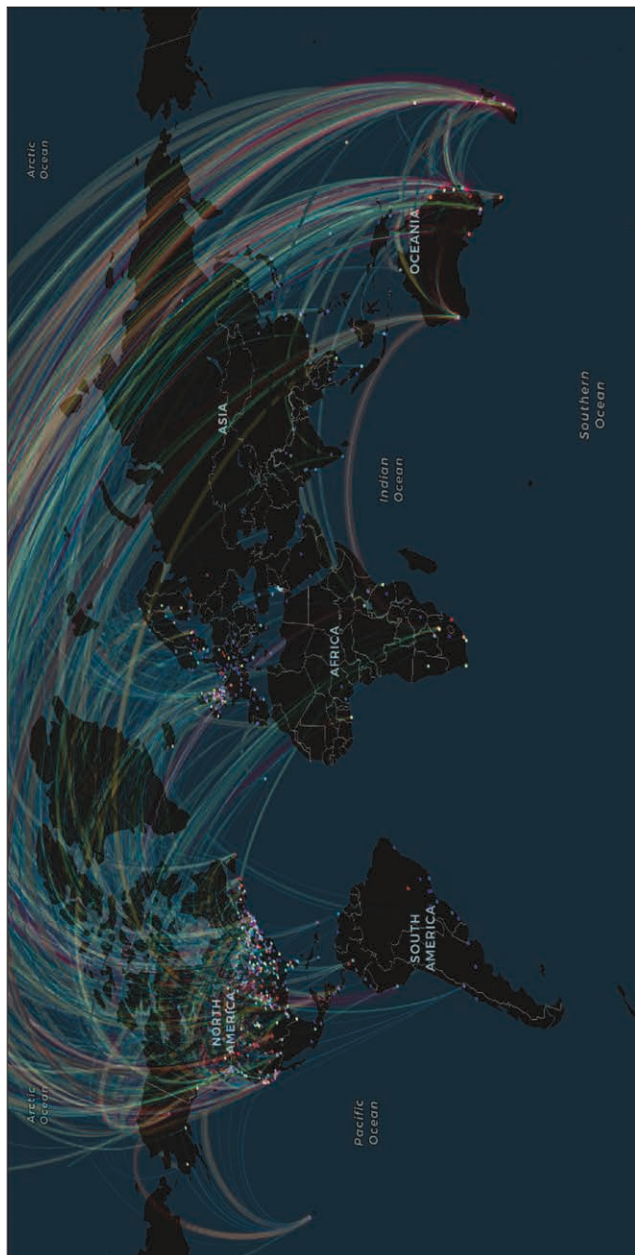
Figure 2. Developed in partnership with the University of Auckland Centre for eResearch, this graphic shows a static snapshot of the geocoding of references globally of Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* between 1999, when it was first published, and 2020. The arcs show citations between institutions, with the colours representing the number of citations. Microsoft Academic Knowledge API was used to gather this data, although it is not representative and does not capture articles that are not machine processable/accessible.

disciplinary training as a historian and the Indigenous research experiences that significantly informed her positionality as a historian and Pacific scholar.

While *Decolonizing Methodologies* has served as an important touchstone for a larger conversation on epistemology, ontology and methodology, it emerged amid a wider movement in kaupapa Māori (underlying Māori values and principles) discourse that blossomed in Aotearoa in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Russell Bishop (1998) speaks of this shift as one that "featured the revitalization of Maori cultural aspirations, preferences, and practices as a philosophical and productive educational stance and a resistance to the hegemony of the dominant discourse" (p. 201) motivated by the increasing political consciousness of the previous 20 years. Graham Smith (1992), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1991) and Russell Bishop (1994), alongside thinkers such as Ranginui Walker (1990) and Donna Awatere (1981), pioneered this push away from the idea of knowledge oriented only to the west: "We know that there is a way of knowing that is different from that which was taught to those colonized into the Western way of thought. We know about a way that is born of time, connectedness, kinship, commitment, and participation" (Bishop 1998: 215). These movements in Kaupapa Māori research fed and were fed by the discourses of Indigenous peoples worldwide. But these spaces and conversations in Aotearoa led by Māori thinkers also empowered and made room for Pacific scholars in the changing knowledge landscape of Aotearoa. One just needs to scan the references to see reflections of connectedness.

Across the globe, battles against the continued enforcement of Anglo-European notions of what constitutes knowledge were fought by Indigenous scholars, influenced by a variety of works including those by Frantz Fanon (1963), Albert Memmi (1965), Paulo Freire (1970), Edward Said (1978), Audre Lorde (1984), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) and bell hooks (1990). Indigenous peoples collectively began to meet, collaborate and publish in response to and in conversation with those who were pioneering these movements in thought and academic scholarship. For example, Ladislaus M. Semali and Joe L. Kincheloe's edited collection *What Is Indigenous Knowledge: Voices from the Academy* (1999) examined the social, cultural and political issues surrounding Indigeneity with a focus on the potential benefits of including Indigenous knowledge in the academy. In their introduction, the authors discussed recent developments at that time including consortia, working groups and conferences dedicated to the examination of Indigenous knowledges, including epistemological and practical questions surrounding the notion of Indigenous knowledges and its use and value. Their book emerged from the theoretical and practical challenges raised in these conversations and the resolution to increase and improve the study and understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems around the world.

The following year *Local Knowledge and Wisdom in Higher Education* (2000) focused on critiquing the place of universities in the increasing

rationalisation of culture, knowledge and action as well as their role in transmitting hegemonic ways of knowing. Editors G. Robert Teasdale and Zane Ma Rhea (2000) argued that the distinction between local knowledge and what was posed as universal knowledge relied upon political power and power relations in the designation of central/peripheral knowledges (see also Ma Rhea 2000). They urged an examination of academically generated ideas and their production, legitimation and circulation within universities around the globe. Some contributions to the collection provided models in practice or posed suggestions for future action (e.g., Brock-Utne 2000; Thaman 2000).

Pacific scholars were part of these emergent conversations at the turn of the century and prior, discussing and writing on Indigenous epistemologies as knowledge systems that could shift realities for our Pacific peoples, who have been ignored and disenfranchised by academic imperialism (Hereniko 2000). In some of the earliest writing into what would become Pacific studies, Albert Wendt offered "Towards a New Oceania" (1976) as a vision that refused the siren call of colonial ontologies and advocated a way of both being in and seeing the world rooted in the multiple iterations of Indigenous Oceania. Similarly, in his "Pacific Maps and Fictions" (1990) Wendt challenged cartographic knowledge of the Pacific, offering new maps for Oceania by demonstrating multiple ways of knowing the world and the Pacific by denaturalising what might appear as "normalised" ways of seeing. Haunani-Kay Trask's later text, *From a Native Daughter* (1993), powerfully asserted Hawaiian sovereignty and pushed against the commodification of culture and whitewashing of Hawaiian history. Trask was one of the first Pacific activist scholars who pushed the boundaries in her work to argue for the centring of Hawaiian ways of thinking, doing and seeing the world. Similarly in 1993, Konai Helu Thaman argued for cultural knowledges and traditions to be included within the educational curriculum in the South Pacific, arguing the potential for social change and educational success through the decentring of western priorities of education.[4]

In the same vein, only a year later, Epeli Hauʻofa (1994) in his "Our Sea of Islands" argued for a reframing of the way the Pacific is typically seen, reaching back to precolonial concepts of Pacific peoples and communities to point out that colonisation has been allowed to fracture not only the way we are seen but, more importantly, the way we see ourselves. Hauʻofa argues against the prevailing political discourses of the era of decolonisation that belittled Pacific homelands as being too small, poor and isolated to prosper or survive within the capitalist global market. Hauʻofa proposes an expansionist view of the Pacific (Oceania for Hauʻofa) that encompasses and connects, concluding with these words:

Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces that we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed places, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom. (1994: 160)

This vision of the Pacific has been prevailing. While these thinkers were key to shifting discourses in Pacific scholarship, there were many other vital scholars who contributed to these shifts that we simply do not have space to include here—Vilsoni Hereniko, Vicente Diaz, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, Teresia Teaiwa, to name a few—who also published key pieces in the same 1994 issue of *The Contemporary Pacific* (spring issue). Similarly in 2001, *The Contemporary Pacific* (spring issue) showcased some of this re-visioning of Pacific epistemologies with articles by David Welchman Gegeo and Karen Watson-Gegeo, Manulani Meyer and also Subramani with his essay titled "The Oceanic Imaginary" including responses by Vilsoni Hereniko, David Gegeo and Caroline Sinavaiana-Gabbard. Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) implore Pacific scholars to become involved in research on their Indigenous or Native epistemology(ies), to examine and take seriously Indigenous epistemic frameworks and to transcend the hegemony of Anglo-European scholarship.

At Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland, where both authors are currently teaching, a Pacific postgraduate symposium in September 2002 led to key contributions that examined Pacific and Indigenous epistemologies, worldviews and higher education from a collective of Pacific scholars. *Researching the Pacific and Indigenous Peoples: Issues and Perspectives* (2004), edited by Tupeni Baba, 'Okustino Māhina, Nuhisifa Williams and Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, is an important part in this genealogy of the development of Pacific thought and approaches to research. Divided into three "issues", this collection discusses Indigenous research and methodologies, language and culture, and then narrows to discuss Pacific research. While there are a number of notable contributions in this collection,[5] for the purposes of this overview, Baba's (2004) "Pacific and Indigenous Research: Beyond Bondage and Patronage" is significant in tracing the impacts of key shifts in research by Indigenous, Māori and Pacific scholars on policy in Aotearoa over the proceeding 25 years. He highlights education, health, globalisation, research, identity and Indigeneity as examples of how the shift towards culturally informed and responsive research by Indigenous, Māori and Pacific academics has shaped social conversations.

These discussions by Indigenous, Māori and Pacific[6] scholars and the shift they encouraged in conceptions of knowledges in higher education, research and beyond are a central part of the story of Pacific research methodologies and methods. Challenges to academic imperialism by Pacific scholars in an effort to advocate for Pacific ways of knowing and doing in research went hand in hand with the initial and continued development of research paradigms led by and for the benefit of Pacific communities.

PACIFIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS:
A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The central purpose of Pacific research methodologies and methods is to provide paradigms for ethical community-centred research with Pacific peoples framed within priorities of relationality, reciprocity and responsibility. Just as they are for other Indigenous peoples, for Pacific scholars and communities these approaches and frameworks are sites of decolonisation and reindigenisation (see, e.g., Archibald *et al*. 2019). As Naepi (2019) states,

> Pacific research methodologies are an act of decolonial resistance that recognizes the legitimacy of Pacific ontologies and epistemologies, enabling research that is truly reflective of Pacific peoples. They are a response to colonial research patterns that have framed and stereotyped Pacific peoples in problematic ways. (p. 1)

In Aotearoa and the wider Pacific we can see this flourishing of Pacific-centred research in publishing from the 1990s.[7] Although these responses by Pacific academics were a push against a system that actively sought to undermine and ignore nonwestern ways of knowing and doing, they were also in response to social concerns within our communities. In Aotearoa, for example, these efforts resulted in the development of Pacific research guidelines in key sectors to enable ethical research for Pacific peoples that made a measurable difference. The need to address key social concerns in which Pacific peoples are positioned as "problems" reflected in negative social statistics makes the connection to Pacific research *personal* for us in so many ways, an antithesis to the usual claims of objectivity in western research. As Konai Helu Thaman (2003) asserts in her poem "Our Way" (p. 3), Pacific research for Pacific peoples is intimate and subjective, but also rigorous and truth-seeking.

The intention here is not to provide an exhaustive list of Pacific research methodologies and methods, as this has already been done by a number of other scholars (see, e.g., Anae 2019; Koya-Vaka'uta 2017; Naepi 2019; Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). Instead, we trace some of the key strands in the genealogy of Pacific research methodologies and methods and their development over time, to understand where we find ourselves

today, with a new generation of scholars questioning, probing and pushing towards a more critical and expansive discussion. While there have been a number of frameworks or guidelines for Pacific research developed by both government ministries and agencies and by research institutions (e.g., Airini *et al*. 2010; Anae *et al*. 2001; Health Research Council 2005, 2014; Massey University 2014; University of Otago 2011), the focus here is on the development of specific methodologies or methods, largely by Pacific practitioners, researchers or educators.

Pacific research methodologies and methods can both be specific to a Pacific people or span Pacific communities; they can be centred in home islands or in the diaspora. They can be frameworks for approaching and carrying out research and theoretical paradigms and, in some cases, can be used as both a method and a methodology. Many are framed by using a cultural metaphor or process, although all are underpinned by values and structures that are intended to ensure appropriate engagement with Pacific peoples (in a variety of contexts and forms). Koya-Vaka'uta (2017) traces commonalities in Pacific research methods and methodologies to include

> the use of metaphor; an emphasis on indigenous life-philosophies concept-ualised around place (land) and space (relations); cultural notions of the pedagogic self (self-concept and identity) in relation to family and community; holistic understandings of the human-in-the-world grounded in balance for continuity and survival (sustainability); and spirituality and values. (pp. 78–79)

At this point in time, there is a plethora of Pacific research methodologies and methods for aspiring Pacific scholars to use to frame their research, and even more are being developed, as we will see in this special issue. As noted above we saw the first wave of publishing on these research methodologies from the 1990s, although we know many were initially developed earlier in health and education research.[8] In recent decades, Pacific research methods and methodologies have been spaces of development, adaptation and reinterpretation as scholars have taken and built upon them in different ways. Referring to the development of the Kakala research framework, for example, Sanga and Reynolds (2017) express this in terms of not just depth and complexity but also "width", because of its applicability across "differing Pacific structures related in their decolonial intent" (p. 199). Adaptability is one of the strengths of Pacific research methodologies, and one we have embraced in this special issue.

A key example of this is the Pacific research methodology/method of talanoa, which is the most widely used Pacific research approach (Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). Talanoa (sharing of stories and ideas through conversation and storytelling) has been discussed as a customary practice relevant throughout the Pacific as a culturally appropriate research method

(Faʻavae *et al*. 2016; Gremillion *et al*. 2021), although it is largely used amongst researchers with Fijian (Cammock *et al*. 2021; Meo-Sewabu 2014; Nabobo-Baba 2008; Otsuka 2006), Tongan (ʻOtunuku 2011; Tecun *et al*. 2018; Vaioleti 2006, 2013; Vaka *et al*. 2016) and Samoan connections (Matapo and Enari 2021; Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea 2014). Talanoa has many forms and nuances dependent on context, which must be understood by the researcher (Naepi 2019; ʻOtunuku 2011). While published work on talanoa first focused on providing a culturally relevant method of collective discussion and knowledge building (Halapua 2002), Timote Vaioleti (2006, 2013) developed talanoa as a research methodology. From Vaioleti's initial conceptions, scholars have extended and adapted the conception and usage of talanoa in research. At its heart, talanoa is relational and empathetic (Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba 2014; Naepi 2019); recent research has also shown that it is adaptable and dynamic in the research space (Thomsen 2023). While talanoa has become widely used, it has cognates with tok stori (Melanesia; Sanga and Reynolds 2023) and moʻolelo (Hawaiʻi; Oliveira and Wright 2015), both built from the foundation of relationality.

Relationality or the act of relating to one another in ways culturally specific to Indigenous Pacific peoples underlies all Pacific research methodologies. Pan-Pacific research methodologies centre relationships, although they also warn that such umbrella research approaches are still dependent on the community with which the research is being conducted (Airini *et al*. 2010; Bennett *et al*. 2013; Naepi 2019). For Indigenous scholars, relationships, or the importance of them in research, is not a new revelation (Davidson 2019; Wilson 2008). However, specificity matters: the worldview or specific cultural paradigm that informs the nature and framework of such relationships will shape how relationality is conceived, enacted, valued and maintained (Anae 2019; Sanga and Reynolds 2019; Stewart-Withers *et al*. 2017). As Upolu Lumā Vaai (2017) explains:

> Pacific people are born into a multi-dimensional flow of life, enhanced and protected by relationships. We do not create relationships. Rather, we continue relationships. And through us, relationships flow. We are relational beings who are "more" than the assumed individualised self. Because we are "more" we are formed in relationality, and through this mystery we deliberately recondition and reconfigure the world around us. (p. 27)

Esteemed Samoan educationalist Airini (2010: 170) explores the significance of relationality in research with these words:

> If I am to know you then I am
> to be human.

We talk.
I can see you.
Here.
We share breath.
I can see possibilities of, in,
through relatedness.

I see that where research
connects, there is meaning.

Could it be this simple?

Here Airini speaks of genuine connection through research. When talking about relationality in research, the concept of connection or the sacred space between entities, represented for some Pacific peoples in the concept of the vā, is the most significant aspect of Pacific research. Albert Wendt (1996) explains the vā as "the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-all, the space that is context, giving meaning to things" (p. 42), while Refiti *et al.* (2021) describe it as "the attachment and feeling for place and relatedness" (p. 357). Melani Anae (2019) emphasises teu le vā (or tausi le vā; to nurture and value the relational space) as a spiritual, unifying aspect of Pacific research methodologies. Similarly, Hūfanga 'Okusitino Māhina has theorised tā–vā (time–space) through the philosophical tenets and ontological aspects of the relationship between time and space in Tongan worldviews (2010, 2017), while Tēvita Ka'ili has explored Tongan tauhi vā (taking care of one's social space with kin or kin-like members) in transnational spaces (2005: 106; see also 2017). To teu le vā or tausi le vā is a foundational element of daily life that is reflected in research with Pacific peoples (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009; Suaalii-Sauni 2017; Tuagalu 2008).

While these guiding precepts have been crucial to shaping new approaches, Pacific research methodologies as a developing scholarship have reached the point where critical interrogation and reflection on theory, process, practice and engagement are essential to ensure continued vitality, robustness, applicability and heart. Koya-Vaka'uta (2017) discusses the need for rethinkers to critically engage with established Pacific research methodologies and methods holistically and reflectively, calling for intellectual and critical debate on what "good research practice in Pacific indigenous contexts" (p. 79) looks like. Sanga and Reynolds (2017) encourage "careful and respectful critique of the past", stating powerfully that when faced with the strength of colonisation, "we benefit from walking forward by looking back carefully" (p. 200). Concerns about clutter as distraction in Pacific research, the claiming of Pacificness inappropriately and the choice (or need) to adhere to cultural contexts are significant in these

discussions as well (Efi 2005; Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba 2014; Sanga and Reynolds 2017; Tunufaʻi 2016). Additionally, concerns about the ability of Pacific research methodologies and methods to adequately guide our Pacific postgraduate and doctoral students to carry out their own research projects have also been demonstrated, in particular with talanoa (Faʻavae *et al*. 2016; Tunufaʻi 2016). Many of the contributions to this special issue move these discussions forward by considering and responding to these critiques, extending the conversations and adding new dimensions through reflection on experience as early-career Pacific researchers.

OUR SPECIAL ISSUE: PIONEERING A NEW PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

A key component in assembling this special issue was the development of a unique peer-review process that supported the contributors as emerging Pacific academics through a process that can often, unfortunately, be destructive and detrimental in the name of academic "rigour". We designed this process to simultaneously provide space for robust, critical engagement with Pacific research methods and methodologies while also centring Pacific values such as faʻaaloalo (respect; reciprocity; communal relationships), alofa/aroha (love; charity) and tautua (service) (Airini *et al*. 2010; Anae *et al*. 2001; Health Research Council 2005, 2014; Massey University 2014; University of Otago 2011). This was inspired by a similar peer-review process developed by Thomsen *et al*. (2021) that was also based on Pacific values of relationality. As editors, it was important for us to ensure this process was one that supported and enhanced the experiences of the Pacific early-career academics who contributed to this issue, with the understanding that to teu le vā was not in opposition to a double peer-review process or producing academically rigorous scholarship; it was central to it.

Building relationships with and between our contributors was foundational in order to provide wide support for the article-writing process. Peer support is recognised as an important component of success for Pacific tertiary students, and the same is true for many of us working in the academy (Chu *et al*. 2013; Kidman and Chu 2019). We initially accepted abstracts from all over Aotearoa and Australia (20 in total), so we had to find a way to start building relationships with the contributors while also providing a space for discussion on the overall philosophy of the special issue alongside individual articles. We held an optional two-day online writing retreat for contributors in June 2022 where we spent time on whakawhanaungatanga (establishing relationships), discussed article writing as a process, had guest presenters talk about writing for an audience and shared initial thoughts about our papers. To maintain this relational space, we then held weekly 2.5-hour online writing sessions prior to the initial draft submission at the beginning of August. These online sessions included an initial 30-minute

Figure 3. Participants at the end of day 1 of the closed symposium for preparation of this special issue. Back row: Inez Fainga'a-Manu Sione, Sam Iti Prendergast, Ruth Faleolo, Lisa Uperesa (editor), Joseph Bruce Tutonga Houghton, Dion Enari, Wanda Ieremia-Allan, Emma Ngakuravaru Powell, Yvonne Underhill-Sem (senior discussant), Nanise Young Okotai, Caleb Panapa Edward Marsters, Vili Nosa (senior discussant), Marcia Leenen-Young (editor). Front row: Charmaine 'Ilaiū Talei, Cherie Chu-Fuluifaga (senior discussant), Catherina Bolinga, Glenda Stanley, Sereana Naepi (senior discussant), Radilaite Cammock. Absent: Malcolm Andrews.

talanoa space for contributors to raise any issues they wanted to discuss.

Having established these connections, we held a 1.5-day compulsory, in-person closed symposium for the double peer-review process (Fig. 3). In this symposium, held at the Fale Pasifika in Auckland, we facilitated the first peer review on day 1 through in-person talanoa between groups of contributors (three papers per group) and a more senior academic discussant who had already reviewed their articles (four in total). Senior discussants were vital to the success of this peer-review initiative, but we recognise it is also a significant ask to review four papers and spend a day in talanoa with the authors. We were lucky to have four accomplished and committed Pacific academics agree to do this: Associate Professor Yvonne Underhill-Sem, Associate Professor Vili Nosa, Dr Cherie Chu-Fuluifaga and Dr Sereana Naepi. Each of our senior discussants were generous with their time and were fully invested in the process as we had designed it, enhancing and invigorating, but also directing and critiquing, through their reviews.

It was vital that this process be in person to allow for meaningful relationship building between the discussants and contributors, kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face), to enable our unique approach to the peer-review process to be culturally appropriate, safe and supportive. The intentional pairing of senior knowledge holders and early-career scholars also reflected Pacific ways of sharing knowledge across generations, incorporating a tuakana–teina (older person–younger person) support model. Throughout the day there were multiple communal peer-review sessions and spaces for reflection where contributors were taken through their articles and given space to ask questions and discuss comments from senior discussants. This was not only a two-way peer review, since each person in a group had reviewed all of the articles from that group and were encouraged to comment and discuss the articles collectively. In order to support attendance from all of the contributors and our senior discussants, we secured funding from the Faculty of Arts at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland to cover travel and accommodation, and ensured each of our contributors was able to attend.

After the peer-review sessions, our senior discussants were invited to be part of a panel to discuss future directions in Pacific research methods and methodologies (Fig. 4). While our discussants and contributors had been together for the day, this was an opportunity for the senior discussants to discuss Pacific research methods and methodologies collaboratively and for our contributors to pose questions. Unsurprisingly, this was a space that invited reflection on experience and hopes for the future of Pacific scholarship and for scholars in Aotearoa and beyond. It was at times raw, emotional, uplifting and hopeful. To close the first day and extend the web of connection, we held a reception to introduce our contributors to other Pacific scholars at local universities.

The second peer review took place on day 2. For this session, each contributor had been assigned another's article to review, and similarly to day 1, this was done in person through discussion. We encouraged contributors to focus on supporting their fellow early-career researchers to develop their scholarship through their reviews—and, for the most part, contributors

Figure 4. Panel with our senior discussants and contributors focused on the past and future of Pacific research methodologies and methods. From left to right: Dr Cherie Chu-Fuluifaga, Associate Professor Yvonne Underhill-Sem, Associate Professor Vili Nosa, Dr Sereana Naepi. The cover picture of this special issue of the lalava (traditional lashing) in the Fale Pasifika where we held our symposium is significant to connect to this moment in time.

thoroughly engaged with the process. For some, this was both their first time receiving and giving a review, made more familiar by the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and suggestions as part of a reciprocal process of development in person, instead of a blind one-way review.

The reflection at the end of the symposium demonstrated the success of the process. Contributors were invigorated and enthusiastic and appreciated the ability to engage in a process that centres Pacific peoples, values and ways of doing. One contributor raised the question of academic rigour, deciding that this process was more rigorous than the standard double-blind peer review because of the ability to discuss, argue, adapt and understand more fully the perspective and opinions of the reviewers, and in turn for the reviewers to understand the perspectives and motivations of the authors. While this unique peer-review process was a significant investment in time and funding, it allowed us to develop a process that reflected our ethical commitments, cultural priorities and ways of interacting with the world as Pacific peoples in order to support and develop Pacific academic excellence. We hope the contributors take this experience as an example of how to do academia differently and feel empowered to intervene in and reframe processes to create space for Indigenous approaches more broadly. For us, never having had the opportunity to work in this way as emerging scholars, it was a memorable experience to work in collective brilliance and a good reminder that you can create the space you wish to see.

OUR SPECIAL ISSUE: SURVEY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

The articles in this special issue engage in reflective critique based on the realities of incorporating Pacific research methods and methodologies in research today. In this, the pieces make three key contributions: they issue a call for deeper recognition of place and context ("on the ground"), provide critical reflection on practicalities that reckon with the need to adapt existing methods and methodologies to new contexts, and reinvigorate existing frameworks and methods or provide new ones.

The first section in the special issue calls for deeper recognition of place and context. In reflections on the use of metaphor, Emma Ngakuravaru Powell raises important critiques about how we deploy Pacific metaphors in research, and whether we are understanding and fully conveying in our work the lived experiences and labour on which they are based. Powell argues that grounding our understanding of these metaphors in Indigenous knowledges and practices in context is important, and cautions against the use of Pacific metaphors that are increasingly disconnected from the realities from which they are drawn. Engaging with recent work (Wright-Koteka 2006) and classic work in Pacific studies by Teresia Teaiwa and Epeli Hauʻofa, Powell delves

into the metaphor of te akau roa (the long reef) as both a feature of the social imaginary and fundamental part of everyday life for Cook Islands people.

In a different call to recognise more deeply place and context in the approach to research with Pacific peoples, Sam Iti Prendergast grapples with Pacific theorising and settler colonial realities. In reflections on the Māori diaspora, she delves into the ways Pacific theorising is sometimes not only insufficient but also problematic when paradigms of movement and diaspora either elide the role and impact of the state in a focus on trans-Indigeneity or fail to reckon with Indigenous relations and how Indigenous peoples in movement enter into and maintain relations with other Indigenous peoples on whose land they have come to reside (often through the mechanisms of the settler state). In its call for engaging Indigenous studies and settler colonial realities in the Pacific more explicitly, this article speaks to methodological approaches in research, considering depth of analysis and what is brought into the frame of vision for analysis.

The second section in the special issue also prioritises research context, but emphasises adaptations in the contributors' critical reflections on the practicalities of employing Pacific research methodologies and methods in research with Pacific communities. Caleb Panapa Marsters's article argues that the cultural frameworks for research that have been elaborated in previous scholarship need to be adapted to contemporary contexts. He offers a thoughtful exploration of how we stay true to core values of relationality, ethics and care in our work with Pacific communities but also reckon with place and shifting realities. This article provides insights into practical adaptations when using talanoa and concern with what this negotiation means for Indigenous research and diasporic and transnational realities. Those insights have implications for research far beyond the shores of Aotearoa.

Also taking up talanoa, but extending it into the digital space, is Ruth (Lute) Faleolo's article. With the benefit of reflection over a period of time, Faleolo discusses cultural protocols for her research first as a daughter of Tonga in the Pacific and then later in the online space. She helpfully illustrates key shifts in communication preferences for Pacific communities in Australia and Aotearoa over the course of the past two decades. Her discussion of e-talanoa is particularly relevant given the restrictions on research in person due to COVID-19 protocols, but it is also helpful for people using digital platforms for research, those focused on migration and transnationalism, and anyone engaging in research with communities in different geographical locations. With attention to principles, practices and adaptations, the article explores how we enact cultural values and sensibilities in research that respects participants' preferred modes of communication and shares power with participants in research design.

Nanise Young Okotai offers another critical reflection on the practicalities of Pacific research methodologies and methods today, focusing on the Fijian Vanua Research Framework (FVRF) and navigating research in Fijian village settings as an anthropology doctoral student with family ties to the village. The article offers insights into employing FVRF as a methodological approach combined with more mainstream qualitative methods. As both a visiting academic and someone genealogically connected to the community that hosted her research, she discusses navigating local protocols, permissions and relationalities. Her reflection on negotiating vanua (land) politics complicates simplistic views on insider/outsider positionality for Pacific researchers doing research with Pacific communities. It also raises questions about how legacies of colonialism shape recognition of our genealogical links to place and community, and how that affects our own sense of identity.

In their article, Radilaite Cammock and Malcolm Andrews revisit the Vanua research framework together with iTaukei philosophical viewpoints to present a conceptual base aligned with local knowledge to support research with Fijian communities. They delve into the structure of iTaukei society as well as key philosophical concepts such as sautu (wellbeing), gauna (conceptions of time), maliwa (space) and veiweikani (relationships) to map a proposed Fijian value research system (FVRS) that provides key considerations for undertaking research successfully.

Drawing on the research methods of talanoa and tīvaevae in his education research, Joseph Bruce Tutonga Houghton offers a critical reflection on practicalities of research using existing frameworks. Houghton elaborates on the synergy between tīvaevae as a research model connected to his own ancestry and talanoa as method appropriate for his school-based participatory action research on empowering Pasifika voice, with largely Samoan and Tongan students and stakeholders. His piece offers useful insights on successfully combining Pacific research methods and methodologies along with mainstream methodologies.

Picking up the threads of research with diasporic and transnational communities outside of the islands, Inez Fainga'a-Manu Sione, Glenda Stanley and Dion Enari detail their doctoral journeys and share insights from reckoning with the position of Pacific communities in Australia and what they were able to offer the communities they worked with while balancing collective obligation and individual responsibility. Guided by Spirituality, rooted in Service, activating Agency, developing Vision and engaging in Innovation, the trio elaborate the SSAVI framework that enabled them together to study for their own and the greater good while maintaining commitments to community. This article speaks to the many difficulties Pacific scholars often face, particularly as early-career researchers, as they try to balance the heavy workload of study and community needs.

The last key section in this special issue pushes our understanding of existing frameworks further by introducing new dimensions or providing new frameworks altogether. Wanda Ieremia-Allan's article offers a new conceptualisation of talanoa in archival research that in some ways departs from, and in other ways deepens, existing knowledge. Unlike the more common use of talanoa in social science research, Ieremia-Allan deploys talanoa as both a Samoan philosophical paradigm or methodology and as a method in work with archival material. Working in the archives of the London Missionary Society Samoa newspaper *O le Sulu Samoa*, Ieremia-Allan grapples with the embodied experience of connection to family over time and space, whose lives and work she discovered preserved in the writing in the newspaper. Alongside sharing a moving engagement with ancestors through archival discovery, Ieremia-Allan's reconceptualisation of talanoa as historical research methodology and method as read through specific Samoan philosophical notions and practices significantly develops our understanding of talanoa in research.

Working with a different method, Catherina Bolinga builds on existing elaborations of tok stori (storytelling sessions through conversation) in Melanesia to provide a different iteration in yumi tok stori. Based on her experience in Papua New Guinea and research with diasporic PNG communities in Aotearoa and those located in the Pacific, Bolinga outlines the elements of yumi tok stori employed in her doctoral research. Her critical discussion focuses on the importance of centring Indigenous communication frameworks and adapting to specific place and community contexts, of considering key elements of relationality and protocol that are culturally and circumstantially appropriate, and of developing research methods with Melanesian communities. In the scholarship on Pacific research methods and methodologies Melanesian approaches are significantly underrepresented, and this article helps to address that gap while expanding the tok stori framework.

Drawing on existing scholarship on vā and her experience with a variety of architectural projects in Aotearoa, Australia and the wider moana, Charmaine 'Ilaiū Talei conceptualises vā as relational principle as well as research and design praxis. She writes, "nurturing vā as a design professional means being mindful about, but not limited to, the delivery of services and how to enable Pacific stakeholders' full participation, alongside identifying their sociospatial perceptions of vā for the actual design of the project" (p. 164). For 'Ilaiū Talei, "[v]ā, then, becomes a praxis that concurrently is the driving design principle and frames the design process and the project delivery, alongside being the approach to nurture the project relationships" (p. 164). In this piece 'Ilaiū Talei helpfully bridges the gap between the theoretical and the practical, from considering vā as a conceptual description of connection to a discussion of how it manifests tangibly in architectural practice and research.

Finally, in her research on Pasifika perspectives on wellness in Australia, Inez Fainga'a-Manu Sione offers a Tongan-centred methodology for research, following ten stages of the process for making a fala (traditional mat). "Fofola e fala, kae talanoa 'a e kāinga" is a Tongan proverb that means "to respectfully unravel the fala for the family to talk". In her approach to research with three generations of participants (elders, parents and youth), Sione adopted the fala methodology to guide her work; here she outlines the different phases and also discusses the integration of the methodology with talanoa as a method and grounded theory as an analytical approach. Importantly, she addresses the importance of time in the analytical process. In this she drew on a phase of fala making (tuku 'i tahi or soaking in the ocean) and inspiration from dadirri (inner deep listening and quiet still awareness) (Ungunmerr 2017; West *et al*. 2012: 1584), an Indigenous practice of the Ngangikurungkurr people of Australia's Northern Territory, where she grew up. In the stillness of waiting, listening and "soaking" the leaves (data) she was able to return to the analysis with a new perspective. This pause is worth flagging as it highlights a useful divergence from expected research analysis activities and timeframes according to mainstream academic approaches, one that allowed her understanding to mature with distance from the research.

HONOURING THE PAST AND MOVING FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE

In Aotearoa New Zealand we (generally) have the privilege of not needing to focus on arguing for the significance and place of Pacific research methods and methodologies in scholarship and so have the opportunity to step back to consider how to move forward, and how to share these innovations in a way that enables emerging scholars to continue to build. We have benefited from those who fought these academic battles before us, and recognise their work with great respect. Where to from here? We hope that collections like this one both highlight the emerging innovations and provide teaching tools toward greater understanding, clarity and intentionality with Pacific research methods and methodologies. As scholars engage in deep learning toward ethical research, we also hope greater discussion and transparency does not facilitate appropriation of these approaches by others. As a feature of Pacific Indigenous thought, engagement with these research approaches commands careful consideration of embodied knowledge, positionality, commitment and accountability to our communities.

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NOTES

1. The term "Pacific" has been used in this introduction to align with common usage, although we recognise that this term is steeped in colonial tradition and that it is contested (Airini *et al.* 2010; Māhina 2008). In this special issue, contributors were encouraged to use their preferred terminology.
2. Aotearoa New Zealand did not sign this nonbinding declaration until April 2010.
3. As of May 2023 the text had garnered over 24,000 citations in Google Scholar. Its impact on Indigenous peoples can be seen through publications such as the edited book *Indigenous Women's Voices: 20 Years on from Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Decolonizing Methodologies* (*Tebrakunna* country and Lee and Evans 2022).
4. The Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative was formed with this vision in 2001 (Pene *et al.* 2002).
5. For example, in addition to the editors, Margaret Mutu, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Kabini Sanga, Kolokesa Māhina and Melenaite Taumoefolau made contributions.
6. In this special issue our conception of the Pacific as Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa includes Māori, but writing from Aotearoa we also recognise local terminology that often separates out Māori as tangata whenua (the local Indigenous people).
7. Melani Anae (2019) refers to this as a renaissance based on recognition of Pacific peoples' precolonial epistemological traditions.
8. As far as can be traced through the published literature, there were four methodologies initially developed prior to the first publication of *Decolonizing Methodologies*: the Fonofale model of health by Karl Pulotu-Endemann was first used in the mid 1980s and developed further over the following two decades (Pulotu-Endemann 2009; Koya-Vakaʻuta 2017); the Kakala research framework was initially conceived by Konai Helu Thaman in 1992 (Koya-Vakaʻuta 2017), initially published in 1993 (Thaman 1993) and further developed by Thaman with ʻAna Taufeʻulungaki and Seuʻula Johansson Fua and with the support of Linitā Manuʻatu into the framework as it is today (Johansson Fua 2014); the Faʻafaletui framework of Kiwi Tamasese, Carmel Peteru and Charles Waldegrave emerged in a report in 1997 on Samoan perspectives of mental health (Tamasese *et al.* 1997); and Naʻauao was developed in 1998 by Manulani Aluli Meyer and published in 2001 (Meyer 2001; Koya-Vakaʻuta 2017).

GLOSSARY

alofa	love (Samoan)
aroha	love; charity (Māori)
dadirri	inner deep listening and quiet still awareness (Ngangikurungkurr (Aboriginal Australian, Northern Territory))

fa'aaloalo	respect; reciprocity; communal relationships (Samoan)
fala	traditional mat (Tongan, Samoan)
gauna	conceptions of time (Fijian)
kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face (Māori)
Kaupapa Māori	underlying Māori values and principles; the Māori way
lalava	traditional lashing
maliwa	space (Fijian)
mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge systems (Māori)
sautu	wellbeing (Fijian)
tā–vā	time–space (Tongan)
talanoa	sharing of stories and ideas through conversation and storytelling (Fijian, Tongan, Samoan)
tangata whenua	lit. people of the land; Māori, Aotearoa's Indigenous people (Māori)
tauhi vā	"to take care of one's social (relationship) space with kin or kin-like members via reciprocal exchanges of food, goods, and services" (Ka'ili 2005: 106) (Tongan)
tausi le vā	to nurture and value relational space (Samoan)
tautua	service (Samoan)
te akau roa	the long reef (southern Cook Islands Māori)
te ao Māori	the Māori world (Māori)
Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa	the Pacific Ocean (Māori)
teu le vā	to nurture and value relational space (Samoan)
tok stori	storytelling session through conversation (Tok Pisin)
tuakana–teina	relationship between an older and a younger person that promotes a reciprocal learning process (Māori)
tuku 'i tahi	soaking in the ocean (Tongan)
vā	relational space that gives meaning to things (Samoan, Tongan)
vanua	land (Fijian)
veiweikani	relationships (Fijian)
whakawhanaungatanga	establishing relationships (Māori)

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Part 1

Recognition of Place and Context in Using Pacific Research Methods and Methodologies

TEI TE AKAU ROA: AN OCEAN OF METAPHOR IN PACIFIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

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ABSTRACT: Pacific methodologies have often drawn inspiration from metaphorical interpretations of our natural environment. Pacific theoreticians and researchers have attempted to use key cultural practices and iconography, ancient ritual and ceremony, oceanic topographies and the significance of island geomorphology and ecosystems (including the role of the human) to critically map research approaches and designs and carefully draw correlations between Pacific lives and the creation of Pacific worlds. These methodological innovations are powerful because these conceptualisations of key aspects of the Pacific world speak so clearly to lived Pacific experience. In this article, I explore the significance of metaphor in Pacific research with a focus on oceanic topography in the Cook Islands context with discussion of the reef. This discussion is inspired by Elizabeth Wright-Koteka's use of the reef in the critical framing of her thesis, "Te Uʻu nō te Akau Roa: Migration and the Cook Islands" (2006). With consideration of this text, and a brief survey of creative and critical texts in Pacific scholarship, I encourage reflection on the construction and use of the metaphor in Pacific research practice and describe how useful this can be with reference to te akau roa—the long reef—as both a metaphor and powerful topographical feature in the social imaginary and life of Cook Islands peoples. I conclude with a brief discussion of where I see the reef (and conceptualisations like it) situated in the growing body of writing and research about Pacific methodologies.

Keywords: Cook Islands, Pacific methodologies, Indigenous methodologies

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Metaphors are among the most powerful intellectual tools that we have in the Indigenous Pacific academy. Used well, metaphors allow many of us to convey the deepest cultural beliefs of Pacific peoples without belabouring the vocabularies of western knowledge systems that often fail to represent our world-views accurately enough to be useful to us. This use of figurative language to translate aspects of the Pacific world to outsiders, or indeed into western ontological and epistemological frameworks, is a tricky enterprise. For example, in her article "On Analogies: Rethinking the Pacific in a Global Context" (2006), the late Pacific studies scholar Teresia Teaiwa discussed the at-times problematic use of the analogy in Pacific scholarship, warning about the ways figurative language could as much enlighten as obscure the realities of real Pacific lives. Nevertheless, the use of metaphors across academic

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and privately commissioned research continues to increase, from the use of woven and sewn materials to show the intertwined nature of theory and practice to the ways that ocean-going vessels might be used to metaphorically represent the journey of those managing research projects or organisations along continuums of development and change.[1] Metaphors have been incredibly useful to Pacific research, but they have, in my estimation, been unevenly described and applied in that same work.

In this article, I bring the reader's deliberate attention to the presence of the metaphor in Pacific research methodologies with the intention of gesturing to their power and our responsibility as researchers when wielding them. In particular, I wish to transcend the idea that metaphors are only figurative devices within dialogue and text. Rather, they are *lived* realities for Pacific peoples. I focus here on the popularity of metaphors inspired by the ocean and its topography within Pacific research work, and in particular, I discuss the power of the reef within the Cook Islands context, where much of my recent research work has been centred. A physical location present in the daily lives of those who live in, and belong to, the 'enua (islands, lands and waters) that make up the Cook Islands (and many other Pacific islands in the region), the reef appears persistently in text and conversation and in the outlook of Cook Islands life. Over the last five years of my research exploring Cook Islands epistemology and ontology, the reef and its persistent, albeit subtle, presence in the vernacular of te iti tangata Māori (Cook Islands Māori society) has made me wonder at how its invocation as a metaphor plays a role in the wider cultural and societal imaginary of Cook Islands Māori peoples. In considering the current theoretical work being undertaken and extended by Indigenous Pacific scholars, the reef has grown into a theoretical post for thinking about both relationality and Indigenous ontology in my work, and is an addition to a tradition of anglophone Pacific theoretical and methodological work that continues to grow.

The Trouble with Metaphors
Most of my graduate training has been in literary studies, and so when using figurative language to do the necessary descriptive work in methodological design, I've often spent longer than I expected in trying to ensure that the metaphor fits. This can be hard. At a workshop I attended recently, the braided river was used to describe the ways bicultural research could be framed when using mixed-methods techniques. This was based on work by Rhiannon Martel *et al*. (2022) and used the intersecting nature of the braided river to metaphorically represent the ways that different worldviews might be distinct but also meet periodically in the research process. Part of me wondered, though, after years considering the ethics of changing the flow of tupuna awa (ancestral rivers) for power generation in the central North

Island of Aotearoa New Zealand, whether the metaphor would still fit or whether it simply required more explanation, given such braids often came from the same source (in the North Island case, the central mountains). Did this still accurately describe two distinct cultural and intellectual knowledge traditions? Did the metaphor need to stretch all the way back to the source? Metaphors are powerful tools, but they also require work or labour to delineate, describe and understand them in their fullness.

I have often been troubled by this in my research work about the Cook Islands and its peoples, particularly when engaging one of the most popular metaphors in our intellectual tradition: the tīvaivai, a large quilt that is iconic of my people's contemporary material culture. Cook Islands women are well known for creating these elaborate and beautifully stitched quilts. They adorn people during some of our most important ceremonies: marriages, funerals, hair-cutting ceremonies, 21st birthdays. In Cook Islands research, the tīvaivai has become almost synonymous with our research heritage. When looking for theoretical and methodological inspiration, the tīvaivai as an epistemology seeded by educationalist Teremoana Maua-Hodges (2001) has become a recognisable term in the Pacific graduate student's frantic search for critical approaches that prescribe a way forward for their oftentimes intimidating research journey. Maua-Hodges's theoretical conceptualisation of the tīvaivai has been called a method, a methodology and a "culturally responsive" framework, and this has been variously described in the methodologies of research projects since Maua-Hodges first began delineating the concept in 2001. Since then, Maua-Hodges's theorisations have been extended by Pacific and non-Pacific scholars across several disciplines (Kokaua *et al*. 2020; Kokaua-Balfour 2019; Ruhe 2021; Tanner 2018).

Indeed, I was one of those graduate students who reached for the familiarity of the tīvaivai as a prospective master's student. In 2012, I sat in my grandparents' garden, scrawling a research proposal for my master of arts application to the University of Auckland. Totally unsure about what I really wanted my project to be about, I got to the part of the application that asked about theoretical and methodological approach and I shoved in a mention of Maua-Hodges's tīvaivai methodology (or was it a method?) without really knowing what it was. I wanted to write about Cook Islands writing and I recognised the tīvaivai as a Cook Islands practice in the theoretical literature, so it seemed appropriate. I did use the tīvaivai in my master's thesis, and I have reflected on that period of preparation and the final thesis many times since completing the project, prompted by students and colleagues who have asked for my thoughts on the effectiveness of the tīvaivai concept in their own work. I have read through countless draft papers where the tīvaivai has been used in similar and new ways, as an extension to Maua-Hodges's foundational work and developed through application

and practice by scholars like Aue Te Ava (Te Ava and Page 2020) and Debi Futter-Puati (Futter-Puati and Maua-Hodges 2019). This growing legacy of the tīvaivai within an intellectual genealogy of a Cook Islands and wider Pacific intellectual heritage has prompted me to consider the nature of such methodological legacies, what Pacific researchers recognise in them and why we need to continue deepening their bounds and application.

Across the work mentioned, I have been struck by the ways that such an iconic object in the material culture of the Cook Islands has become so widely abstracted in the esotericism of discipline-specific theorisation. I did this myself when I invoked the parts of Maua-Hodges's theorisation that seemed to fit my literary studies project. I proceeded to draw an entirely different meaning from the tīvaivai's physical form in order to make sense of my thesis structure. Very similar to how Futter-Puati used the tīvaivai "not only as a metaphor but also as a guide" (Futter-Puati and Maua-Hodges 2019: 141) in her doctoral work, the tīvaivai became an organisational device in my thesis. As I think about the power of the metaphor in Pacific theoretical frontiers, my early requisition of the conceptual tīvaivai as a metaphor for the research process feels somewhat irresponsible. Rather than a deep reckoning with the relational labour engaged in by va'ine tini (groups of women) in their production of tīvaivai, I projected meaning onto the process of its making and arrangement. I described the so-called patterns on the tīvaivai as conceptually differing "in texture, colour and composition, reflecting the literary diversity of those that are a part of [the Cook Islands literary] field" (Powell 2013: 5) and explained my literature review as a process in which I would "pick and ready the texts and writers for discussion", an interpretation of how cutting paper patterns as a preparatory step for va'ine tini could be paralleled with the scholarly exercise I was undertaking. You understand the gist: I grafted a research method on top of a tīvaivai practice that I did not really know myself. It felt easy to do as a literary studies student, barely trained in the application of literary theory, let alone the breadth of epistemological and ontological thought in Pacific and Cook Islands research at the time. But this is not about shaming my younger self as a scholar. Rather, this reflection helps me to think through what is at stake when using metaphors in Pacific research.

While I can understand how metaphorical interpretations happen and are useful for Pacific scholars, I have felt uncertain about whether we are undertaking an ontological practice that is not very Pacific at all. There is a subtle semantic glaze that pervades our parochial academic chat: ritual and ceremony is mimetic; of course Maui didn't *really* slow the sun; 'Avaiki isn't *really* a place, it's just a metaphor for our ancient genealogies and the place we go to after death. Metaphors. They have a way of making everyday practice beautiful and meaningful but also not quite literal, or even, dare I say it, real.

This is not to say that metaphors have not been put to powerful and research-changing use in the recent decades of Pacific research. The invocation of Pacific iconography and ritual as meaningful research frameworks and methodologies has increased considerably across a wide cross-section of research disciplines, and the development of Pacific research paradigms and methodologies has been a growing conversation amongst Pacific scholars (Naepi 2019; Sanga and Reynolds 2017; Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). Despite that, their efficacy, I argue, has been rather inconsistent in that in making such symbols and ceremonies only metaphors of real-life Pacific practices—allegories, comparisons and representations—there has been an undermining of the genuine and complex ways that such symbols and ceremonies hold together the web of relationships between Pacific peoples and the islands, lands and waters to which we claim deeply felt kinship and belonging. This has also been noted by Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019: 191). These relationships are not only conceptualised but made real by numerous practices—the various kinds of labour—that Pacific peoples engage in daily. This includes, for example, the commitment of vaʻine tini to gathering, designing, talking through and physically stitching their love, hopes and dreams into the fabric they work between their collective fingers.

In the last few years, I have been thinking through tensions between the metaphorical and the literal in the critical framing of my research work. The most enlightening has been my examination of the metaphorical and literal reef. To extend this conversation on the role of metaphor in my research work, I now move to describing how oceanic topography has been used in Indigenous and Pacific research work to date. Below, I refer to some of the key Pacific writers and scholars who have fashioned theoretical discourses informed by the ocean before turning to a specific author who discusses the significance of reef formations: Elizabeth Wright-Koteka (2006), who framed her master's thesis on Cook Islands migration by using a well-known saying about the uʻu (parrotfish) and its return to the long reef. I use Wright-Koteka's work primarily to identify how the delineation of metaphors can powerfully scaffold Pacific methodologies and ensure they are efficacious in terms of the questions we ask as Pacific researchers. I also rehearse this Indigenous scholarly tradition of theorising oceanic topography in order to make concluding comments on where I see theorisations like the reef extending discourses about Pacific research design, theory and methodologies.

OCEANIC TOPOGRAPHY AND PACIFIC SCHOLARSHIP

The Ocean in Us: A Tradition of Oceanic Metaphors
The ocean has been invoked in Pacific research over the last 50 years of Pacific scholarship in countless ways, which is unsurprising. In her essay "L(o)osing the Edge" Teaiwa appropriately wrote of Pacific peoples: "No other people have had their history shaped so much by an ocean" (2001:

345). This is clearly demonstrated in the significant volume of critical and creative writing that has deeply engaged with the presence and power of the ocean as a life-giving, connecting and relational body in the Pacific region. Perhaps most famously is Epeli Hauʻofa's inversion of the ocean in his seminal essay "Our Sea of Islands" (1994), a theorisation that he elaborated on and put to analytical use in his subsequent writing (see *We Are the Ocean*, 2008). In his essay, Hauʻofa discursively inverts the smallness and dependence of Pacific nations which had for so long been propagated by dominant external actors (nation-states at the rim, donors). Rather than viewing Pacific islands as isolated and disparate, Hauʻofa redrew the ocean as the connecting body, the space of comparison and a representation of the abundance and potential of Pacific lives.

Though the ocean has inspired Pacific poets and new cutting-edge theorisations, its topography has also extended the boundaries of its theoretical potential. In 2007, Teaiwa wrote a short entreaty for the collection *A World of Islands* (2007) in which she proposed a rethinking of "the island" as more than a stationary, landed site within a large watery body. The book aimed to celebrate "the wealth and scope of what islands can offer in the search for knowledge and wisdom" (Baldacchino 2007), and in her short contribution, Teaiwa implores the audience to make the word "island" a verb. She writes,

> Let us turn the energy of the island inside out. Let us "island" the world! … Once islanded, humans are awakened from continental fantasies. … Yes, there is a sea of islands. … But let us make "island" a verb. It is a way of living that could save our lives. (Teaiwa 2007: 514)

Such oceanic features are recurring inspirations throughout Teaiwa's oeuvre. The transformation of the island into a verb feels resonant with the inversion exercise undertaken by Hauʻofa in his recasting of the ocean: rather than understanding the ocean as a disconnecting and isolating force, Hauʻofa suggested instead that it was the only body that really *connected* islands and peoples in the region. Similarly, Teaiwa proposed the island not as a sedentary and landed space but as a state of becoming. Indeed, her proposition of the ocean as an edge in her "L(o)osing" article subverts the same dominant attitudes from the Pacific rim that Hauʻofa disassembled in his own work, and, of course, Teaiwa is also remembered by the immutable sentiments of her words: "We sweat and cry salt water, so we know that the ocean is really in our blood" (quoted in Hauʻofa 2008: 41).

Hauʻofa and Teaiwa are but two examples of many within the contemporary Pacific intellectual tradition of how the ocean and its topography have inspired innovative and ground-breaking new theories and methodologies. Even in Cook Islands scholarship, the ocean has continued to

inspire cutting-edge critical engagements with the urgent issues of our time. In 2020, Cook Islands and Niue scholar Yvonne Underhill-Sem published her article "The Audacity of the Ocean: Gendered Politics of Positionality", in which she depicts the ocean as underlying a Pacific feminism equipped to engage in decolonial scholarly work. Another Cook Islands scholar, Christina Newport, coined the Vakamoana framework in her doctoral work in 2019. Newport extends the discourse on vaka (ocean-going vessel) voyaging by exploring and applying navigational practices in Cook Islands policy spaces. More pressingly, her work requires a necessary engagement with knowledge of and about the ocean's currents and its relationship with the heavens and the earth in order to see the complex interrelationships between peoples, environment and sustainability. These are but two examples from a much larger body of critical and creative works across the region that have reckoned with the power of salt water in Pacific lives. The discussion that follows ties into this legacy of the ocean as metaphor and theoretical tradition. Inspired by the ways that these authors have used features of the ocean to theorise Indigenous conceptions of relationality across spatial and temporal scales, I have been engaged in both theorising the reef *and* using it to theorise within the Cook Islands context.

An Oceanic Metaphor: The Reef
The reef has arisen time and again in conversations with relations, research collaborators and colleagues when discussing relationality and genealogies in the Cook Islands and the wider Pacific. In those dialogues, the reef is used to mark the amorphous point at which relationships go "beyond" the edge of the home island. Coral reefs are peculiar spaces. In a literal sense, the reef is a place "outside" the island, and yet it is not really a place at all. It is more of an edge. Certainly, many of the reefs that rim the 'enua in the Cook Islands appear as large and jagged shelves and with the swing of tides exist in cyclical states of emergence and submergence. While the reef isn't a boundary that encloses per se, it does help to create both deep and shallow lagoons from and within which Cook Islanders cultivate and harvest seafood and teach their children to swim, a place they traverse in order to fish from the edge of the reef.

In Pacific scholarship, the reef has become a common turn of phrase. Its physical and conceptual presence is very subtle, and yet it connotes an understanding fostered by generations of islanders who have lived within, alongside and beyond it (Vaai 2015). This seems clear from Elizabeth Wright-Koteka's 2006 master's thesis, where she examines the motivations for Cook Islanders' migrations beyond the home islands and the impetus for those who return, either as former emigrants or as descendants of the same. To frame her thesis she uses a saying from the island of Aitutaki in

the Southern Cook Islands, "Te u'u nō te akau roa, ka oki rai a ia ki te akau roa". She offers a translation, "The parrotfish from the long reef will return to the long reef" (2006: 1), and explains further:

> The ancestors in their wisdom noted similarities between the movements of the "uu" [parrotfish] and that of people. Firstly, the ancestors observed that in times of hardship or significant change to people's environment and circumstances, they were inclined to migrate away from the islands. When conditions on the islands improved, like the "uu", they would return. Secondly, the ancestors also understood that despite departing, people maintained a sense [of] belonging to the islands from whence they departed. It was this sense of belonging that kept people connected to the islands and this would ensure that at some stage of their lives, they would return, hence coining the metaphor. (p. 1)

The reef represents a kind of boundary—or perhaps it represents the homeland itself. The parrotfish, influenced by seasonal change and the tide, leaves the reef, and when conditions change, when they improve, it returns to the reef and to its home. Through interviews with emigrants and returned Cook Islanders, Wright-Koteka explores agency and existentialist pull and push factors influencing their movement to and from the home islands, either to join family or to find work and education opportunities. The metaphorical reef underlies Wright-Koteka's work as a broader interpretation of Cook Islands life in its seasons. It provides a broad framing but also one built from an Indigenous ontology that has a cognisance of the contribution of the environment—the reef, in this case—to the rhythm of Cook Islands peoples' lives.

Wright-Koteka reflects on this idea of relocation, movement and settling early in her research where she assumes that the u'u and its movements are dictated by ocean seasons and currents, pulled away and back to the reef through tidal movement. The u'u becomes the analogy for the Cook Islands emigrant in Wright-Koteka's work. The larger oceanic currents are analogous with "historical-structural factors manifest in global inequalities and differences between the Cook Islands and New Zealand" (p. 119) and the need to follow, and be with, one's family, and migration is the "time honoured strategy for improving one's life" (p. 119). One can see how the reef is a useful metaphorical device for understanding what drives the movement of people (or fish) and how we might be able to conceive iterative departure and return not only at the shore but also "at sea" amongst unassailable currents and at offshore formations enabled by the same.

But what *is* the long reef within the Cook Islands imaginary, and how might it usefully frame, edge or indeed slow the larger currents within and beyond which the u'u move? I have come to see that the reef is not an

alternative boundary or border to the home islands, as implied by Wright-Koteka. Her work was timely in that Cook Islands depopulation had become so pervasive in the development and economic discourse during the early 2000s that it had simultaneously created a Cook Islands futurity, one where the Cook Islands would one day be empty of its Indigenous people. As Wright-Koteka's interviews with Cook Islanders showed, and as Hauʻofa and others have persistently argued, such assumptions oversimplify the lives of Pacific peoples. To more accurately identify and theorise Pacific *realities* in the case of movement and migration then, the reef creates the pocket of space beyond diaspora and home island that is needed to do such thinking.

TEI TE AKAU ROA: AT THE LONG REEF

The reef is often used as a reference point, a way to judge spatial scale and temporal distance when talking about migration and return to the ipukarea (homeland). I explore some examples of that here. Migration pervades so many conversations amongst Cook Islands Māori people. It is a fixation on always trying to understand *where* our people are and how we go forward knowing the physical and relational distance amongst our people. After all, if the majority of our people are not located in their ancestral home islands, where then do we locate our nation and, indeed, our future? These distances are constantly shifting with global, neoliberal and modernising currents and have resulted in studies of (and the framing that is) diaspora, migration and development studies and in economic analyses. These discourses attempt to correlate capitalist and economic behaviours with the histories of Indigenous peoples. As Wright-Koteka acknowledges in her work, these larger systems of power have shaped the dominant migration narratives we use; however, Indigenous peoples, including Cook Islands Māori peoples, have also exercised agency within and far beyond these same systems. Wright-Koteka's theorisations of the reef aim to make recognisable that agency by adopting a different cultural lens, a perspective of temporal and spatial distance that does not necessarily fixate on the edge of settler-colonial or Indigenous territory à la Greg Dening (1988) at the beach and shoreline. If anything, the references to the reef in dialogue and text offer a more dynamic conceptualisation of the spaces that are crossed by people and also by power.

   In 2020, Canadian journalist Emmanuel Samoglou wrote on the approach of COVID-19 to a, at that time, COVID-free Cook Islands. He'd named his article "Rarotonga: The Threat Beyond the Reef" (2020) and discussed the abrupt change that took hold of Rarotonga with the closing of borders, the disappearance of the tourist industry and the "mild melancholy" he and his family experienced with the unusual "quiet" of Rarotonga. He writes, "As the virus began to take hold in New Zealand, the Cook Islands government appointed an emergency taskforce to prepare the country for the moment it

[COVID-19] would make its way *over the reef*" (my emphasis). His use of the reef to frame a kind of boundary between an interior Rarotonga/Cook Islands and the global currents of the pandemic and consequent economic crisis prompted me, months later, to ask a research participant how she felt about the effect migration had on the strength of familial structures for our people. I'd framed my question, "The papa'anga [genealogical connection] doesn't stop at the reef?" and she'd responded, "No. We [Cook Islanders] exist beyond that. Those relationships prevail beyond that, just like they prevail across time, past and present." In my contemplations of migration, I was also surprised to note the presence of the reef later that year in what seemed an unlikely place. I'd been working with a colleague at the University of Auckland to prepare social media material with students for Cook Islands Language Week 2020. In a video of support from Vae Papatua, a member of the Cook Islands Language Commission and well-known language expert in the home islands, he'd declared:

> Ē i tēia rā, te oronga atu nei te reo 'akameitaki'anga ia tātou, e te iti tangata, tātou i te māro'iro'i nei i te 'akaora i tō tātou reo i *te akau roa* i Aotearoa.
> So today, my word of thanks to our people, our people that are working tirelessly to revive our language in the long reef they call home in Aotearoa.[2]
> (AUCISA Te Maru o Avaiki 2020, my emphasis)

Here, te akau roa—the long reef—appeared not as the boundary between the home islands and elsewhere but as a formation offshore, a gathering place of our people somewhere beyond the edge of the home islands, a place where Cook Islands Māori people are sheltering and engaging with indigeneities in another part of our watery region. These brief examples are by no means the only ones.

In the iterative and persistent appearance of the reef across text and dialogue, the metaphor of te akau roa and the u'u seemed to beckon a more considered theoretical exercise. Its subtle presence as a kind of colloquialism in the vernacular seemed to have deeper connotations underlying it, a reference point for something collectively understood by Cook Islands Māori peoples and in reference to a real and collectively imagined site of refuge, withdrawal and arrival. The power of the reef in theorising relationships and movement across the ocean is its ability to slow our thinking and bring attention to the conceptual space—the ocean—between one location and another. What happens there? What is allowed to happen there?

I am not sure whether Samoglou had deliberately missed the obvious interpretation of the conceptual reef or whether he had simply not spent long enough contemplating the metaphor, but in his evocative reflections on empty roads and melancholic engagements with local Māori, it is clear that

the reef could not stop the threat of COVID-19 in all the ways that matter—and even now, Cook Islands Māori peoples are caught up in the dangerous economic and geopolitical currents that churn at its edges. The narration of relationships not only going beyond the imagined physical location of the reef but "across time, past and present" also seemed to indicate the reef as a site that slows and extends temporal scale, a place where relationality unfolds and is ascertained with an alternative understanding of temporal *distance*. Rather than conflating emigration with the disconnection of Cook Islands peoples from their ancestral soils and their cultural connections, over years and indeed generations, the reef seems able to recalibrate our interpretations of time entirely. Inevitably, this also means that spatial understandings of distance are also rearranged in our conception of the reef. As Papatua acknowledged, in the metaphorical u'u of Cook Islands peoples at the reef that is Aotearoa New Zealand, it seems implied that u'u are not so much lost to the reef but are rather found there, buffeted by currents and sheltered against discourses, politics and systems of power that have oceanic proportions.

CONCLUSION: METAPHORS AND ALL THAT THEY ARE

Is the island moving? Is the ocean in our sweat and in our tears? Can the reef really slow time? Metaphors are powerful research tools in the context of Pacific research. They convey poetics that can beautify Indigenous knowledge traditions and deepen the way we wield that knowledge in our problem-solving and future-building research work. However, these poetics can also run the risk of obscuring those same knowledges in the research context. When I began theorising the reef as a kind of metaphor for the border of island territory and the layering of national, genealogical and cultural identity, it started to become obvious, as with Samoglou's interpretation, that in thinking about the literal, physical, real reef, there was an inconsistency in the rendering of the metaphor: the reef isn't a boundary. Water flows over it and through it, beyond and within it. It is both swamped by and shored up against ocean currents, a topographical feature that encircles, that slows, that drains. My reflections on my use of metaphors in my past methodological work brought my attention to this discrepancy, alerted by a persistent discomfort with the idea that COVID-19 may be the stalking wolf at the gate, or in this analogy, a building wave at the edge of the reef that had not, even with its spray, come inland. This seemed inaccurate. I began, then, to work at why this was, and how, if at all, the metaphor might be reworked to reflect its nature and its presence in the everyday lives of Cook Islands peoples. As I described above, such interpretations and the meanings associated with the reef littered conversations and popular

references throughout Pacific texts. It became obvious that the reef was a powerful site in the imaginary of Cook Islands peoples, as a vantage point offering new dimensions for understanding distances—physical, relational, spatial and temporal—as more than only movement to and from a single and stationary ancestral island home. The reef offers a refreshed way of critically framing migration, agency and even diaspora.

Though I have only briefly explored its theoretical and critical potential here, the reef is a theorised metaphor, a Pacific methodological tool, that is still in its becoming. In theorising the reef, I have found it most useful for understanding how it is analogous to other projects in adjacent fields, as with Wright-Koteka's work, and how it might be a part of a Pacific intellectual tradition that continues to extend metaphorical interpretations in current Pacific methodological and theoretical work. While there is always the easy interpretation of the reef as *only* a metaphor for border and boundary, the preliminary comparative work I have begun here shows that it is a useful way of identifying further scales of distance in the interpretations of ocean and shore, undertaken in Pacific research work to date.

The presence of the reef seems to me to be more than merely a metaphorical and abstracted feature of our island and ocean environs. In the Cook Islands context, it is narrated into a collective imaginary within everyday conversation, a key way that Cook Islands peoples understand spatial and temporal distance and therefore their relationships with those who stay in the home islands and those who go. Distance, much like Hau'ofa's sea of islands, is therefore *not* separation and disconnection at all for the emigrant. It could easily be interpreted as anchoring places outside ancestral islands for our relationships. Such sites do not displace other Indigenous peoples nor necessarily displace the emigrant from their own natal soils, but provide, instead, a conceptual formation to exist offshore and gain new conceptual and literal vantage points. This distinction is important to make. Such formations, even metaphorically, allow intellectual space to consider the agency of the Indigenous Cook Islands emigrant in spite of the larger currents of power at play. Moreover, such metaphorical concepts, like that of the reef, better reflect the lived realities of Cook Islands peoples, as Wright-Koteka herself emphasised in the conclusions of her thesis. Working with the conceptual metaphor of the reef to its very end has helped me to see both what is assumed to be taking place—the reef as boundary—and what is actually at work: the ocean (and those larger discourses) sweeping over that assumed boundary on the swing of tides.

NOTES

1. For example, see writings on the Kakala Research Framework (Johansson Fua 2021) and Suʻifefiloi (Lopesi 2021) as well as privately commissioned reports like that from the Pacific Advisory Group for the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families in Aotearoa New Zealand with the use of the vaka (ocean-going vessel) (2012). See also articles in this issue by Manu-Sione and Houghton.
2. This translation was given in a personal communication from Eliza Puna.

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are used in the southern reo Māori languages of the Cook Islands unless otherwise stated.

ʻenua	islands, lands and waters
ipukarea	homeland
papaʻanga	genealogy
(tei) te akau roa	(at) the long reef
te iti tangata Māori	Cook Islands Māori society
tīvaivai	large quilt
tupuna awa	ancestral rivers (Aotearoa Māori)
uʻu	parrotfish
vaʻine tini	group of women
vaka	ocean-going vessel

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TRANS-INDIGENEITY AND SOVEREIGNTY THAT ENDURES: REFLECTIONS ON MĀORI DIASPORA

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ABSTRACT: "Trans-Indigeneity" broadly refers to two movements: the way Indigeneity moves and shifts with Pacific peoples as we move across oceanic space, and the way that our historical and ongoing transregional relations defy colonial expectations, categories and imaginations. This article offers critical reflections on trans-Indigeneity as a theoretical framework for understanding the complexities of Pacific movements and the accountabilities of Pacific diaspora. With a focus on Māori diasporic movement onto the unceded sovereign territories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, I ask how scholars might complicate an existing focus on Pacific relationality to foreground the vital question of what it has meant to make lives on other peoples' lands.

Keywords: Australia, New Zealand, migration, white Australia policy

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> In my ideal Pacific
> things wouldn't be
> perfect
> but everyone would learn
> deeply from their mistakes.

—Teresia Teaiwa, excerpt from *In My Ideal Pacific* (2015)

Growing up in Aotearoa I imagined myself as part of the ocean. "New Zealand" felt like an island to me then, full of uncles in diving masks filling our tables with crayfish, aunties cackling so loud in the muddy ocean shallows that their voices flooded bays. My koro (grandfather) was a fisherman and my cousins are too. The ocean is not a metaphor, the ocean is home. It returns us to the Pacific when we lose ourselves in the bindings of the nation state. It teaches us that our smallness is real, even when our connections are vast.

At home in the inland Waikato—too far from the sea—I open my laptop and type the words "my ideal Pacific" into a Google search bar. Teresia Teaiwa's poetry has followed me throughout my PhD, from Wurundjeri land in Australia to Lenape land in the United States and back to the lands of Tainui, where I was born and where I now live. In an act of misdirection the internet sends me elsewhere, to a British travel site that reads, "Choosing

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your ideal South Pacific Island" (Audley Travel n.d.). Now I am a character in a bad sci-fi, scrolling past visions of white sand and overwater bungalows, wondering what happens in a storm. "Have you always felt drawn to the South Pacific," the digital travel agent asks, "with its promise of castaway, palm-dotted islands and footprint-free sand?" I scream-laugh because that is the only response I have, and then shriek again when the "South Pacific specialists" explain that each island has its "individual appeal". "For example, French Polynesia has the lion's share of high-sheen resorts, whereas part of Samoa's allure is its lack of development." Then, as if salt water does not connect lands, as if oceans tear apart at perforated lines, we learn that "the South Pacific combines well with a trip to New Zealand or Australia", those two floating nations beyond the Pacific's reach. In my ideal Pacific Epeli Hauʻofa would have a field day. Teresia Teaiwa would roar with laughter. And the rest of us would learn deeply from this mess.

This is not an article about commercial travel agents or their lusting for our sea of island resorts; the thread of horror that runs through this commercial description of the Pacific connects in strange ways to a different kind of disfiguring that haunts Pacific diaspora. Colonial understandings of the Pacific linger like toxins in the seas that connect island to island, shaping not only what happens *to* this place, but how we as Indigenous peoples come to know each other's lands. In the settler nations of Australia and New Zealand, the processes of colonisation have produced the illusion that the organisational power of settler political sovereignty is normal and permanent. Phrased differently, when I travel onto Dharug land, the infrastructure of the nation tells me that I am in the Australian city of Sydney, subject to the terms of the Australian government's borders and laws. If I settle on the land and embed myself in a community, the quotidian administrative realities of my life will be shaped, in large part, by Australian state bureaucracies. Highways obscure the lives of land. Mining poisons water. And nation-state borders—the experiential edge of immigration policy—obscure First Nations' sovereignty. When Australia *allows me entry* it invites me onto someone else's sovereign territories without their permission. When New Zealand welcomes you in through the Auckland airport, it ushers you onto Tainui land, but not without a reminder that your life will be subject to New Zealand's rules and regulations. The material realities of the settler nation mediate the possibilities for Pacific Indigenous relationality—and grappling with this reality can take us to crucial questions about Pacific diasporas.

Most broadly this is an article about Indigenous Pacific methods that help us to understand the complexities of Pacific movements, the accountabilities of Pacific diaspora, and the insidious ways that the ongoing projects of settler nation–building in Australia and New Zealand bear upon Pacific relationships. The "research method" in focus is Indigenous Pacific

theorising—a form of research that often operates alongside and in pursuit of Pacific resistance to colonial power. Over the past decades many Indigenous scholars have developed critical methods for disavowing the centrality of the nation state and foregrounding trans-Indigenous collaborations and relations across regions (Aikau 2015; Allen 2012; Diaz 2019; Hau'ofa 1994; Te Punga Somerville 2012; Wendt 1976). Many of these scholars, including Vince Diaz, have warned that foregrounding trans-Indigeneity cannot mean forgetting the specificities of Indigenous belonging to place. In a 2021 talk alongside Katerina Teaiwa and David Chang, Diaz offered a firm word of advice to those of us in the diaspora: "If you're wanting to reclaim your roots ... but don't want to do the hard work of relating that to the Indigenous people of where you are, then don't do that. ... [B]ecause if you do that you are just like [reproducing] imperialism" ("PI Studies Symposium" 2021). Despite the caveats and recommendations, there remains a scholarly tendency to celebrate diasporic excellence, to borrow the language of university marketing departments, without interrogating the ways that our communities might be complicit in aiding settler projects.[1] In his work on Asian settler colonialism and in his reflections on Haunani-Kay Trask's seminal work on "settlers of colour", Dean Saranillio (2013, 2018) argues for the central importance of reckoning with complicity as a move away from "settler innocence" and towards resurgent solidarity with peoples Indigenous to the lands we live on (Trask 2000; Tuck and Yang 2012). As Saranillio reminds us, "settler colonialism comes at the expense of all of us" (2018: 39).

In my work on the history of Māori movement into and deportation from Australia, I locate the recent Australian deportations of Pacific peoples in the long history of Australian and New Zealand immigration exclusions, arguing for an understanding of racialised deportations as intimately bound to the project of constructing a white sovereign nation on Indigenous peoples' sovereign territories. Since 2014 Australia has drastically increased deportations of New Zealand citizen migrants, from fewer than five deportations in 2013 to 2,776 between January 2015 and August 2022. Māori make up 41.8 percent of New Zealand citizens that the government deports. Pacific peoples, separated from Māori in the New Zealand Police statistics, make up 22 percent of the individuals deported.[2] In my work with a Māori migration activist in Australia, I learnt the intricacies of Australia's current immigration exclusion regimes and began to understand the extent of the crisis: thousands of people are deported; hundreds of thousands are vulnerable to deportation.[3] During that period of research I also grappled with the difficult question of how to intervene in a crisis without reinforcing Australia's sovereignty over unceded First Nations territories. Deportations and immigration vulnerability demand urgency. But that urgency can trick us into thinking that crisis emerges in a vacuum. As Amangu scholar

and organiser Crystal McKinnon argues in her critically important work "Enduring Indigeneity and Solidarity in Response to Australian Carceral Colonialism", movements that call for rights from a settler government can reify the nation in ways that undermine the enduring reality of Indigenous sovereignty (2020: 691–92).

As such, this article asks how we, as Pacific scholars, might think through the histories of our diasporas in ways that foreground the specificities of enduring Indigeneity. To divest from the imperial scripts that turn Indigenous territories into settler nations, we need to navigate through the sometimes-discomforting subject of our own accountability, responsibility and complicity when we make lives on other peoples' occupied territories. How, for instance, might we critically reflect upon the fetishisation of others' lands as sites of milk and honey? And how do we ensure that a growing attentiveness to Pacific diaspora does not elide the enduring sovereignty rooted in the foundational kinship between Indigenous peoples and our territories? I know these questions are discomforting because when I raise them in any semipublic sphere there is often a degree of resistance. In particular, the word "complicity" can sound like an accusation (Saranillio 2018: 36). Grappling with the complexities of our own movement does not erase the material reality of Māori struggles. As Indigenous scholars have long stressed, we can account for the complications and complicities of our lives on other peoples' lands while simultaneously acknowledging the realities of ongoing colonisation in our own communities, on our own territories and in relationship to our own Indigeneity (Kauanui 2016; Trask 2000). In the context of Māori diaspora in Australia, the word complicity is not an accusation but an invitation to think critically about our historical and ongoing presence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' homes, and in the context of Australian settler nation–building.

Australia is always trying to convince us that its nation-state project is the real thing, and that First Nations sovereignty is a relic (Moreton-Robinson 2015). In truth, as McKinnon (2020) reminds us, "settler sovereignty is unstable and in a constant state of becoming" (p. 696). Indigenous sovereignty endures because it is rooted in the foundational connection between people and land. The challenge for Pacific scholars who grapple with diaspora is not only to foreground the relationship between ourselves and peoples Indigenous to the land but to foreground and invest in the relationship between our diasporic futures and the enduring Indigeneity—the enduring material sovereignty—that Indigenous peoples possess. Engaging with the reality of another person's sovereignty can mean forgoing some of the desires that we have for our future on their lands. But it also means the more expansive, resurgent and liberating possibility of collaborating towards futures that defy the settler nation's constraints upon our lives (Aikau 2015).

LAUNCHING: GRAPPLING WITH TRANS-INDIGENEITY

If I employ the metaphor of a waka (canoe), as we so often do in Pacific studies, then the launching place for this article is my own waxing and waning discomfort with the framework of trans-Indigeneity. "Trans-Indigeneity" broadly refers to two movements: the way Indigeneity moves and shifts with Pacific peoples as we move across oceanic space, and the way that our historical and ongoing transregional relations defy colonial expectations, categories and imaginations (Aikau *et al.* 2016; Allen 2012; Diaz 2019; Ka'ili 2017). As Chickasaw literary scholar Chadwick Allen explains in his 2012 monograph *Trans-Indigenous*, the "trans-" is a call to decentre nations, borders and colonial boundaries so that we might read Indigenous texts in relation to each other rather than in comparison to each other. That is, the "trans-" in trans-Indigeneity is a refusal of the colonial notion that Indigenous peoples and texts are bound in place to the islands or lands where colonisers first "encountered" us.

As an analytic, trans-Indigeneity offers a powerful disavowal of the nation state's centrality, and a powerful disavowal of the colonial definitions of Indigeneity that have fixed us in place to discrete lands. In addition, trans-Indigeneity foregrounds collaborations between Indigenous peoples as productive sites of meaning, both historically and into the future. That is, through our material relations with each other we produce new practices of kinship, knowledge-sharing, organising, resurgence and economy that forge pathways out of a world organised by the nation state's bureaucracies. Trans-Indigeneity can therefore help us to think about our Pacific Indigenous futures in relation instead of in comparison or, worse, in competition.

The problem with evoking the trans-Indigenous, at least at the moment, is the tendency to focus so heavily on the resurgent potentials of Indigeneity-in-movement that we risk eliding the enduring realities of Indigenous sovereignty on land. Key scholars of trans-Indigeneity warn against eliding Indigenous sovereignty (Diaz 2021). But the warning on its own is not enough to disrupt a diasporic tendency to inscribe our future aspirations onto other peoples' lands in ways that replicate colonialism. This is especially true when the settler state thrusts diasporic people into crisis.

Since 2012 Vince Diaz, along with others, has built on Allen's literary-focused framework to explore the potential of trans-Indigeneity for helping us to reimagine the meanings and expressions of Indigeneity. In his 2019 article "Oceania in the Plains", Diaz describes his own search for "indigenous vernacular practices and frameworks that allow for expansiveness without sacrificing specificity" (p. 3). At the time Diaz described a growing and "problematic valorization and reification of the tropes of expansiveness and fluidity" in scholarly and popular Pacific discourse (p. 2). For example, the repeated evocation of "our sea of islands" can emphasise Pacific relationality

without necessarily accounting for the specificity of place—or for the specificity of Epeli Hauʻofa's argument in his oft-cited essay, "Our Sea of Islands". In the essay Hauʻofa warned against a prevailing macropolitical understanding of Pacific islands as "much too small, too poorly endowed with resources, and too isolated" to ever rise out of economic dependency on the "largesse of wealthy nations", including the Pacific settler nations of Australia and New Zealand (1994: 150). These details are vitally important, because when Hauʻofa argued that "Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding" (p. 160), he was not writing metaphorically. Instead, he was arguing that "the perpetrators of the smallness view of Oceania" (p. 159) were looking at the Pacific through a faulty colonial frame, seeing isolated islands at risk and missing the vast networks of on-the-ground trade, resources, cultures, ideas and kinship that rise into view once you understand the islands as part of a connected whole (Hauʻofa 1994). The material consequences of the smallness view bore out in development policies that produced structures of economic dependency dressed up as "aid".

When Diaz uses the term trans-Indigeneity he engages with the specificity of Hauʻofa's argument: if we see our Indigeneity as fixed-in-place to discrete islands, then we see ourselves in colonial terms (Teaiwa 2006). This does not mean that my status as tangata whenua (person of the land) travels with me like a flag that I can plant in the lands of Sāmoa, or the Mariana Islands, or Niue, claiming the islands as home because I am of the ocean. Instead, the "trans-" in trans-Indigeneity is about foregrounding the very specific ways that Indigeneity was and is both mobile and co-constituted in specific contexts. Diaz's work, for instance, is grounded in "the effort of one group of displaced Micronesians, from the island of Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, to practice traditional outrigger canoe culture and traditional navigation … in waters and lands—rivers, lakes, and skyways—of the northeastern plains world of the Dakota Makhóčhe" (Diaz 2019: 2). He works with a trans-Indigenous frame because it reflects the reality that Indigeneity has and can be forged "in productive relations with histories, narratives, and technologies of travel or geographic reach", and "in strategic relationship with other equally deep and moving indigenous peoples and traditions from elsewhere" (p. 3).

The turn to trans-Indigeneity can help us to think beyond settler futurity and towards a resurgent Indigenous politics that does not need colonial institutions, including settler nations (Aikau 2015; Aikau *et al.* 2016; Etherington 2022). For many decades, Indigenous scholars have stressed the importance of decentring the nation as the object of analysis (Coulthard 2014; Hauʻofa 1994; Simpson 2014; Smith 1999; Teaiwa 2006). We can, as Alice Te Punga Somerville and Shino Konishi both argue, contend with our expansive Indigenous worlds and relations without showing any interest in settler colonies and their expectations for our lives (Konishi 2019; Te Punga

Somerville 2021). But sometimes the disavowal of the nation as an analytic can lead us to elide the ugly ways that our Indigeneity—the ways we practise and understand both our rootedness to territory and the Indigeneity in our routes—is also informed by our historical and ongoing relationships with nation states that occupy our lands and other peoples' territories (Camacho 2008). One example is in works that celebrate the persistence of language and culture in diaspora, without ever mentioning the ongoing sovereignty of Indigenous peoples in that place.

WHAT TRANS-INDIGENEITY CAN ELIDE: A 1905 CASE STUDY

One difficulty of trans-Indigeneity as a framework is that in an effort to displace the settler nation as the central object of analysis, we can sometimes overlook the more insidious ways that the persistence of settler national infrastructures, logics and future-oriented aspirations come to mediate our relations. In the next section of this article, I look to a 1905 example of how Australia and New Zealand, two white settler nations, collaborated to produce a mirage of white national legitimacy in the place of Indigenous sovereignty. In a historical case of Māori deportation from Australia the loud absence of Indigenous relationality tells us about the "intimacies" of colonisation, where the word intimate refers both to scale and to the very personal ways that settler notions of place, relationality and politics can come to inform our own understandings of Indigeneity (Teves 2018).

Historical specificity is important, and the historical roots of Māori migration into Australia differ dramatically from the origins of many other Pacific peoples' migrations. From 1905 until the 1970s, Māori were the only predominantly non-white group to be exempted from Australia's blanket ban on migrants of colour.[4] Not all diasporas are forged in the same ways, and there is a stark difference between diasporas born of violent dispossession and diasporas born of mobility—even when "mobility" takes place in the context of colonisation. Kāi Tahu historian Michael Stevens has written about the 1800s movement of Kāi Tahu tūpuna (ancestors) to Sydney, describing their voyaging as an expression of Indigenous agency (Standfield and Stevens 2019; Stevens 2018). Meanwhile, in the same time period, British colonists conspired to forcibly remove South Sea Islanders from their homes, enslaving Pacific peoples in Queensland (Banivanua-Mar 2007; Foley 2011; Mann 2018: 6, 100–101).

In February 1905 two Māori sheep shearers travelled from so-called New Zealand to so-called Australia. The men purchased tickets in Pōneke, commonly known as Wellington, at the southernmost tip of Aotearoa's northern island. In one of the men's accounts, the sales clerk offered an ominous warning: Australian customs had special rules for "natives". The men would need to pass a language test and buy return tickets proving their

intent to return to Aotearoa after a few months. But when the men arrived in Sydney a customs officer immediately denied them entry. Customs listed the men for deportation, detained them in a stiflingly hot cell and sent them back to New Zealand on the next available ship (*Matuhi* 1905; *Richmond River Herald* 1905).

Four years earlier, shortly after Australia's federation as a commonwealth nation, the new government enacted the white Australia policy. The policy was a set of laws and regulations prohibiting non-white migrants from entering Australia and facilitating the deportation of thousands of South Sea Islanders. From its inception in the late 1800s the white Australia policy was deeply aspirational (Moreton-Robinson 2015). By prohibiting non-white migrants, the Australian government articulated its hopes for nationhood. Australia was to be an almost impossible place, a homogeneously white island looming on the imagined edge of the vast Pacific. For early 1900s Australian policymakers, the Pacific and its peoples posed a threat to Australia's future (Foley 2011: 609). The governmental fear materialised in legislation, in the policing of First Nations and Pacific communities and in deportations (Banivanua Mar 2012; Foley 2011; Mann 2018).

The two Māori men did not know about the policy when they purchased tickets to sail, but after their forced return to New Zealand one of the men raised complaints with New Zealand officials. In an interview conducted at the time he reportedly told a journalist, "We are British subjects, and I thought we were as good as anyone" (*Richmond River Herald* 1905). News of the deportations offended Pākehā (white New Zealander) commentators, and New Zealand politicians sent probing telegrams to their counterparts in Australia. In the New Zealand settler imaginary Māori were "British subjects" on our way to total assimilation into the settler population. "It is simply absurd", one commentator wrote, that "a couple of Maoris [sic], representing a fast dying race-fragment … should be forbidden" (*Wairarapa Daily Times* 1905). Less than a month later the Australian premier intervened, promising outraged New Zealanders that this accident of deportation would not be repeated. From March 1905 onwards, Māori were, as a matter of law, to be allowed into Australia in the same way as white New Zealanders (*Hawera and Normanby Star* 1905). The exemption marked a turning point in Australian immigration policy and in the structural relationships between Indigenous Pacific peoples, including First Nations peoples in Australia and Māori in New Zealand.

One of the perversions of settler colonialism is that the norms produced by settler nationhood—the material force of national borders; the organisational power of nation-state laws—act like a frame on how we understand the past (Trask 1993). Because settler governance persists in the present, we can imagine that the organisational dominance of settler statehood is somehow

natural. In the case of the two Māori sheep shearers, for instance, it feels historically "unsurprising" that the men understood First Nations territories as Australia—who, in 1905, could have travelled by boat to Sydney and expected anything other than "Australia"? But this rhetorical question, laden with assumptions, forecloses the possibilities for understanding what the 1905 exemption reveals about the tensions between Pacific Indigenous worlds, on one hand, and the political modalities of white settler nations on the other.

In my doctoral work I write in more depth about the threads that shoot off from the sheep shearers' interaction with the machineries of white nation building in the early twentieth-century Pacific. For the sake of this article, I want to point at the power Australia and New Zealand possessed to determine who deserved a future in the colony, and who did not. In the early twentieth century the Australian and New Zealand governments located Māori in relatively close "proximity to whiteness", to draw on the language of critical legal and race studies scholar Cheryl Harris (1993). When I say that Māori were located "proximate to whiteness" in 1905, I am not talking about colour or about "privilege" in a colloquial sense—instead, I am talking about colonial structures and racial stratification. Australia understood Māori as "essentially white" British subjects because New Zealand Pākehā colonists reported that Māori had been so effectively assimilated that we would soon be extinct; colonisers imagined us as "noble", "war-loving", but not a serious existential concern to settler futurity (see also Warbrick 2021). As the New Zealand prime minister, Richard Seddon, promised his Australian counterparts in 1905, Māori were no threat to the white Australia policy; our sovereignty was imagined as a faint haunting of the distant past (*Waikato Times* 1905). From this position of imagined assimilation Māori migrants received a legal entitlement to live in Australia while, in the same year, the Australian government deported thousands of South Sea Islanders. After 1905, Māori *inclusion* into Australia positioned us outside the white Australia policy's definition of an "undesirable migrant".

There are two key ways that Australia's exclusionary borders and New Zealand's practices of assimilation mediated Pacific Indigenous relations in the moment of 1905. First, the material force of immigration bureaucracies disfigured First Nations territories. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson stresses throughout her work, the fiction of Australian settler sovereignty has long relied on the Australian state's ability to hold up a curtain over the realities of the land, framing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' homes as vacant sites for migrant futures (Moreton-Robinson 2015). Second, in the case of the two Māori sheep shearers, we see an example of how settler nation states ensnare Indigenous people by binding our identities to the nations that occupy our territories. Colonisation in New Zealand shaped the possibilities for locating ourselves in relation to other Pacific peoples (Te

Punga Somerville 2012). This is not to say that Māori were not in relation with Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander peoples in other ways—in 1905 Māori already lived in Australian towns (Banivanua Mar 2019; Te Punga Somerville 2012, 2014). Instead, I am stressing that the materiality of the national border produced an absence of relationality, so that when a Māori person tried to move onto Dharug land, for instance, their experience was heavily mediated by Australian borders and New Zealand notions of subjecthood.

The Māori sheep shearers' appeal to their rights as British subjects reminded me of my own appeal to "rights" more than a century later. In April 2014, months before deportations of Pacific people increased, I wrote a well-intentioned and glaringly problematic article for *Guardian Australia* lamenting the lack of social security for New Zealand migrants in Australia. An editor titled the piece "New Zealanders in Australia: Neglected and Vulnerable", amplifying the lingering sense of entitlement already present in the article. The writing reflected my own frustrations as a young person on a temporary visa and highlighted the precarity of New Zealand citizens who had lived in Australia since childhood without any access to permanent residency. By way of historical background, since the early 1970s the Australian government has allowed all New Zealand citizens to live and work in Australia, on First Nations territories, without applying for a visa (Hamer 2014). Until the year 2000, New Zealanders in Australia could apply for permanent residency and later citizenship after a few years of continuous residency in Australia. In 2001 the Australian government, led by the conservative prime minister John Howard, altered the trans-Tasman travel arrangements and dissolved the pathways to permanency; from 2001 onwards, New Zealand citizens could move to Australia, but they would no longer become eligible for permanent residency after two years (Hamer 2012; Kukutai and Pawar 2013). This was a significant shift because it meant that New Zealand citizens could reside in Australia for decades without ever having access to social security networks—severely limiting access to domestic violence services, emergency housing assistance, disability and health services and youth social security payments (youth allowance), among other vital safety networks.

In the article I elided Indigenous sovereignty and ended by staking a claim to Australia as my home. I could choose to forget the article, relegating it to the field of past mistakes, but it represents a sharp reminder of how easy it is to erase the specificities of place when faced with the injustices produced by nation-state bureaucracies. In 2014 I knew that I lived on unceded Kaurna land, but Australian immigration practices dictated the realities of life for me and for many Pacific peoples living in Australia. At the time of the article I was trying to arrange health services for a New Zealand citizen relative who

had no means to leave Australia and who was denied access to Australian services because of their immigration status. This personal experience—along with what I learned from Māori migration activists—taught me about the dire material consequences of immigration uncertainty. Australia possessed much of the organisational power over our lives and so I developed a politics of demanding "rights" in a way that reified the nation state and undermined the reality of Indigenous sovereignty (McKinnon 2020: 700).

I bring up this example not as a performance of self-flagellation but as an example of how the state tricks us and lures us in. I also raise the example because, in 2014, I was not an academic or a researcher. I was a migrant frustrated with the Australian government. This is not an excuse, or a move to "settler innocence" (Tuck and Yang 2012). Instead I am trying to illustrate the insidiousness of settler colonialism's trappings; in toying with our lives, the nation makes its sovereignty *feel* real. Migrant settler complicity in ongoing colonisation is a product of settler colonialism's structures for sustaining its own sovereignty: borders and immigration practices are nation-state tools for performing organisational power.

PACIFIC METHODS FOR KEEPING AN EYE ON THE STATE

The methodological question, then, is how to keep an eye on the intimacies of colonialism as we work with analytical frameworks that foreground Indigenous histories and emphasise the enduring realities of Indigenous sovereignties.[5] In her monograph *Consuming Ocean Island*, Katerina Teaiwa provides one model for tracing the disfiguring impacts of Australian colonial violence on Banaban relations to land, place and kin, without reifying the nation as the object of analysis (Teaiwa 2014). Teaiwa adopts a method of assemblage. Throughout the book different regional sites and time periods come into view because, collated, they complicate what it means to think about Indigeneity and "migration" in the Pacific. From the 1920s to the 1960s, colonial excavators forcibly removed Banaban ancestral land and converted it into a commodity—phosphate fertiliser. Agricultural settlers then used Banaban bones, now fertiliser, to transform other peoples' Indigenous territories across the Pacific. In Aotearoa New Zealand, phosphate converted so-called "barren" Māori land into "productive" agricultural territory (Teaiwa 2014). To illustrate the non-linear ways that colonisation produced dispossession, Teaiwa places a chapter that describes the experiences of white Australian mining families on Ocean Island across the first four decades of the twentieth century alongside chapters about the chemical structure of phosphate, its application to New Zealand farmland across the twentieth century and ethnographic accounts of her family watching television in Fiji in the 2000s. For Teaiwa, Banaban diaspora—which includes people and also land—comes into view through histories shaped by colonial yearning

for resources and power, but told with Banaban land in the foreground. Working from archival and ethnographic assemblage, Teaiwa asks about the multiscalar ways that colonial capitalism reorganised Banaban relations and Indigeneity specifically, and Pacific relationality more broadly (Teaiwa 2014).

These questions operate as both material problems and a metaphor for making sense of the relationship between empire and dispossession in the Pacific—they come into view in a nonlinear fashion, because that is how the archive of phosphate mining probed with Banaban experience in the foreground reveals dispossession. To tell phosphate's history is, for Teaiwa, to piece together multiple local histories throughout Oceania, to depart from a nation-based method of historical enquiry, and to attend to what the archive reveals when it is asked to answer to Indigenous experiences. Linear historical narratives risk plotting the entanglements of Oceania's past onto a foreign frame because they do "not resonate with the partial and often fragmented manner in which Banaban land or people, or any of the other agents involved in mining, experienced the last one hundred years" (Teaiwa 2014: xvi). Teaiwa foregrounds the Pacific as a site produced by historical movement rather than as a site defined by nations, but she also retains a crucial critique of how colonial desires—economic and otherwise—have produced havoc, loss and displacement for Indigenous peoples (see also West 2016).

To return to the central concerns of accountability, complicity and complexity, I want to emphasise the possibilities that this method of assemblage offers to those of us working on questions of Pacific diaspora, or thinking with the frameworks of trans-Indigeneity. If a focus on trans-Indigenous relations helps us to disavow the nation's centrality, then the method of following threads of violence, mess or colonial desire can help us to know when it is time to bring settlers and settler nations back in as an object of critique. To disavow the nation we often have to deal with the mess that imperialism makes—including the very real ways that colonialism in the Pacific has shaped how we understand ourselves and our territories in relation to others.

I started this article with my own connections to the Pacific. The ocean is not a metaphor—the ocean is home (Teaiwa 2006). It returns us when we lose ourselves in the bindings of the nation state. It teaches us that our smallness is real, even when our connections are vast. I cannot offer conclusions when it comes to grappling with accountabilities in diaspora, but my experiences as a diasporic person and researcher have taught me about the harms of letting accountability slide. If we celebrate our movements but forget whose land we stand on, we celebrate our success but forget the routes, the connections, the dispossessions and the sovereignties that forged Pacific pasts and shape Pacific futures. In Teresia Teaiwa's ideal Pacific none of us are perfect, but in learning deeply from our mistakes we might navigate towards resurgent collaborations that simultaneously honour the breadth of Indigeneity-in-movement and the reality of Indigenous sovereignties that endure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1.   Rather than picking at specific works, which would unfairly target select individuals, I am going to gesture to the broad sweep of diasporic research that forgets to acknowledge or engage with the sovereignties of Indigenous peoples, including some that have framed my own whenua (land) as a site of milk and honey.
2.   Statistics obtained via Request for Information, 16 September 2022, from New Zealand Police under the Official Information Act 1982. For more on the legal mechanisms for the "Section 501 deportations", as they are known colloquially, see Duckett White (2020).
3.   As part of my doctoral research I conducted research into the immigration laws and practices that affect New Zealand citizen migrants in Australia, 2020–2021, under the guidance of Māori migration activist and expert Erina Morunga.
4.   National Australia Archives A1, 1911/10657: Examination of persons under the Immigration Restriction Act. https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=11098
5.   I use Katerina Teaiwa's work as one example; see also Powell (2021).

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are te reo Māori.

koro	grandfather
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
tangata whenua	person of the land
tūpuna	ancestors
waka	canoe
whenua	land

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Part 2

Critical Reflection on Practicalities of Pacific Research Methods and Methodologies

CONNECTIONS AND SEPARATIONS: REFLECTIONS ON USING PACIFIC RESEARCH METHODS WITH PACIFIC YOUTH IN AUCKLAND

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ABSTRACT: While Pacific research methods are now widely used, there are emerging arguments around the "correct" application of these methods given the contemporary research settings in which they are often applied and the different philosophical, cultural and social elements that influence their application in practice, especially in Aotearoa New Zealand and Pacific youth contexts. This paper argues that reified contemporary forms of Pacific research methods may not necessarily align with traditional Indigenous practices and protocol, but the values underpinning these methods remain central to engaging and doing effective research with increasingly multifaceted and, at times, culturally ambivalent Pacific communities in Auckland. This article explores the experiences of an early-career Pacific researcher doing research with young Pacific men in Auckland, Aotearoa, with a particular focus on negotiating tensions of connection and separation when using Pacific research methods in contemporary diaspora settings. The diverse range of cultural knowledges and understandings among Pacific youth in Auckland emphasise the wider acculturative patterns emerging within Aotearoa's Pacific communities, thereby underlining the need to discuss how we can adapt Pacific research methods so that they are inclusive of these diverse cultural knowledges and enable research methods that empower, rather than alienate, the increasing number of second-, third- and fourth-generation Aotearoa-born Pacific people in Aotearoa. This paper affirms the legitimacy of Indigenous Pacific knowledge and research methods as a platform for revisioning what culturally appropriate research can look like and developing Pacific research practices that acknowledge the lived realities of the communities taking part. This is an important step towards sustaining Pacific research in which contemporary Pacific communities, particularly youth, can recognise themselves and their aspirations for the future.

Keywords: talanoa, Pacific studies, Pacific, Indigenous, diaspora, method, methodology, Aotearoa

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While Pacific research methods are now widely used in Pacific research, important and necessary critique is emerging from Pacific academics in relation to how these Indigenous methods are being applied in practice. These critiques are based on claims that Pacific methods such as talanoa

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(from the Tongan word talanoa, meaning sharing of ideas or conversations based on histories, realities and aspirations) are being applied in a manner that does not align with the Indigenous protocols or practices underpinning these methods. This paper engages this critique, focusing on the use of Pacific methods in research with Pacific young people in Aotearoa New Zealand and highlighting why Pacific methods can be effective for doing research with Pacific communities residing in settings that feature a plethora of both Pacific and western social and cultural influences. As Pacific researchers, we know that we often apply elements and principles of Pacific research methods in pieces, unevenly or inconsistently. This paper argues that although contemporary applications of Pacific research methods may not necessarily align with the original Indigenous practices and protocol that inspired these methods, the underlying values on which they are built remain essential to engaging and doing research with Pacific people. However, when using these methods, it is important that we reflect on how we frame these contemporary applications and make sure that we articulate the points of difference between how we apply them in academic research and how they are applied within Indigenous contexts and settings. This article builds upon critical discourse from scholars such as Fa'avae *et al.* (2016) who have called on Pacific researchers to place greater emphasis on voicing the complexities and challenges we face when implementing Indigenous philosophies and practices within our research practice.

My Introduction to Talanoa as a Research Method

In this paper, I will draw upon my experiences doing research with the increasingly diverse and, at times, culturally hesitant Pacific youth population living in Auckland, Aotearoa. In particular, I focus on how I have negotiated the tensions of connection and of separation between the researcher and research participants (the knowledge holders) when using Pacific research methods, namely talanoa, with Pacific youth in an Auckland diaspora context. Like many Pacific postgraduate researchers, my worldview and learnings within the classroom led me to adopt Vaioleti's (2006) talanoa method for the qualitative phase of my PhD research project. This paper does not aim to describe, explain or critique talanoa as a research method (for explorations of this, see Vaioleti 2006 and Fa'avae *et al.* 2016). Rather, it offers critical insights and reflections on my experiences of using the talanoa method to do research with Pacific youth in Auckland. Talanoa as a research method provided me with an effective and concise Pacific cultural reference point for undertaking qualitative data collection that is aligned with the social norms and practices many Pacific researchers are raised with but sometimes take for granted as universal among our Pacific communities here in Auckland.

Pacific research methods such as talanoa have rightfully been front and centre during my postgraduate studies, and we graduate students have been taught that they are central to carrying out effective Pacific research. As such, I was confident that talanoa would be an effective and culturally appropriate method to use in my research. These assumptions, for the most part, were correct, and I was able to frame and justify my open and informal approach to data collection using this important and groundbreaking method.

The Dilemma…
As important as Pacific research methods are when researching with Pacific communities, there is an assumption that all Pacific peoples can engage comfortably and confidently with Pacific cultural principles, processes and practices. Drawing from my six years of experience using Pacific research methods with Pacific youth in Auckland, I have found that many of the Pacific youth I have done research with feel alienated rather than empowered when engaging in more traditional Pacific spaces and participating in certain practices that are seen as essential to carrying out effective talanoa and Pacific research. While I acknowledge that this will not be the case for all Pacific youth, the increasing number of multiethnic Pacific youth and diverse range of cultural knowledges and understandings within this group is representative of the wider acculturative patterns emerging in Aotearoa's Pacific communities, who are mostly born and raised in Aotearoa and unable to speak their Indigenous language(s).[1]

Pacific communities have proudly carried and sustained their cultures while migrating to and living in Aotearoa.[2] However, due to migration and acculturation, the reality, as shown by recent research, is that knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures, languages and practices are trending downwards fast within our Pacific communities (Manuela and Anae 2017). This paper is not centred on questions of cultural identity or debating whether these acculturative trends are positive or negative; rather, it acknowledges the reality facing our communities and aims to build upon the discourse of what these changing trends mean for carrying out effective and culturally appropriate research in contemporary Pacific spaces that may differ significantly from the spaces Indigenous Pacific research methods were developed and intended to be used in.

Ultimately, we must be proactive in adapting and developing Pacific research methods so that they are inclusive of these developing cultural knowledges, so that we can facilitate research that empowers, rather than alienates, Pacific youth in Aotearoa and perhaps other diasporic hubs, such as Australia, where Indigenous Pacific cultural knowledge is less prominent. This paper affirms the legitimacy of Indigenous Pacific research methods

as a platform for revisioning culturally responsive research that is inclusive of the diverse realities and cultural reproduction that is present and always evolving within Pacific communities in Aotearoa. I argue that this is an important step towards sustainable and engaging Pacific research in which Pacific diasporic communities, particularly youth, can recognise themselves and their aspirations for the future. Ultimately, this paper aims to reflect on the following key questions: (i) How can we as Pacific researchers implement Pacific research methods when researching with Pacific people who have limited knowledge of and experience with Indigenous Pacific protocol and practices? and (ii) How can we carry out culturally responsive Pacific research that empowers Pacific youth in their multifaceted contexts?

Papa'anga and Positionality
Before I answer these questions and reflect on my research experiences, it is important to position myself in this conversation. The researcher reflecting on their positionality is an important part of Pacific research in order to identify how their worldview and lived realities might affect the research process. Reflecting on positionality also helps to ensure that research findings consider the phenomenon of situated knowledges, which refers to the idea that all forms of knowledge reflect the particular context in which they are produced and, whether intentional or not, the positionality of the researcher (Rose 1997). In my research, reflecting on my positionality has helped me to identify gaps in my academic, social and cultural knowledge. Ultimately, reflecting on positionality is about acknowledging that who we are as individuals and researchers influences research design, methodology, data collection and the way data is analysed, interpreted and represented.

From a Cook Islands perspective, reflecting on positionality and the process of establishing oneself is founded upon the genealogical practice of akapapa'anga (the reciting of one's ancestral lineage) and is central to identity-making and connecting people to ancestors and land (Powell 2021). I am a Cook Islands Māori and Papa'a (person of European descent) man, born and raised in Auckland, with ancestral links to many of our islands in the Cook Islands but most notably Rarotonga (Ngāti Uirangi) and Palmerston (Marsters). Given my positionality as a 29-year-old Cook Islander living in Aotearoa, I have experienced firsthand how quickly cultural knowledge and practices can change and be displaced, with the latest statistics highlighting that only 9 percent of Cook Islanders in Aotearoa can speak te reo Māori Kūki 'Āirani (Cook Islands Māori), which declines even further to 3 percent for Cook Islanders who were born in Aotearoa (Ministry for Pacific Peoples 2020). Like many Pacific people, I grew up in a large and loving family. I went to school in West Auckland and then attended the University of Auckland where I gained entrance to the Māori and Pacific Certificate in

Health Sciences programme and eventually attained a Master of Public Health, after which I worked at Auckland Hospital before returning to the University of Auckland to complete my doctoral studies with Te Wānanga o Waipapa (School of Māori Studies and Pacific Studies), exploring the mental health experiences of young Pacific athletes in Aotearoa. Away from studies and work, I married a beautiful tamaʻitaʻi Sāmoa (young Samoan woman), and we were blessed with the birth of our beautiful son, Joseph-Teariki, in 2020. After completing my doctoral studies in 2021, I was able to undertake postdoctoral research thanks to the Health Research Council of New Zealand's Pacific Health Research Postdoctoral Fellowship, which funded my project exploring the importance of informal mental health help-seeking for Pacific men in Aotearoa. In 2022, I was blessed to take up the role of lecturer in Pacific Studies at Te Wānanga o Waipapa at the University of Auckland. My papaʻanga (genealogy; ancestry), upbringing and lived experiences inform the way I view the world and, ultimately, underpin my approach to research and my motivation to ensure Cook Islanders and all Pacific people, particularly young Pacific people, can see themselves, their lived realities and their aspirations for the future reflected in the ways we discuss and undertake research within our communities.

THEORISING DIFFERENCE AND SAMENESS, CONNECTIONS AND SEPARATIONS

Why the Terms Insider and Outsider Did Not Work for Me

Historically, it has been argued that researchers occupy an insider, outsider or insider/outsider position in relation to their research and research communities. An insider researcher refers to an investigator who has a direct connection with research participants and the research context, and is usually defined through shared experience, whereas an outsider researcher is someone who does not share any commonalities with participants (Dwyer and Buckle 2009). While many still use the insider/outsider framing, Ryan (2015) challenges the usefulness of these terms, explaining that researchers and participants hold multiple interrelated positionalities that cannot be slotted into such fixed categories. Ryan (2015) also states that making such black-and-white assumptions of shared experience undermines the fact that people frequently hold multiple identities and perform different identities in different contexts and research settings.

Like many Pacific researchers doing research within their own communities, I was unable to assume a fixed position as an insider or outsider or even an insider/outsider. Rather, I simultaneously shared a sense of sameness with participants through our shared intersecting identities, as well as a sense of difference given the many differing and sometimes contrasting identities we held. Each interaction in my experiences as a researcher

has differed depending on the position and identity that participants have assumed, most often governed by factors such as gender, age, class, religion, ethnicity, educational background, acculturative status, language or athletic status. Mohammad's (2001) exploration of the power dynamics present in research by using the concepts of difference and sameness was more useful than the insider/outsider framework when trying to make sense of my experience as a Pacific researcher. Sameness is the process in which the researcher and participants share and connect over some sort of common identity or shared experience. Difference is essentially the absence of sameness within the research relationship.

Cultivating a Sense of Sameness Throughout the Research Process and During Talanoa

In this research, I was able to draw upon my age, where I lived, where I grew up, my lived experiences growing up in Auckland, schooling experiences, mutual friends, ethnicity and church, among others, to develop and nurture the relational space between me and the participants, build rapport and construct a feeling of comfort and sameness with them. I would ask questions about where the young men were from, what schools they went to, where they lived, what sports teams they played for and if they knew so-and-so from here and there. When engaging with the community and carrying out talanoa and data collection activities, I have had to reflect on what aspects of my identities as a person and researcher may strengthen or diminish the development of strong and authentic relationships built on respect, love, empathy, understanding and rapport to cultivate meaningful connections and open talanoa; in most cases, it has been shared cultural identities that has strengthened engagement and talanoa with adults and elders, while shared social identities have proven more valuable when developing bonds and undertaking engagement and talanoa with youth. In addition, I have had to negotiate the power dynamics that characterise my position as a university-trained and -employed researcher and the community's position as participants, dynamics that can cause tension and a sense of unease for some participants who would otherwise feel comfortable engaging in talanoa outside of a formal research setting.

Pacific Youth as Edgewalkers and Carrying Out Talanoa That "Walks Between" Cultures

Pacific youth often express multiple and sometimes contradictory identities and narratives of self, dependent on the social, cultural and/or political setting in which they live, a process that Tupuola (2004) termed "edgewalking" to illustrate the numerous sociocultural and political settings that most Pacific

youth "walk between" daily (Mila 2013). Tupuola states that as researchers we must move beyond viewing Pacific youth in Aotearoa within fixed parameters and work towards implementing research processes that are able to "walk between" cultures, adapt methods to settings that are far removed from their genealogy and avoid narrow and essentialised representations of an increasingly diverse and multifaceted population group. Given this context, it was important to me that my research methods were flexible enough to capture the fluidity and diversity of Pacific youth identities that exist within Auckland. Most importantly, I wanted to ensure the Pacific youth who took part in my research were able to articulate their multifaceted selves without feeling any pressure to live up to any particular social or cultural expectations.

Reflections on the Term "Culturally Responsive"

Growing up in Auckland and doing previous research with Pacific secondary school students in that city, I was aware of the hesitancy and anxieties that some Pacific youth face when engaging with more "traditional" Pacific processes and spaces, which are often seen as activities for elders and not youth (Marsters 2021). I have found that the willingness of young people to share their stories openly with me has depended not so much on my cultural processes and knowledge but on my social mannerisms, processes and ability to develop a sense of sameness with them. Reflecting on these experiences, I am reminded that culturally responsive research is not so much about the Indigenous cultural frameworks and processes we use but more so about the way we apply the social, relational and cultural values of our respective Indigenous cultures. In the case of my research experiences, meaningful engagement and open talanoa have taken place when my research processes have been responsive to the multifaceted social positions and cultural identities held by participants and the communities taking part.

Talanoa regarding mental health stigma and masculinity, for example, was not necessarily open and engaging because of the cultural processes used; rather it is through Pacific relational principles and the building of a sense of sameness through the sharing of our lived experiences of navigating the hypermasculinity and emotional stoicism that are unfortunately the norm among young Pacific men growing up in Auckland. What was most important to cultivating open talanoa, however, was how we talked about our experiences: the slang, the food, the vibe, the jokes to hide the truths, the laughs to hide the cries, the mannerisms, the subtle acknowledgements of vague insinuations, and the unspoken talanoa that was always happening alongside the spoken talanoa.

The Researcher as an Edgewalker

A balance between both difference and sameness is seen as ideal, as a degree of difference allows for diverse perspectives to be shared and helps to cultivate open-minded and impartial interactions while sameness cultivates a sense of connection and enables authentic communication and knowledge sharing (Mohammad 2001), which is essential to carrying out Pacific research. Similar relational principles related to the idea of sameness and difference were applied when carrying out talanoa with older Pacific stakeholders; however, these interactions had a different power dynamic given my positionality as teina (younger sibling) and the elevated age and status of key stakeholders who held the position of tuākana (older siblings or elders). Smith (1999) affirms the complexity for Indigenous researchers of occupying the same, but different, space, explaining that Indigenous researchers are "inside and outside of their own communities, inside and outside the academy, and between all those different worlds", touching on the privilege as well as the responsibilities we hold as Indigenous researchers and the complexities associated with being part of two very different and conflicting worlds (Smith 1999: 14). As a result, and in line with my cultural values and upbringing, stakeholders, most of whom were Pacific, acted as tuākana and would initiate most of the talanoa to build the vā (space, betweenness that connects), which often followed the same processes carried out with youth but in reverse. These processes were also a lot more aligned with the cultural practices and relational processes we abide by within more traditional Pacific settings.

NAVIGATING CULTURAL HESITANCY AND DISCONNECT

A big part of my journey as a researcher, and the main motivation behind this paper, has been reflecting on the persistent feelings of cultural hesitancy and inadequacy that were prominent among many of the young Pacific people that I have spoken to and done research with within Auckland. While these young people were very proud of their Pacific heritage and well attuned to their cultural values, they would often explain the anxiety and discomfort they feel when engaging in more traditional Pacific cultural spaces. During talanoa, young people would say things like "that's just overboard" or "that's too much" when we discussed different cultural processes and approaches to research and why young Pacific people in Auckland are not keen to engage with traditional Pacific health services and research. As an example, some of these young people said that they automatically switch off or disengage when they hear people speaking in their Pacific languages. One young Samoan man captured this phenomenon well, explaining how he and his younger family members always felt excluded when attending family and church events as they did not understand the language nor the

cultural customs and protocols that were taking place. This is not a new phenomenon for young Pacific people in Aotearoa, with multiple generations of Pacific youth having faced challenges to developing their Pacific cultural knowledge and identity; however, these experiences did present practical dilemmas for framing and applying talanoa in a way that aligned with these contemporary youth perspectives but still centred our Pacific cultural values and the method's decolonising effects.

How I Applied Talanoa in a Way That Embraced the Cultural Hesitancy Expressed by Youth

Many of the comments around cultural hesitancy resonated with my own upbringing and lived experiences as a young Pacific person growing up in Auckland, staunchly proud of my culture but similarly detached from the language and unsure of the meaning behind certain traditional protocols and practices. Because I had this lived experience, I was able to apply talanoa and the overall research processes in ways that were underpinned by Pacific values and principles of relationality, while also understanding that the use of overt Indigenous customs, processes and practices could alienate many of the young people who made up the communities I was doing research with. I achieved this by ensuring that the spaces and places in which talanoa took place were chosen by participants, with most young men preferring to talanoa at their local club or favourite food spot. As Fa'avae *et al*. (2016) stated, these chosen sites and the rejection of more formal talanoa protocols, such as prayer, contradicted many of the key principles of cultural competency that we read about in the literature and are taught in postgraduate classrooms. After all, these young men were mostly born and raised in Auckland, and their lived realities, day-to-day customs and social protocols were reflective of that. At the end of the day, our job as Pacific researchers is to meet the communities' needs rather than the other way around. Epeli Hau'ofa (Ellis and Hau'ofa 2001) reminds us that we must be wary of the trapping of tradition in times past, signalling that culture is fluid and always mixing, evolving and adapting. Hau'ofa states:

> We've often put our traditions in cages, and so we try to do what we think our elders, the people in the past, did. And we trap our traditions there. We freeze them. Whereas people in the past really lived very much like people in the present. There were always cultures mixing. Things were fluid, they were not frozen. But we froze them. (Ellis and Hau'ofa 2001: 23)

Ultimately, when navigating the cultural hesitancy that may exist among some Pacific people, we must be fluid in our approach and embrace these complexities to make visible the diversity of Pacific Indigenous experiences. Also, as Mika (2017) and Matapo and Enari (2021) state, we must use the

term "Indigenous" with caution, as the practice of labelling anything with a colonial term and static definition is problematic and contradicts our real Indigenous cultures and practices. Lastly, while western and Pacific research approaches are often dichotomised, there are contexts and research settings that may benefit from the combination of western and Pacific methods based in Pacific relational values and epistemologies, as was the case with my PhD research.

How Talanoa Helped to Address Tensions Between Decolonising Practices and Relationality

There were also some other noncultural tensions and complexities that I had to navigate in my attempts to adopt an Indigenous Pacific epistemology, the main one being the fact that religion, for many Pacific young people in Aotearoa, is now the central medium through which cultural traditions and knowledge are transferred (Thomsen 2019). In fact, for many of these young men, cultural identities and beliefs were seen as secondary to their religious identities and beliefs (Marsters and Tiatia-Seath 2019). With the declining language proficiency rates and the increasing number of Pacific families who have been living in Aotearoa for multiple generations, it is easy to see how the central meeting place for Pacific communities, the church, has become one of the prominent sites in which our cultural practices and traditions are being maintained (Ministry for Pacific Peoples 2020). Again, as a Pacific researcher I was aware of this dynamic in Auckland and how culture and religion are intertwined for many of our Pacific people. Despite my personal views and experiences, I felt conflicted between my position as a Pacific researcher who was well-versed in and committed to decolonising methodologies and research spaces and the reality in our community that Christianity and the church are among the most important elements of our postcolonial cultures for many in our communities. Vaioleti (2013/2014) touches on similar themes, highlighting that decolonising academic research was a key motivator behind the development of talanoa as a research method and methodology. Vaioleti states that Pacific methodologies must be based on thinking, languages and cultures that originate in the Pacific region; yet Christianity and the church in themselves are products of colonisation and did not originate in the Pacific, even as they hold utmost influence within our cultures and communities today.

Reflecting on this experience, questions arose around the strong push in academia towards decolonisation theory and the seemingly contradictory push towards religion that is happening within our communities. How can we challenge colonisation in our research when colonial systems and beliefs, such as Christianity, are so important to our people? While this paper does not aim to answer these questions or address whether this context is positive

or negative, I again experienced tensions in framing my research given that my worldview and training as a researcher did not align with my lived realities and those of our communities and the practices important to our people outside of academia. Leaning on the thoughts of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), this experience emphasised that we must be careful when taking an Indigenous and/or decolonial approach to research, as the separation between Indigenous and western worldviews is not always clear. As in the case of my research experiences, using Indigenous research methods often requires adopting new ways of applying Indigenous processes and philosophies dependent on the relational, social and cultural identities present within the contemporary research settings we inhabit. Again, this aligns with the reality that Indigenous cultural practices and processes are neither static nor closed (Matapo and Enari 2021).

Nevertheless, the Pacific young people that took part in my research engaged well with the way I framed and undertook talanoa. While the application of talanoa in this context did not centre specific cultural traditions and practices, our shared understandings of growing up as Pacific people in Auckland and our many shared social identities helped us to connect, evidence of the significant diverse Pacific youth subculture that has developed in Auckland since our parents, grandparents and, for some, great-grandparents migrated here. While the contexts of Pacific youth cultures are ever-changing in Auckland, I argue, without disrespecting the sacredness of our Indigenous cultures, that this subculture is no less of a cultural conduit than are historical Indigenous cultures for many Pacific people living in Auckland. We are still extremely proud of our ancestral homelands and respective genealogies, but the limited connections and knowledge of our cultures, derived from the fact that we were born and raised in Auckland, means that we find other ways to connect with the diverse realities around us.

Dilemmas with Framing and Naming My Research Methods and Avoiding the Need to Clutter
Although I faced challenges attempting to label and describe my research approach and practice, it was clear to me that the values shaping these were very much the same as those shaping Pacific research methods such as talanoa. In my PhD dissertation I labelled the interviews and focus groups I did as "talanoa-style", but after further reading and reflection I can see that I comfortably agree with Sanga and Reynolds (2017) in their assertion that we must not clutter the literature and knowledge base on Pacific research methods by feeling the need to rename and reframe all the different ways we do Pacific research. Rather, we should understand that our Indigenous research methods, processes and practices are not static and continue to voice the different complexities and responses we face applying Pacific research

methods within our various communities. Sanga and Reynolds (2017) state that Pacific researchers should be confident in their fields of research and should use whatever is at hand to achieve Pacific research interests: as long as these processes align with Pacific thought and practice then they are Pacific research. The same attention, care and emphasis we place on protecting the cultures of our past should be applied when thinking about how we protect the cultures of our present and future, a process that, when done respectfully, offers opportunities to honour origins and protect legacy (Sanga and Reynolds 2017). If we are to really value Pacific agency and empowerment, we must protect the Pacific values and qualities within our research methods, but also understand that over time, cultures and identities will continue to be negotiated, reproduced and contested in a journey that will require clarity and constant reflexivity from us as Pacific researchers if we are to stay on top of what is and is not Pacific research (Sanga and Reynolds 2017).

Just like other areas of our culture, our Pacific research methods are flexible and dynamic. We should not feel imperfect because we apply our Pacific research methods in contemporary ways that do not explicitly align with the way these methods are presented within the literature. Navigating the disconnect between our research practice and the Pacific frameworks that we reference should not centre around how we make our practice fit with specific methods but should focus more on how we embrace the diverse and ever-changing contexts in which our communities find themselves without losing the Pacific foundational values and practices that make our research, and people, Pacific. It is about doing research in a way that resists the colonial view that Indigenous cultures and practices are static and only exist in the past while moving towards embracing the new ways that our cultures are practised today. In the next section, I will discuss the practical steps I took in my research to adapt a Pacific Indigenous research approach to the multifaceted contemporary realities experienced by young Pacific people here in Auckland.

MERGING PACIFIC INDIGENOUS AND CONTEMPORARY REALITIES

It was initially very challenging for me to describe the way I applied talanoa in my own research. I was stuck on trying to answer questions such as: When is talanoa no longer talanoa? At what point is research no longer Pacific? And how do I ensure my research is founded upon Pacific values without invalidating the cultural and social identities that the young Pacific people, and even some of the elders, I was researching with carried? Reflecting on my training as a Pacific researcher and the lectures I attended over my university studies, it was clear that my research did not align with the way we were taught. But I was also aware that my research did not align with

western methodologies and frameworks either. Some aspects were very clearly Pacific and other aspects were culturally ambivalent.

Ultimately, it was important for me to validate the subcultures that exist here in Auckland for our Pacific people, especially those who were born and raised in Auckland, many of whom are part of the second, third or fourth generation of their family to grow up here. In this way, I think that while Indigenous cultural practices and processes were not strictly adhered to during my research engagements, the engagements that took place were still very much culturally appropriate and responsive to the processes and protocols that young Pacific people and increasingly Pacific adults are most comfortable with here in Auckland. The main tension for me was not wanting to disrespect the sacredness of our Indigenous cultures and practices as well as the groundbreaking work of earlier Pacific scholars who faced significant backlash from academia in their efforts to establish and centre Pacific ways of knowing and being within academic research. Pacific research methods like talanoa are also very rich and nuanced cultural practices, so I did not want to appear as if I had watered down the method and overlooked the important principles on which it rests.

My first response to this tension was to simply label my data collection methods as semistructured interviews and focus groups underpinned by Pacific relational values. A potential issue with this approach, however, is that it may be seen to detract from the years of work undertaken by the Pacific scholars who came before us and pushed hard to develop and validate our Pacific research methodologies within academic spaces. As Faʻavae *et al.* (2016) state, we cannot fall back on dominant western research methods just because we might face challenges practising and implementing our own Pacific research methods. This approach would have also oversimplified the research design and detracted from the richness of the engagements that took place and the nuanced processes that characterised these engagements. For example, there were many traditional Pacific protocols embedded within the contemporary approach I took during the interview process, such as the use of prayer to open and close at the request of some participants, the offering of food and gifts to show appreciation and respect for participants' time, knowledge and wisdom, and the open, informal and circular style in my approach to dialogue and addressing the research questions during interviews which led to many off-topic discussions, which in many ways does align with traditional forms of talanoa.

Reflecting on these experiences now, it is clear to me that further discussion is required to collectively theorise what the future of Pacific research methods might look like. Do we continue to develop and build new research methods and frameworks? Or do we build upon existing ones and

focus on how they can be applied in different contexts? As Pacific researchers, we must also do this theorising without drifting too far from the Indigenous values and principles that make our research Pacific in the first place. Within my research, the focus was on how I could capture the multiple social and cultural identities that our young people perform here in Auckland while embracing and empowering these identities within my research rather than attempt to use a one-size-fits-all approach. I was able to achieve this by making slight adaptations to the methods being used in response to the people I was engaging with. This was only possible because I had long-standing relationships with people that were involved in my research and a deep knowledge of the spaces and places of the research context. Co-construction of methods/methodologies with communities we are researching with is a key step towards better aligning our research practices with the needs of our communities. Cammock *et al.* (2021), for example, used talanoa alongside youth participatory research methods to ensure an empowering and inclusive youth voice was present within their research. Meo-Sewabu (2014) also proposes a process of cultural discernment that can be used to design research approaches in consultation with the community to ensure a valid cultural fit. This process provides navigation and support when the relationship between research context and research theory may not align. Regardless of titles and labels, what really matters is ensuring that we do research that celebrates, develops and supports the lives of Pacific people as both unique and connected, wherever they are. Contexts will always differ, and thus, so will processes and practices. Acknowledging this reality respects the values of our ancestors while acknowledging the fluidity and dynamism of the world in which we live.

CONCLUSION

There is a significant need for further discussion to collectively develop a culturally responsive methodology that is sensitive to the diverse and multifaceted contemporary Pacific diaspora communities living in Aotearoa. Many of the Pacific research methods used in my research have been adapted to fit the contemporary Pacific youth context in Auckland through a globalised urban Pacific diasporic aesthetic. While effective, there is a need to voice the tensions we face as Pacific researchers and theorise contemporary forms of Indigenous protocols and knowledge that build upon existing Indigenous Pacific processes to develop research methods that are more relevant to the lived realities and everyday lives of Pacific people in diaspora spaces like Aotearoa. In my experiences using talanoa and other Pacific research methods, I have faced many tensions and contradictions attempting to apply these methods in a way that aligns with the traditional Indigenous principles and protocols that inspired them. Building upon Fa'avae *et al.*'s

(2016) paper encouraging us to better voice the practicalities and challenges faced using talanoa and other Pacific research methods, I reflected on my experiences and found that existing Pacific methods were not necessarily adapted to the multifaceted and diverse realities facing Pacific diasporic communities like Pacific youth communities in Auckland, and yet they do provide an invaluable Indigenous Pacific platform upon which we can build our contemporary Pacific research practices and processes. While these contemporary processes may not be explicitly cultural, they centre on the development of authentic and sustained social connections, which is where our Pacific cultural frameworks thrive. Although we usually apply Pacific methods in ways that are vastly different to the Indigenous practices upon which they were developed, the same Indigenous values and sacredness remain. We must not shy away from this phenomenon: instead we should draw from the strengths of our Indigenous research methods and embrace the diverse ways they play out in different research settings, with the focus on ensuring our research principles and processes are truly responsive and empower, rather than alienate, the multifacetedness that exists in the communities we do research with in Aotearoa. At the same time, we must be intentional in describing where our research practices deviate, and do not deviate, from their theoretical constructs. As Sanga and Reynolds (2017) state, respect for the past must be the platform on which the innovation and creativity for the future sit.

In the same way we frame and explain Indigenous cultural practices and processes in our research, we must also work to be transparent in the way we explain the social identities and contextual realities shaping the research we do with Pacific communities in more contemporary settings such as Auckland, Aotearoa. We must work to continue developing this space, building upon the work of existing Pacific research methods so that our Pacific understandings of reality, knowledge generation and values, in all their diversity, can eventually stand on their own as the bases of a research paradigm that serves Pacific contexts and interests here in Aotearoa. We must confront and contest the colonial view that Indigenous practices and processes are static. Ultimately, we must pay our respects to the scholars who have set the foundation for Pacific research despite the restrictions that made their work a struggle, while also having the confidence to pick and choose elements from existing frameworks to best serve Pacific interests and prepare a useful space for future generations. To avoid oversaturating the Pacific research methods space, we must not feel the need to rename the research methods we use; rather, we should do careful work distinguishing where our methods fit within the literature, orient the research methods and methodologies that we base our research on, and clearly voice the points of difference that exist in the way we apply these methods in practice.

Critical reflection and critique will help to facilitate a respectful conversation that presents us with the opportunities to honour origins while also safeguarding Pacific qualities in the future and ensuring sustainable development of Pacific research methods. As with many aspects of our Pacific cultures, the new can be done in old ways and the old can be practised in new ways—both underlined by the values that have sustained generations of Pacific people. This reality reflects the complexity and multifacetedness of past, present and future Pacific peoples, illustrating the broad spectrum of tradition and Indigeneity that remains within our growing urban diasporic Pacific communities. More researcher reflexivity and discussion is essential for the development and sustainability of Pacific research founded upon Pacific ways of knowing and being. My hope is that these discussions will ultimately cultivate research in which Pacific communities in Aotearoa can recognise themselves and their aspirations for the future.

NOTES

1. As an example, the 2018 New Zealand census found that only 16 percent of Pacific youth can speak their respective Indigenous language(s) (Ministry for Pacific Peoples 2020).
2. For an in-depth history of Pacific people's experiences in Aotearoa, please see Mallon *et al.* (2012).

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are Cook Islands Māori unless otherwise stated.

akapapaʻanga	genealogical practice of reciting ancestral lineage
Papaʻa	person of European descent
papaʻanga	genealogy; ancestry
talanoa	sharing of ideas or conversations based on histories, realities and aspirations (Fijian, Samoan, Tongan)
tamaʻitaʻi Sāmoa	young Samoan woman (Samoan)
te reo Māori Kūki ʻĀirani	Cook Islands Māori
teina	younger sibling
tuākana	older siblings; elders
vā	space, betweenness that connects (Samoan, Tongan)

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RE-VISIONING ONLINE PACIFIC RESEARCH METHODS FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING THAT MAINTAINS RESPECTFUL VĀ

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ABSTRACT: The process of re-visioning online research methods for Pacific research requires us to understand what was, what currently is and what will be possible within future Pacific contexts. As a Pacific academic, I did not consider adopting online research methods for Pacific knowledge sharing until 2015. The significance of adopting these methods became more pronounced during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic social and travel restrictions. The purpose of this discussion is to first consider the online research methods used during my PhD study of multisited Pasifika/Pacific people residing in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, procedures which later became foundational for my postdoctoral work during the pandemic. Second, it offers a consideration of some cultural challenges in using online research methods that will lead us to reflect on how we can maintain respectful sociocultural spaces (vā) while carrying out Pacific research and knowledge-sharing processes online. The rapidly changing landscapes of internet technology and social online environments require us as Pacific researchers to revise/re-vision how we might better connect with our research informants and participants, while maintaining cultural protocols and value systems that ensure our communication is meaningful and that maintain vā.

Keywords: Pasifika, e-talanoa, online research, Pacific research methodologies, sociocultural spaces, talanoa vā

The inevitable implication of an increased use of the internet is a change in how people communicate and interact. According to Lee *et al*. (2017: 3), "[i]nformation and communication technologies have had socially transformative effects [on] how people make and maintain social relationships, the structure of their social networks … [and how they] present themselves to the world and store their memories". These rapidly changing landscapes of internet technology and online social environments require us as Pacific researchers to revise/re-vision how we might better connect with our research informants and participants, while maintaining cultural protocols and value systems that ensure our communication is meaningful and that maintain vā (respectful sociocultural spaces).

The process of re-visioning online research methods for Pacific research requires us to understand what was, what currently is and what possibilities there may be for our future practice as researchers in Pacific contexts (Faʻavae *et al.* 2022). How can we build and maintain respectful vā while carrying out Pacific research online? Is the process of online knowledge sharing an acceptable method of Pacific research? Why should I consider using online methods in my Pacific research design? These are just a few of the many questions that arise in the minds of Pacific researchers today who are embarking on Pacific research projects within an increasingly technologically advanced world and an ever-growing internet-savvy Pacific context.

This discussion will firstly cover online research methods I used during my PhD study of multisited Pasifika/Pacific people residing in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. These methods were foundational to the development of an online Pacific research approach, prompted by the start of the pandemic, that I used in my postdoctoral work. This methodological development highlights the significance of using online forums to create valuable sociocultural spaces for Pacific knowledge sharing—something Enari and Matapo (2020) refer to as the "digital vā". Secondly, this discussion will consider the benefits as well as limitations of using online research methods for Pacific knowledge sharing while maintaining a respectful vā. The implementation of online Pacific research methods has revealed some cultural challenges in using digital spaces (Faʻavae *et al.* 2022), so we will need to reflect on how we can better build and maintain respectful vā while carrying out Pacific research and knowledge-sharing processes online.

BACKGROUND

Researcher Positionality
My personal position as a Pacific researcher relates to my interest in the topic of discussion and my connections to the Pasifika/Pacific communities and locales studied. Therefore, I take this opportunity to make my positioning in the research transparent for the reader.

I am of Tongan descent, from the villages of Muʻa and Houma in Tongatapu (with descent lines tracing to Haʻapai, Fiji, Sāmoa and ʻUvea), born and raised in Aotearoa. I am married to a beautiful Samoan man, from the villages of Saleaula, Falelima and Leulumoega, also born and raised in Aotearoa. Our family includes six Samoan and Tongan children, and together we identify as Kiwis/NZ-born Pasifika/Pacific Islanders of Samoan and Tongan descent. Although we are living, studying and working on Yugambeh Country in Beenleigh, Brisbane, we continue to "represent #274"[1] and remain connected with our South Auckland community of Ōtara.

My research interest in the links between mobility, well-being and the migration of Pasifika/Pacific peoples has grown over time. It started while living in Auckland, moving from personal observations to research inquiry. From 2003 to 2015, my role as a Pasifika educator at Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate in Ōtara allowed me to observe the significant links between the well-being of my Pasifika students, their family's mobility and the overall transient nature of the Pacific Island community in South Auckland. While working closely with families and students over these years, specifically in the pastoral care work at the school, I gained further insight into the familial networks that existed across the Tasman Sea for many of our Pacific families. I witnessed the departure of several Pasifika students and their families from South Auckland to the urban areas of Australia, either on a temporary basis or permanently. Most of these families found success in gaining employment and opportunities in Australia that had otherwise been difficult to achieve in Aotearoa. My own family's journey has bolstered this interest in understanding the trans-Tasman migration process and its links to our family's well-being. In December 2015, after much prayer and preparation, we made the life-changing decision to move. At the start of my PhD candidature in January 2015 we were based in Auckland and spent the following months travelling back and forth between Auckland and Brisbane as part of my research work. Through these trips we discovered the benefits of living in Brisbane. Our underlying belief in finally making Brisbane our base was that we were able to provide better opportunities for our children in Australia's environment and economy. Throughout the following years, particularly during 2016–2019, my family and I continued to travel between Aotearoa and Australia for work, study and personal reasons. These short trips allowed me to maintain valuable family and community connections across the Tasman.

The changes that occurred in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, with the travel restrictions and border closures between Aotearoa and Australia, changed how my family and I maintained these important connections both across the Tasman and within Australia. During these times, communication with our family members largely happened through private messaging apps and, increasingly, Zoom, and, when the migration regimes allowed it, we worked in quick trips around quarantines and vaccination rounds to check in on our elderly and physically isolated loved ones. This unprecedented period of physical isolation and social restrictions also affected the way I was connecting with my Pacific communities in Aotearoa and Australia. At the start we continued to "stay in touch" via private messaging, Facetime, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. As I write it is now 2023, and although we are travelling freely across borders (and have been since late 2022) with fewer

restrictions in both Aotearoa and Australia, the online spaces continue to be the "new normal" way of connecting or communicating within academia. These personal experiences provide further insight into how Pacific research spaces have changed from pre-pandemic to pandemic to post-pandemic settings. For these reasons, it is important that I make my positionality transparent at the outset of the following discussion.

METHODOLOGY

This paper presents understandings that are drawn from Pacific research methods employed during my PhD and postdoctoral work. Here, my focus will be on presenting and discussing the development of talanoa online, what I refer to as e-talanoa (Faleolo 2016; Faʻavae *et al.* 2022). Talanoa, a widely accepted Pacific narrative approach, is what Vaioleti (2006: 23) refers to as "a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether formal or informal … and interacting without a rigid framework".

Talanoa and e-talanoa (both detailed in the next section) have been a crucial part of my research. Both my PhD (2015–2019) and postdoctoral work (2020–2022) entailed research with Pacific Islanders in multiple sites. The PhD work largely focused on Samoans and Tongans migrating between Auckland and Brisbane. This lens expanded in the postdoctoral work to include other Pacific Islanders, beyond just Samoans and Tongans, who were moving to and through Australia (all states and territories) and all regions of Aotearoa. In some instances, this included tracing narratives that had trans-Pacific links with Pacific Island homelands and other Pacific rim areas like the Americas. Therefore, the development and continued use of online methods as well as the maintenance of connections in these various spaces has grown over time.

I was not compelled to consider adopting an online Pacific research approach for knowledge sharing until 2015. It was during the initial communications with participants in my PhD study that I realised I had to create an online presence to connect with Pacific peoples. The significance of my having adopted online methods for the PhD work became even more pronounced and significant during the lockdowns and restrictions as a result of the pandemic, beginning in April 2020. The purpose of this discussion is to first consider some of the online research methods I had initially used during my PhD study of Pasifika in Aotearoa and Australia, which later became significant research tools during the pandemic. This discussion highlights the significance of using such online methods for maintaining valuable connections with people. Second, this discussion will include a consideration of some benefits as well as cultural challenges in using online research methods that will lead us to reflect on how we can maintain respectful vā while carrying out Pacific research and knowledge-sharing processes online.

PACIFIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

When I first began my journey as a Pacific researcher, in 1995, only 4.9% of Aotearoa's population were internet users while less than 1% of Tonga's population used the internet (World Bank n.d.). So, naturally my mode of communication with the 24 Tonga-based women (aged 18–77) participating in my first master's study ('Ilaiū 1997) at that time was through face-to-face talanoa focused on maintaining sociocultural spaces (tauhi vā). It is important to note that at the start of my research journey in the 1990s, the terms "talanoa" and "tauhi vā" were familiar to me in my familial spaces while growing up in Aotearoa, but I had not yet seen these terms in academic literature. However, as I recall and recount these aspects of my research developments, I will now refer to these practices of talanoa and tauhi vā as they really are, not as "semi-structured interviews and consultative communication" as is often the preferred wording of western academic institutions in Aotearoa or Australia.

The traditional narrative approach of talanoa (which could also be less formal, as in "talatalanoa") that I employed in the 1990s, although flexible and seemingly casual in comparison to the clinical western-style interviewing taught at university, would be my first experience of navigating Pacific research spaces as a semi-outsider. I was entering a world of Tongan sociocultural protocols that I had not yet engaged in as an academic and researcher but had only seen my parents operate in as family and church leaders, while I was growing up in Aotearoa. My first master's study (1995–1996) would prove to be a formative and foundational learning experience that would serve me well in years to come. In 1996, I had to travel to Tongatapu Island for fieldwork. Being a single woman in my twenties it was culturally correct to travel with my mother, Falakika Lose 'Ilaiū. I remember that my little brother Isaac (the youngest of eight children) also had to travel with us because he was a toddler. Looking back on it now, my mother and I were doing Pacific research with our Tongan women in the proper "Tongan way" (anga faka-Tonga), which was conducive to free-flow knowledge sharing. We were enacting tauhi vā: the building and maintenance of important, sociocultural, relational spaces. My mother had attended my very first face-to-face meetings with key informants, speaking while I sat quietly, as she was a pastor's wife (a respectable role in our community); this "connecting of persons" (of me to the research participants, through her) then distinguished me as a reliable person because she had prepared the relational space. She also introduced me as her "second daughter who is studying at the University of Auckland" to validate my research fieldwork, but more importantly she proceeded to explain our family's genealogical connections to the locations of Nuku'alofa and Kolomotu'a where I was collecting information. This vā that was built allowed me to begin my

research journey in Tonga. This learning experience taught me the value of cultural protocols in Pacific research and would pay dividends in my next Pacific research project.

In 2011, during my second master's study (Faleolo 2012) of the experiences of 15 Tongan women (aged 20s–50s) of higher education in Aotearoa, it was clear that their preferred mode of communication was face-to-face talanoa. Using my understanding of relational bridge-building and tauhi vā from my first master's study with Tongan women, I was able to communicate my positionality then as an educator and community leader in South Auckland to relate the significance of my research. Importantly, I was able to outline the key genealogical connections I had to Tongan members of our South Auckland community, paying homage to my Tongan village links via my parents and grandparents. However, it was also the first time that I had used an online mode of communication to recruit participants or to distribute information about the master's study. I felt that the introduction of individualised emails helped me to maximise the time available to conduct the study as well as assisted with on-the-go communications with this cohort of women who were already using computers in their professional spaces. We all had social media accounts during this time; however, most of the women preferred to use email communication for the distribution of information and reciprocal processes of script-checking. Only a few had asked that I send information via Facebook Messenger. Although in this second master's study I was using online means of communication for the distribution of information, the majority of the 15 Tongan women participating in the study were still keen to meet with me face-to-face for our talanoa sessions over a meal. I had learnt during my fieldwork in Tonga in 1996 that talanoa and knowledge-sharing was most enjoyable and free-flowing when combined with food—"breaking bread". So, it was evident during the early 2010s that Tongan forms of communication in Aotearoa resembled the preferred mode used in Tonga in the 1990s. Talanoa, so to speak, had not been fully embraced online at this time; however, it was not long after this, at the start of my PhD study, while connecting with Pasifika trans-Tasman migrants in Auckland and Brisbane, that I discovered the pendulum swing of Pacific people's desire, both Samoans and Tongans, to communicate more frequently online versus face-to-face. Taking this all in now as I am writing, I ponder the questions and play of meanings behind the terms "culture/cultural" and "convenience/convenient". Are our current cultural practices no longer convenient? Is it a cultural convenience to shift our practice online? Should we culturally adapt to do what is more convenient?

In 2015, 20 years after conducting my first Pacific research project in a very traditional face-to-face format ('Ilaiū 1997), I was now faced with an unexpected social change (Faleolo 2020). The shift was evident in both

trans-Tasman sites of the PhD study; in 2015, 88.2% of Aotearoa's population were internet users; similarly, Australia's population of internet users grew from 2.8% in 1995 to 84.6% in 2015 (World Bank n.d.). The implication of increased internet use within these two locales was the inevitable change in how people were choosing to interact and connect with others, over time and space. I noted that more than half of my Pasifika networks required me to text, email or chat via private messaging rather than receiving a phone call or meeting face-to-face. According to Lee *et al.* (2017) technology has transformed social structures and how people maintain relationships. Hence, the rapidly changing landscapes of internet technology and social online environments require us as Pacific researchers to revise/re-vision how we might better connect with our research informants and participants, while maintaining cultural protocols and value systems that are meaningful and at the heart of our research practice, always maintaining respectful vā.

A SIGNIFICANT LINK: TALANOA AND VĀ

Pasifika frameworks, like the Tongan way (anga faka-Tonga) and the Samoan way (faʻa-Sāmoa), are core to the Pacific research approaches I have embraced in life as a Tongan woman, wife and mother of Samoan-Tongan children. Such worldviews have also been central to my research approach. These frameworks help me to prioritise the relational spaces between me as the researcher and those who are being researched in the knowledge-sharing processes. The concept of tauhi vā (Tongan) or tausi le vā (Samoan) in Pacific research means to "nurture social relations … on entering talanoa with Pasifika, the object should be to maintain social spaces and relationships" (Faleolo 2020: 52). Working as a researcher within Pacific contexts requires us to engage in a respectful and culturally appropriate way, both in verbal and non-verbal language and face-to-face and online.

Halapua (2002, 2003) draws a significant link between vā and talanoa that should not be ignored. Considering this paper's focus, this means that talanoa allows for meaningful communication and connections to occur, built on the shared obligation of the researcher and participants. Talanoa is a two-way process, reciprocating knowledge-sharing obligations to both give and receive. It is in this act of reciprocal information exchange, giving and taking, sharing and receiving knowledge that respectful vā in our Pacific research practices is created, nurtured and maintained. In the same way, using online forms of communication requires tauhi vā or tausi le vā even more so. Enari and Matapo (2020: 8) emphasise the importance of maintaining the digital vā when using online communication forums, by not stripping "the rich cultural significance of Pasifika ways of knowing".

Talanoa and other narrative-style research methods come naturally to many Pacific researchers and participants as we often communicate in this

style within our private and public domains. However, we must not assume that just being Pacific and labelling what we do as "talanoa" means we are doing it the "right way" (Faʻavae, Jones and Manuʻatu 2016; Faʻavae *et al.* 2022). Collecting Pacific knowledge by using the talanoa method should be undertaken with a deeper understanding of the social spaces in which talanoa occurs respectfully. For instance, when I am speaking with a family leader, a church leader or a community leader, I am mindful that there are "expected and respectful ways that a Pasifika researcher should be dressed" to address these persons of authority (Faleolo 2020: 51). And so, I conduct my talanoa sessions with these individuals in a manner that is befitting of their roles and titles, usually with a prayer and acknowledgement of their time before we break the ice with small talk. The significance of maintaining respectful vā in online research spaces as Pacific researchers is that we are accurately representing our cultural values and how we as researchers understand these (Faleolo 2021). Our "Pasifika-ness" is demonstrated in how we implement cultural protocols online; these aspects of our online communication set the tone for establishing and maintaining respectful vā in the current session and the next.

BENEFITS OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Online modes of contact were adopted in my PhD research (2015–2019) in order to cater for the communication needs of participants. This decision aligned closely with Pacific cultural values of respect (faʻaaloalo in Samoan; fakaʻapaʻapa in Tongan) that were appropriate for the study, whereby research designs were responsive to the participants: a collaborative process of reciprocity where feedback from my participants prompted the use of mixed online/face-to-face methods of data collection. The shift in my research design acknowledges the central role that informants should play in academic research, redefining research spaces and repurposing modes of communication, contributing to culturally sensitive and appropriate Pacific knowledge-sharing processes.

While it was clear that online forums were key to collecting trans-Tasman narratives, I was also mindful that I was capturing Pasifika voices, so it was important to collect narratives in a culturally responsive manner—it only seemed natural that I spoke to other Pasifika the way I preferred to be spoken to: respectfully, meaningfully and thoughtfully. This is an art in our Pacific knowledge-sharing that entails purposeful entry, delivery and exit of dialogue that occurs between two or more people who are mindful of their spoken (vocabulary, tenor, tone) and non-spoken languages (facial expressions, body language, dress code, demeanour). I have unpacked the significance of this art of Pacific knowledge-sharing elsewhere (Faleolo 2021) but will summarise it here also.

   As Pacific researchers, we should constantly be mindful that our business is not about selfish data-mining but rather about collectively maintaining our sociocultural spaces through the reciprocal knowledge-sharing process. The maintenance of sociocultural spaces should be an ongoing action within Pacific research contexts, including online spaces. The significance of vā to our practice as Pacific academics is in the act of maintaining and nurturing relationships and sociocultural spaces that connect us to our Pacific people. We need to be mindful that respectful vā starts with us and within ourselves. In any given Pacific research context in which we find ourselves standing, we must make the conscious decision to embrace respectful vā protocol. When uncertain, make time to speak with your family elders and community leaders and get a better understanding of what respectful vā looks like, sounds like and feels like within your research context. If this means that you need to put on a puletasi (two-piece church dress; not your pyjamas or bathrobe), change your Zoom background or move to a space in your home that is more culturally respectful (not sitting in your bathroom or lying in bed!), do so. Introduce yourself using family names—positionality, genealogy—making relevant connections to the participant/s. Second, be mindful and respectful of your participants and their personal knowledge. Know who you are speaking with, address them by name or titles, be understanding of their time constraints or personal interests in your current study. Pray with them or talk freely about their/your day before outlining your agenda for the meeting. Make time to really listen and to hear their heart as they speak and respond to you. Latu (2009) explains that Pacific peoples keep libraries of knowledge hidden deep within and it is with talanoa that these become known to those who listen. Knowing what drives them to talk with you in the first place is a good place to start (Faleolo 2021). From experience, I have found that most Pacific participants want to contribute to "the greater good" and that their knowledge shared is "a way of giving back" to their communities, descendants and ancestors. This understanding about Pasifika gives essence to what is being said.

Pasifika Trans-Tasman Migration: Facebook Community Page
In May 2015, key informants identified during the scoping stage of my PhD study helped to initiate the virtual snowball recruitment of participants. These key informants were crucial in establishing a relational context for me online to speak with members of their collectives. I was introduced online, via private messaging by key informants who would explain the significance of my research to our Pacific communities in Aotearoa and Australia and, importantly, my connection to them. These initial online connections further led me to create the Facebook community page Pasifika Trans-Tasman Migration where the newly formed Pacific connections online

led to wider, ongoing dialogue about the proposed research within their own collectives. The Facebook community forum made the research readily accessible for further potential participants to query, comment, "share" or "like" the project. As a researcher, I was able to spend less time recruiting and more time in dialogue with people, building those crucial sociocultural relationships and sharing important narratives of trans-Tasman migration. Five posts sharing photographic images (Fig. 1) as well as video links to the documentary series *Children of the Migration* (NZ On Screen 2004) and *Second Migration of Pacific People* (Kailahi 2015) were successful in generating robust discussion and general interest around the research, building on the vā that was established by the key informants. A month later, a sixth post called for interested Pasifika to participate in the study, outlining the objectives of the study as well as the criteria for their participation. Those who were interested but did not meet the criteria often shared this sixth post on their private Facebook pages, alerting others of their collectives to visit the Pasifika Trans-Tasman Migration page. The call out for participants went far and wide because of this online snowballing technique, saving a huge amount of time. Thus, the functionality of the already established Facebook community page became an important component of the multisited study across Aotearoa and Australia. Most importantly, the online snowballing

Figure 1. Post on the Facebook community page showing image of author's son, Nehemiah Thomas Faleolo, at the Pasifika Festival held in Manukau, Auckland, in 2015.

extended a process that was also occurring verbally in my community networks offline. This use of online snowballing via Facebook gives our Pacific communities and collectives significant levels of agency and control in their impact on research, widening the participation and intake of stakeholders in Pacific research.

During June and July 2015, the Facebook community page was used to post open-ended discussion questions relating to experiences of trans-Tasman migration and well-being in Aotearoa and Australia. It became evident that there was a lot more interest in the research than initially expected, with some posts reaching hundreds of people, and with the additional use of the Facebook "boosted posts" feature, thousands of Pasifika people were reached globally.

It was especially important, as the researcher, to remain transparent in order to ensure the voices and stories I recorded were accurate. One method employed using the online community page was to provide regular updates on stages of the study (data collections, analysis phases and outputs of research) as well as the opportunity for informants, participants and community members to comment on draft findings, articles, conference papers and the thesis progress. Overall, the Facebook community page allowed for a series of respectful and reciprocal interactions between the researcher and knowledge holders throughout the knowledge-sharing process of the PhD study.

Private Messaging: The Humble Beginnings of E-Talanoa
What became evident at the start of my PhD study in early 2015 is that most of the participants preferred online modes of communication, particularly those who were multisited or in transition between Aotearoa and Australia. The need for dialogue embedding Pacific values using online modes led to the creation of e-talanoa as an online Pacific narrative approach, a direct response to my participants' needs. Often, private communications via Facebook Messenger was the preferred online mode of communication for participants, followed closely by emails. Thus in mid-2015, further considerations were made to ensure the research design and methods of the study embraced the participants' communication needs, while ensuring safe and secure information and knowledge sharing.

Having conducted Pacific research in Tonga and Aotearoa prior to 2015, I had anticipated home visits and talanoa sessions that would need me to travel often and afar to meet face-to-face with informants. After months of these talanoa sessions, I would spend double the amount of time transcribing and ensuring the scripts are correct by revisiting homes and laboriously reading through scripts with everyone. However, to my surprise, I had the convenience of e-talanoa with instant verbatim scripts from the reciprocal dialogue I and the participant had typed. This ease of retrieving scripts of

our dialogue meant that my research practice was more efficient, providing participants more time to reflect on their responses soon after our e-talanoa.

Latu (2009) prompts us to provide our participants with an environment that is conducive to good talanoa, aided by a sense of comfort and familiarity. This methodological development provided the flexibility and ease for informants to participate. In particular, Facebook Messenger allowed several participants to have live conversations with me, free-flow in and around their "realities and daily lives" (Faleolo 2016: 67). Often these types of conversations went on for more than a day. Sometimes this was through text dialogue and other times participants would ask to do a Facetime video call if they were busy with household work, running errands, travelling or out with their children. In essence, as a Pacific researcher, I was giving my informants the reins of control, empowering them to respond to interview prompts according to their preference (Facetime video or text submission through private messaging or by email "volley" conversation) and when they had time (Faʻavae *et al.* 2022; Faleolo 2016, 2021).

ONLINE RESEARCH DURING THE PANDEMIC

At the time my postdoctoral research began in April 2020, I was not aware of the full extent of the pandemic and all the restrictions it would impose on my movements and my research. It was not until months later that it dawned on me how profoundly blessed I had been to have developed the e-talanoa narrative approach. It was as if I had been preparing for such a time as this. However, it was not all smooth sailing as I discovered that not everyone, including myself, was prepared for the long-haul social isolation periods.

Zoom: Later Developments of E-Talanoa
Postdoctoral research during 2020–2022 studying Pasifika mobilities to and through Australia allowed me to continue using e-talanoa with already established networks of informants living in Aotearoa and Australia. During this time the pandemic had spurred online communication and technological advancements to a new high; e-talanoa had largely transferred from the Facebook Messenger chats and Facetime video calls to the more corporate-style Zoom sessions. The culmination of technological advances like the applications Zoom and Microsoft Teams and the heightened need for social connection during the pandemic provided the perfect conditions for the ripening of e-talanoa as a research method for knowledge sharing. Enari and Matapo (2020) as well as Enari and Faleolo (2020) capture the significance of maintaining digital vā through the continual use of e-talanoa in response to the COVID-19 social and travel restrictions. Their analysis of Pasifika connections during 2020 highlighted the significance of familial and communal solidarity during the pandemic that was strengthened through online forums.

It would be remiss of me to not mention the challenges that arose, particularly in 2020, while using online forums to connect with some research participants and academics alike. In particular, the elderly cohorts were at first apprehensive when invited to join an e-talanoa. More often than not, elderly participants (aged 70 years or older) were not tech savvy and were unable to use online platforms to connect socially. For almost all other participants (aged 18 years or older) Zoom was an unfamiliar application at the start of the pandemic (early 2020) and only became a readily accessible online forum towards the end of 2020. During lockdowns, with school- or working-aged members of participants' families being home-bound, elderly and non-tech-savvy participants now gained assistance to set up and use Facebook or Zoom. It was evident by 2022 that our Pacific communities, elderly included, had embraced the usefulness of online forums for building their familial and communal connections. Figures 2 and 3 show examples of how the online forums were being used in the Pacific communities observed.

A Collaborative Pacific Research Space During the Pandemic

At the start of COVID lockdowns and travel restrictions in 2020, I was asked by Pacific academics in Aotearoa and Australia to share my understandings and praxis of e-talanoa. This was the beginning of an important and continuing dialogue whereby other Pacific researchers were able to reference e-talanoa as a way forward in their own research and practices online. The

Figure 2. Auckland-based Samoan community celebration of Samoan Language Week, online during COVID restrictions, 2020.
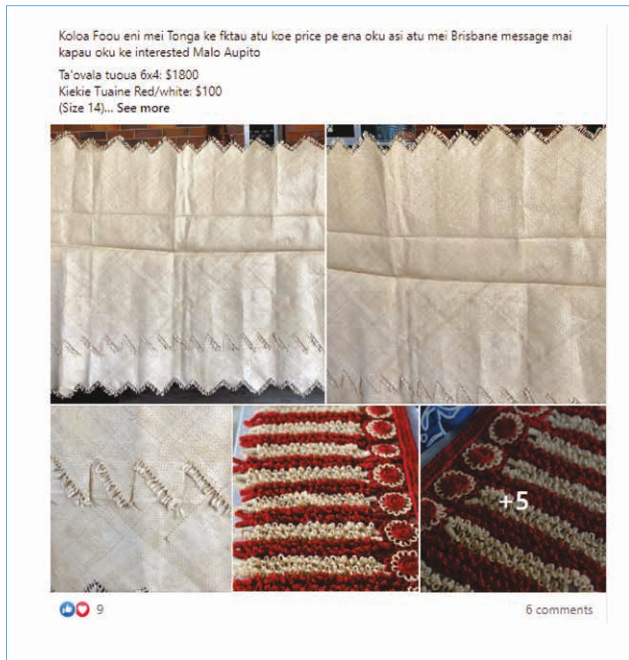
Figure 3. Brisbane-based Tongan community advertising Tongan-made crafts online, 2022.

outcome of these initial discussions gave rise to an important critical analysis of e-talanoa as an online tool, calling for further interrogation and unpacking of the method and underlying methodology. I welcomed this collaboration with my fellow Pacific researchers because I could see the need to unpack the complexities associated with e-talanoa, and to articulate why and how e-talanoa had emerged. Our co-authored work (Faʻavae *et al*. 2022) provides a valuable outline of the benefits and challenges of e-talanoa. There was a general agreement amongst the researchers involved in this project that e-talanoa was an opportunity to extend Pacific research into online spaces. However, very real concerns were expressed by researchers who were more adept in traditional face-to-face talanoa practices about the loss of māfana (warmth and emotion felt in the presence of others) when talking to a screen, particularly with someone who has turned off their camera, or not being able to read facial expressions or body language accurately. So, there is still room for improvement regarding Pacific knowledge sharing using e-talanoa.

RE-VISIONING PACIFIC KNOWLEDGE SHARING ONLINE:
MAINTAINING RESPECTFUL VĀ

The maintenance of sociocultural spaces should be an ongoing action within Pacific research, including online spaces. Ka'ili (2017) suggests that the significance of vā is in the act of maintaining and nurturing relationships and sociocultural spaces that connect Pacific peoples. Where does this respectful vā begin? With the researcher first and foremost. Understanding what respectful vā looks like, sounds like and feels like when enacted will empower us as Pacific researchers working within online spaces (Faleolo 2021).

The gradual changes that have occurred in our Pacific research contexts, as outlined in the discussion above (1990s to the present), has streamlined Pacific knowledge-sharing processes from the more traditional face-to-face talanoa to e-talanoa. However, the protocols that govern our traditional face-to-face talanoa, founded on cultural tauhi vā/tausi le vā, should still be replicated when using e-talanoa.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of our son, Nehemiah (2003–2020) and our daughter Angels (2000), both dearly missed, forever in our hearts, now resting in our Heavenly Father's arms. Psalm 91:1. Also dedicated to Thom and our growing Pacific academics: Israel, Sh'Kinah, Lydiah and Naomi. Onward and upward. 2 Timothy 1:7.

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NOTES

1. The area code 274 is used for phone numbers in the South Auckland suburb of Ōtara, where the author was raised in Aotearoa.

GLOSSARY

anga faka-Tonga	the Tongan way
fa'aaloalo	respect (Samoan)
fa'a-Sāmoa	the Samoan way
faka'apa'apa	respect (Tongan)
māfana	warmth and emotion felt in the presence of others (Tongan)
puletasi	two-piece church dress (Samoan)
talanoa	exchange of ideas or thinking through conversation and storytelling (Fijian, Samoan, Tongan)
talatalanoa	less formal approach to talanoa/conversations (Tongan)
tausi le vā	maintaining sociocultural spaces and relationships (Samoan)
tauhi vā	maintaining sociocultural spaces and relationships (Tongan)
vā	respectful sociocultural relational spaces (Samoan, Tongan)

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REFLECTIONS ON APPLYING THE FIJIAN VANUA RESEARCH FRAMEWORK IN INDIGENOUS ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT: In my dissertation research completed in 2020 on the Levuka World Heritage Site, I applied Unaisi Nabobo-Baba's Fijian Vanua Research Framework (FVRF) as a methodological and analytical framework, alongside deploying the disciplinary conventions of anthropology such as fieldwork, participant observation and the semi-structured interview. In this paper, I discuss how my positionality as a transnational mixed-race Pacific Islander, with maternal links to Fiji and an inherited anthropological path, informed my use of FVRF and my practice of Indigenous anthropology. I explain the essential aspects and principles of FVRF that I drew upon to guide my research, despite having initial reservations about potential limitations of FVRF. I describe how I practically applied FVRF to carry out research in three Fijian villages, and some successes and failures I had in trying to uphold FVRF principles. Carasala (to open the way) was a recurring theme throughout my research experience, as it was the subject of an ethnographic film that my American anthropologist father and Fijian mother produced when I was six months old. The film documented several days of ceremonies to reinstate severed kinship ties between my mother's village and their ancestral village, which they broke away from during the colonial period. While conducting fieldwork, I shared the film back with the next generation in the village as a reciprocal contribution, where I drew on FVRF to remind me of the importance of carasala as Indigenous Fijian knowledge.

Keywords: Pacific anthropology, Fijian anthropology, Pacific research methodology, Fijian research methodology, positionality, carasala

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When I embarked upon my graduate research in anthropology at the University of Hawai'i, I came across Unaisi Nabobo-Baba's Fijian Vanua Research Framework (FVRF) (2006, 2008) through my Indigenous anthropology and research methodology courses. FVRF made sense to me as a Fijian researcher carrying out research in Fiji. However, I admit I was sceptical at first and wondered if FVRF was too prescriptive, and might limit diverse voices and findings in my research on local responses to Levuka's UNESCO World Heritage designation. Having been in Fiji during two coups d'état, I was also suspicious of any approaches that might validate

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or perpetuate iTaukei (Indigenous Fijian—I use the terms interchangeably) ethnonationalist agendas that featured in Fiji's four post-independence coups d'état. I was also grappling with my identity and positionality as a "part-Indigenous" Fijian and "part-anthropologist", and understanding the extent to which I could say what I was doing was Indigenous research or anthropological research if I failed to meet all of the criteria for both. For these reasons, I thought I would keep FVRF in my back pocket when I embarked on my research, but soon found that by the nature of Fijian relationality and the protocols required of anyone doing research in Fijian villages—Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike—I was naturally following FVRF. In this paper I outline the aspects and principles of FVRF, discuss the importance of positionality in Indigenous Pacific research and describe how I practically applied FVRF to carry out research in three Fijian villages (two of which I was genealogically connected to) and some successes and shortcomings in trying to uphold FVRF principles.

THE FIJIAN VANUA RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

FVRF is a research methodology proposed by iTaukei academic Unaisi Nabobo-Baba (2006, 2008). Nabobo-Baba (2008) notes that FVRF draws ideas and inspiration from other Indigenous and Pacific research methodologies, namely Kaupapa Māori (Smith 1999) and the Tongan Kakala methodology (Thaman 1997, 2006). FVRF incorporates key cultural pillars and protocols for Indigenous Fijian research as well as principles of Indigenous and Pacific research methodology such as taking into account Indigenous values and protocols, ensuring accountability to the community, advocating for Indigenous researchers as principal investigators and obtaining permission from chiefs to carry out research.

Echoing Smith (1999), Nabobo-Baba (2006) proposes an approach to Indigenous Fijian research that is framed around Indigenous self-determination and valuing Indigenous knowledge. FVRF advocates for Fijian research that is "based and embedded (as well as framed) in Vanua identities, cultures, languages and ways and philosophies of knowledge" (Nabobo-Baba 2008: 143). Nabobo-Baba proposes that all research must recognise and be grounded in the four primary epistemological categories of vanua (land and place), lotu (spirituality, both Christian and Indigenous), i tovo vakavanua (custom) and veiwekani (kinship relationships). As described under FVRF, vanua refers to land and place and "everything on it and in it and include[s] all fauna and flora as well as waterways, oceans, mountains and forests … Land is of physical, social and spiritual significance to people" (Nabobo-Baba 2006: 81). Lotu, meaning spirituality and worship, includes the Christianity that is widespread in Fiji, but also "the Indigenous elements of spirituality that are not publicly discussed" (p. 87). I tovo vakavanua

describes the proper customs and behaviours associated with maintaining a system of kinship and life principles: "Appropriate behaviour is based on the tenet that the spiritual and the material worlds are interconnected; respect for people, resources, the ancestors, and God, governs all important behaviours and values" (p. 88). Veiwekani refers to kinship relationships and also to customary vanua relationships. Nabobo-Baba says, "Veiwekani is important because the Fijian is essentially a communal person. … When people neglect their veiwekani they lose the respect of others" (pp. 89–90). Of course, these concepts of vanua, lotu, i tovo vakavanua and veiwekani are all interrelated and dialogically reinforce each other.

Talanoa (lit. talking story) is also a key Fijian practice and methodological tool outlined in FVRF. Nabobo-Baba (2006, 2008) describes different types and levels of talanoa and associated protocol. Nabobo-Baba and other Pacific scholars have explored in depth the dimensions of talanoa as a relational method of collecting stories in Pacific research (Fa'avae *et al*. 2016; Farelly and Nabobo-Baba 2014; Tunufa'i 2016; Vaioleti 2006), and I will not discuss it extensively here. In my research, I used talanoa as a tool and method where applicable, in addition to set questions for semi-structured interviews. I mainly engaged in talanoa in participant observation settings while having kava during more formal meetings or informal after-hours socialising.

Nabobo-Baba (2008: 146–48) also outlines the particular steps involved in vanua research, which include na navunavuci (conception), na vakavakarau (preparation and planning), na i curucuru/na i sevusevu (entry), na talanoa/veitalanoa (multilogue, dialogue, monologue, story collection), na i tukutuku (reporting, analysis, writing), na vakavinavinaka (gifting, thank yous), i tatau (departure), vakarogotaki lesu tale/taleva lesu (reporting back, revisiting site for the purposes of presentation/informing chiefs and those involved of completion) and me vakilai/me na i vurevure ni veisau se na vei ka e vou ka na kauta mai na bula e sautu (transformative processes/change as a result of research reports). The research steps are carried out applying the following eight principles:

1) Research that is carried out on Fijians needs to benefit people, especially the researched community.
2) It should focus on indigenous peoples' needs and must take into account indigenous cultural values, protocols, knowledge processes and philosophies, especially those related to knowledge access, legitimation, processes of ethics, indigenous Fijian sanctions and clan "limits or boundary", all of which influence knowledge and related issues.
3) The researcher should be fluent in the Fijian Language and or dialect of the researched community. This recognises the importance of language in understanding, critiquing and verifying indigenous concepts, and in documenting aspects of their lives appropriately.

4) The use of indigenous persons in the research team as principal researcher(s) in team research situations. …
5) Respect and reciprocity: researchers need to acknowledge and affirm existing elders and Vanua structures and protocols. In terms of reciprocity, researchers must ensure there is sufficient means to show appreciation to people so that people's love, support, time, resources and knowledge freely given are duly reciprocated. Fijian gifting is appropriate here.
6) Researchers need to ensure as far as possible that local people in the research setting are co-opted as members of the research team. This is a means of building local capacity and ensures benefits in multiple ways to the research community.
7) Researchers need to build accountability into their research procedures through meaningful reporting and meaningful feedback to the relevant people and community.
8) Vanua chiefs, as well as village chiefs and elders at all levels, must give permission to all "researches" (research) done in the Vanua. (Nabobo-Baba 2008: 144–45)

FVRF provides a comprehensive guide for how to engage in Fijian research, although looking back, I think it was useful to approach FVRF with some scepticism, if only to avoid the pressure of trying to conform to the "proper" customary protocols that Nabobo-Baba (2006) describes, given that I did not live or grow up in the village or speak Fijian fluently. I would be required to follow Fijian protocol anyway to enter and move freely around the villages to carry out research. This is required of any researcher from inside or outside of Fiji. What FVRF provided was a named and packaged methodology, which espouses the values and principles that aligned well with how I wanted to approach research and anthropology.

GENEALOGIES AND POSITIONALITY IN PACIFIC INDIGENOUS ANTHROPOLOGY

In order to describe my research experience with FVRF and my approach to Indigenous anthropological research it is important to understand my positionality, or "where I am coming from". This relates to the key concept of veiwekani in FVRF. For Fijians and Pacific Island peoples, genealogy is central to how many of us narrate ourselves and position ourselves in relation to each other, across our countries and our islands (see Powell 2021 for a Cook Islands example). Tengan *et al*. (2010) affirm that for many Indigenous anthropologists from Oceania, referencing one's genealogy is "critical in gauging what one's identity is in relation to vā [space, place]" (p. 156). They explain the significance of genealogy for Indigenous anthropology within Oceania as an "index of articulation" that allows further insight into how

Native/Indigenous anthropologists interact with their particular field site or community. They add, "Genealogy is also inextricably bound with sense of place; the vā or space/place inherently determines or shapes what then becomes manifested in one's fieldwork and ethnographic data" (p. 156). Several Fijian and Pacific anthropologists have discussed their experiences navigating genealogy and the insider/outsider dichotomy in relation to one's fieldwork (Fifita 2016; Tabe 2015; Teaiwa 2004; Tengan 2005; Uperesa 2010; Vunidilo 2015).

Traditionally, in anthropology (and the academy generally) researchers did not include their own voice in the research in order to uphold a sense of scientific objectivity, nor was it considered how the researcher may influence findings through their identity, ideological biases and colonial supremacy. Consideration of one's positionality, or being "reflexive", gained traction in anthropology in the 1980s–1990s postmodern turn in the discipline (see Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus 1994; Marcus and Fischer 1986), introduced in the 1960s and 1970s by the French poststructuralists and also heavily influenced by feminist anthropology/Third World feminism (Mohanty *et al*. 1991; Moore 1988; Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974). Reflexivity has been important in the context of decolonising the social sciences, and anthropology in particular (Sinha 2021). Following this trend, many western anthropologists exercise reflexivity in their research to some extent (how effective they are at it is a question for another time).

In terms of my own positionality, I tend to describe myself as a transnational mixed-race Fijian or a multiethnic Pacific Islander. My mother is Fijian with maternal connections to Ovalau Island in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Indo-Fijian migrants from Nepal, and my father is American of Scottish and English descent. Officially, I am not considered iTaukei because my father and grandfather are not iTaukei, and therefore my mother, sister and I could not be recorded in the vola-ni-kawabula (record of patrilineal descendants), the official registry of Indigenous Fijians established by the British during the colonial period as a record to determine land ownership rights (Rokolekutu 2017). However, we are afforded some rights as vasu—a male's sister's children—a status not institutionalised like the vola-ni-kawabula (Toren and Pauwels 2015: 143–65).

At the time that I carried out my research, I could not comfortably claim that I was an Indigenous Fijian researcher/anthropologist because views of indigeneity in Fiji have been so highly influenced by colonial patriarchy. I have had Fijians tell me that I am not really Fijian because my father is not Fijian. I don't know if or when I will arrive at a place where I am entirely comfortable in my Indigenous identity, but I like David Gegeo's (2001) view of place and identity as it relates to indigeneity. Based on Solomon Islands Kwara'ae epistemology, Gegeo argues for the portability of identity and place

in resolving tensions between Native and Indigenous and non-Native in the context of Native Pacific cultural studies. The conception of place as portable

> would remove the test of one's Nativeness or Indigenousness based on where one is living, and would instead recognize the unity of Islanders wherever they are. The increasing hybridity of identity and ethnicity in the Pacific and worldwide should not prevent us from being able to make claims about parts of our identity if we feel them to be central to who we are. (Gegeo 2001: 502)

Gegeo goes on to say that arguments over degrees of ethnicity and indigeneity are "metropolitan battles that have been imported into Pacific cultures" (p. 502), implying that these approaches foster discrimination and divisiveness. The cliché holds true that "we need to recognize and celebrate rather than try to root out the diversity among us" (p. 502).

In line with Gegeo's sentiment, a conversation happened during one of my research visits to the village. An uncle told me that someone in the village hall saw me pass by during a meeting and said, "Ocei na kaivalagi ike ya?" (Who is that white person over there?). My uncle replied, "Okoya sega ni kaivalagi. Okoya na marmama ni Viti, mai Nasinu. O sega ni kila? Keitou madaga na kawani drodrolagi" (She's not a white person, she is a Fijian from this village. Don't you know our family is like a rainbow?).

To complicate my positionality even further, my father is an anthropologist, which also informs my academic genealogy, including its role in colonialism and anthropology's label as the "colonial handmaiden" (Asad 1979; Asch 2015; Sinha 2021). I choose to study anthropology in the hope of contributing to decolonising the discipline. I often say facetiously that my mother was my dad's "native informant", though that was not really the case. They were married before my dad decided to do research in Fiji. At one point during my fieldwork a family member in the village said, "Oh, so you're doing what your father did?" People remember him fondly as the anthropologist uncle from the USA. I responded yes, to keep things simple. He also did research on Ovalau (Young 1984), making my anthropological path somewhat inherited, I think mostly by osmosis, as growing up I thought anthropology was the last thing I wanted to do.

My father trained at Stanford in the 1960s and subscribed to a more positivist view of research and anthropological practice, believing that scientific objectivity can be achieved in anthropology well enough to be able to identify cultural truths. He rejected the postmodern turn that emerged in the 1980s as navel-gazing and believed anthropologists should apply their cross-cultural skills to effect positive change in the world. This position has influenced my approach to anthropology, in that I think anthropologists should always look to contribute in practical and positive ways to the people and communities they work with. His favourite *Far Side* cartoon, posted for

many years to his office door in the Oregon State University anthropology department, depicted an Indigenous person in headdress and grass skirt telling the anthropologist in his pith helmet and safari suit, "Enough about you, let's talk about me". Excessive reflexivity may detract from the goal, and it has its place in different types of anthropological approaches. But as a researcher and anthropologist with Indigenous genealogy, the findings generated by my research are inextricably influenced by positionality, so it is important that I acknowledge the lenses through which I am doing research.

My positionality as both an Indigenous person and anthropologist I think shares some characteristics with that of Indigenous Pacific anthropologist Katerina Teaiwa in her research experience. In Teaiwa's (2004) discussion of Visweswaran's (1994) notion of "homework" as a theoretical approach to research in the context of Native and Indigenous anthropology, it becomes apparent that the anthropological convention of "fieldwork" can reinforce ideas about an outsider/insider dichotomy between the researcher and the researched and the privilege wielded by academics to represent Indigenous people and reproduce colonial power relations (Smith 1999: 2; White and Tengan 2001: 389). Teaiwa says that navigating her role as a "Banaban anthropologist" while not growing up in Kiribati or speaking the language was a deeply troubling experience, as she was neither an insider nor an outsider: "I was constantly learning and unlearning what it meant to be a good Banaban and a good anthropologist, and I usually felt like I failed at both", and this led her to a sense of "homelessness" (2004: 217). Like Teaiwa, I am not an insider, nor am I a total outsider. I am not proficient in or necessarily good at navigating my indigeneity or my inherited path of anthropology. Indeed, doing anthropology as an Indigenous person, or anyone with an Indigenous background, underscores the blurred boundaries between native and non-native, insider and outsider, home and "the field", and can create conceptual dilemmas (White and Tengan 2001: 389, 397).

Epeli Hauʻofa (2008) pointed out that anthropology's othering effect and historical portrayal of Pacific people as static, transactional and without feelings deters Pacific Islanders from taking up the discipline. Commenting on the relationship between Pacific Islanders and the field of anthropology in 1975, Hauʻofa bemoaned that "after so many years of involvement, we have produced only one native anthropologist, the late Dr. Rusiate Nayacakalou", with himself as a "poor second" (Hauʻofa 2008: 8). White and Tengan (2001) expanded upon this view, saying that "[a]nthropology's valorization of outsiderness as a strategy for culture learning, seen as a core value from inside the discipline, is often seen by others as evidence of separation and detachment, of separate values and interests. Given the palpable legacy of power differentials between natives and non-natives in a region with a long and present colonial history, it should not be surprising that 'separate'

is often read as divergent and conflicting", and in a decolonial context, " 'separate' easily implies 'antagonistic' " (pp. 395–96). My opinions and relationship with anthropology may always remain mixed and complex, and I cannot totally snub the discipline or disregard its conventions because it is also a part of my genealogy and I recognise its important contributions and methodological influences across disciplines.

<div align="center">FVRF ON THE GROUND</div>

For my PhD project, I carried out research in the town of Levuka and three different villages on Ovalau, Fiji: Nasinu, Levuka Vakaviti and Lovoni. Considering my positionality as an anthropologist with Indigenous genealogy, or as an Indigenous person with an anthropological genealogy, the question of who I am doing research for and why is central. It is not merely a matter of looking at a map and deciding that a place looks like a suitable research site based on its geography. You think about your community, your family, their needs and aspirations. It may be a backwards approach to anthropological research, but it aligned well with FVRF—I first chose Levuka and Ovalau as a research site because of my connections to the place, then identified World Heritage as a major activity on the island that might affect people's lives, rather than the more orthodox method of trying to discover or test anthropological theory in a place that fits particular research parameters and serves individual academic interests.

Kanaka ʻŌiwi (Indigenous Hawaiian) anthropologist Ty Tengan discusses the importance of kuleana (rights and responsibilities) for Indigenous anthropologists, saying that rather than ethnographic research being curiosity-driven, "genealogy and *kuleana* are perhaps even more salient driving factors for Indigenous ethnographers" (2005: 248). This is also true of my research journey. My pull towards Fiji and Levuka is strengthened through my yaca (namesake) relationship with my iTaukei grandmother, Nanise Baba Daunaqaqa. Tuwere (2002: 21) explains that naming a child after someone within kin groups or clans was one way that early Fijians transmitted oral tradition. It helps to ensure continuity of the vanua, with a connection maintained through the yaca relationship. Nabobo-Baba (2006: 56) describes the significance of naming in her district of Fiji: "The cyclical concept of time is indicated by the way names are given to people and the way alternate generations are called 'tako' and 'lavo'. Loosely defined, this links the first and the third generations as being, for example, like brothers." It is common to ask who a person takes after/replaces, "who are you named after, who do you reflect?" I cannot say for sure if similar language is common in Ovalau, but the sentiment around naming is similar. A yaca relationship also comes with i tavi (like kuleana—responsibility/obligation). Namesakes can be close or distant relatives, and might be expected to have a close relationship ("like

brothers", as Nabobo-Baba says) and serve each other through reciprocal gifting or acts of service. Tengan's description of his grandmother bestowing him with kuleana resonates with my experience of a yaca relationship. He says, "*Kuleana* also chooses us rather than the other way around, and it comes as a gift from our *kūpuna* (ancestors both living and deceased)" (2005: 252). Essentially, my genealogical ties and sense of responsibility are strengthened, both consciously and subconsciously, since I carry my grandmother's name. During a research follow-up visit to the village (which ended up focusing more on family obligations) the aunt I was staying with said to me, "It must be your name. That is why you keep coming back."

Asking Permission and I Tovo Vakavanua

When I wanted to begin interviews and informal talks in the villages, according to Fijian protocol I first asked permission from the relevant chiefs of respective villages to carry out my research by making a sevusevu (offering) of a kava plant (yaqona). I was requesting permission from village chiefs and vanua chiefs to move freely around the village and speak to anyone willing to participate. I began interviews with village chiefs after obtaining permission through sevusevu to interview others in the village, and ensured that I also gathered views of village elders and women.

Nabobo-Baba points out that "[a] relation of the researcher from the matanivanua (herald) clan of the researcher's village, or a male relative of the researcher, attends as spokesman and presents the yaqona" (2006: 30). My research consultant (I chose to use the term "consultant" rather than "assistant") was a male second cousin (Nereo Lowa Cika, or Lowa), and he acted as my liaison and spokesperson. My research was not team research by university standards, but I considered my research consultant to be my guide on protocol and take the lead in establishing rapport when visiting villages and conducting interviews. I also paid him for his time and effort in supporting my project.

When asking permission from the village chief in our own village of Nasinu (we do not have a vanua chief in the village), my mother also attended. The chief at the time was her cousin—my grandmother's brother's son. When visiting Levuka Vakaviti, a village we are not connected with, with a different vanua chief, the former village chief of our village (my grandmother's other brother's son) presented the sevusevu and spoke for us. When visiting Lovoni, a village where we have strong genealogical ties, Lowa's brother-in-law, who is from Lovoni and lives there, accompanied us to the two chiefs' houses and spoke for us during the sevusevu. The Lovoni chief and others in the village knew my grandmother who had since passed away and recognised my yaca relationship to her, as well as the ancestral ties of our Nasinu clan to Lovoni, and were very welcoming.

Being familiar with Fijian culture and protocols, I knew that I needed a spokesman and liaison for village research, but it was an unusual dynamic where I was still restricted as a visitor moving about the village where all spaces are demarcated and have meaning. Male relatives accompanied me during interviews, and even when moving around the village to visit others informally, at least a child or two was sent to deliver me from one place to the next. In this context, being unable to move around independently, I felt that I was being cast as a real outsider. However, providing me with escorts and spokesmen was also a show of respect and hospitality.

I relied on my male relatives to facilitate as well as enact sevusevu ceremonies for me to ask permission, as it was not appropriate for me to try to do it myself, and I would have little idea of what to do anyway. At the same time, I held some limited economic power as well as power as a researcher to access people's time and knowledge (granted by chiefs through senior males speaking for me). I also had my mother with me not only to help nurture veiwekani and i tovo vakavanua but also to help look after my daughter, who was a baby at the time I was doing all of this. Vanua research, if done properly, takes time and money, and relationships and reciprocity are key.

Respecting Vanua Structure and Veiwekani

Since my daughter accompanied me on a few research trips to Levuka, I followed Fijian protocol to formally present the eldest child to village elders in a (simple in our case) kaumata ni gone ceremony to gain acknowledgement and acceptance of her genealogical ties to the village. After the ceremony, with formalised language and presentation of kava and other goods, it was then appropriate for her to come and go from the village. This was a way of respecting vanua and of respecting and acknowledging the status of elders in the village.

Nabobo-Baba also recognises that "[r]espectful language, appropriate choice of words, gestures, correct gifting and respectful deportment are particularly important in *vanua* research. For me to be *vakamarama* (to behave like a lady at all times) was important" (2006: 27). It is important to dress with legs and shoulders covered, and better to wear sulu jaba, formal Fijian muumuu attire that extends down the ankles. Both men and women are expected to cover their legs in the village. "Acting like a lady" sounds antithetical to gender equality, but for the purpose of visiting and gathering information, following village protocol such as this is important. It signals respect for iTaukei values, and though it could be argued these are purely colonial, I didn't feel it would be productive to agitate for feminist revolution while I was trying to establish some trust to get people to talanoa with me.

Recognising that Pacific methodologies were not addressing dimensions of gender, Naepi (2019b) developed masi (or tapa, Fijian barkcloth) methodology as a metaphor that points to the importance of the knowledge that Pacific

women hold "that will be useful for generations to come, that research is a collaborative process, and that information shared by Pacific women is sacred" (Naepi 2019a: 12). Masi methodology had not yet been proposed when I did my research, but I was aware that FVRF did not provide guidance related to access to knowledge and navigating gender dynamics during research to include women's voices. However, as a woman with awareness of gender equality issues, I was deliberate in seeking out women's perspectives. This enriched my findings in that the views and experiences of women in Levuka's World Heritage programme who were given ongoing opportunities to participate in handicraft revival were notably different from those of the men, who did not have equivalent engagement with the programme.

My mother and grandmother (before she passed away) were also important in facilitating vanua research, as things can sometimes get tricky with veiwekani and vanua politics. When travelling alone to Levuka, I am always given specific instructions to visit particular people with particular gifts, and avoid others that might be currently involved in a dispute with allied family members that I might otherwise be unaware of. I have also been warned to stay away from certain areas of the village where black magic might be practised. I listened to these warnings, and also applied my own judgement taking into account what I already knew of village dynamics. In this respect, navigating veiwekani and the insider/outsider positionality meant it was sometimes easier to stay at a lodge in town and only stop in for short visits with family. It was also difficult to write field notes and have space for reflection when staying with relatives, particularly when they hosted kava sessions in your honour and you might be expected to at least be present until the early hours of the morning; but it might be impossible to sleep anyway while the party carried on all night.

Vosa Vakaviti (Language and Translation)

Though most people interviewed could speak basic conversational English, village interviews were conducted mostly in Fijian, and interviews with non-Fijian townspeople were conducted in English. I am not fluent in Fijian but have been exposed to the language since childhood, spoke fluently as a young child and took formal lessons as an adult. Lowa assisted with simultaneous interpretation between English and Fijian, though I understood most of the Fijian and also asked the interview questions in Fijian, picking up the phrasing and rhythm of questioning after a few interviews. Later, during transcribing, I used my mother's strong Fijian–English bilingual ability to assist with translations where I was uncertain or identified comments that had not been translated during the interviews. I was glad I did this before the university requirement to have certified translators for second-language interviews came into effect.

Since the interviews were in a mix of Fijian and English, and for the purpose of recalling impressions during particular interviews and while reading interview notes, I transcribed all 55 of my village interviews myself, 74 in total including interviews with townspeople and officials. Some translations were worked out through discussion in order to come to the most appropriate translation. We sometimes called those interviewed in our own village to clarify comments, as those people could be approached informally. So the voices that came through in my research were conveyed not only by me but also through Lowa and my mother. All of this meant that I took even longer to complete my dissertation, but as a Fijian researcher intimately connected to the people and places in my research, I felt this was the best way to approach bilingual interpretation.

Vakarogotaki Lesu Tale (Reporting Back)
From the beginning of my research, I factored in time and money to return to Levuka after completing a draft of my dissertation to present my observations, collect feedback and obtain permission to publish comments from "key informants". In the early stages of my research, I shared conference papers and my research proposal with Fiji's Department of Heritage and Arts, whose staff I had been interviewing and consulting with at the time, to obtain feedback and approval to proceed from an official standpoint (I have Fijian citizenship so I did not need to obtain a research permit). I presented my findings to chiefs and interlocutors in the three villages and held a public presentation in Levuka attended by the town CEO, other town leaders and residents, generating meaningful discussion and feedback that I included in my dissertation.

Na Navunavuci (Conception), Na Vakavakarau (Preparation and Planning), Benefits to Vanua and Transformation
I did not obtain initial approval from the vanua for my overall project or work as collaboratively as I would have liked with local stakeholders to help inform my research focus and ensure it would be useful for them. This was a difficult balance as a graduate student overseas, again with not many resources, trying to complete a project that was feasible academically as well as personally while also trying to make my work relevant locally. I am not sure if my research has benefited the vanua directly or resulted in significant transformation. This principle seems to assume that it is only the researchers that are building local capacity and not the other way around. Young researchers in particular, I feel, only remotely know what they are doing, have so much to learn from the vanua and need capacity building themselves. I certainly did.

I admit that I feel like I failed to contribute more during my research, as I was unable to live on the island for an extended period of time to do research (a rite of passage in anthropology), making several visits instead. On a graduate researcher's budget, I also did not have much cash to contribute to village soli (fundraising) or other expected cash contributions. My hope was that my research could be a tool for advocacy and information, or at least as a record of conditions and sentiment at a particular moment in time, and put me in a position to contribute more into the future.

FVRF with Qualitative Methods

While FVRF was an important foundation and guide for me, alongside FVRF I needed other research tools to collect and analyse my data. These included semi-structured interviews, field notes based on participant observation, thematic analysis, domain analysis and a mix of purposive and snowball sampling to ensure a balance of gender, age and geographic location, while applying Bernard's (2006) guide to anthropological methods. To manage my interview data I used a basic transcription software, Express Scribe; qualitative analysis software like NVivo was another piece of technology to navigate that I didn't think was necessary, so I chose to keep it simple and stick with Excel for my database. While I applied FVRF principles to my research approach, I still needed the other tools of anthropology and qualitative methodology to collect and analyse my data.

Na Vakavinavinaka (Reciprocity/Gifting)

To show appreciation and reciprocity, at every visit I distributed gifts to the appropriate people, mainly in the form of food and clothing. To contribute to village livelihoods, I also made sure to purchase items from the village canteen (operated by my great-uncle), buy fish from my cousins and purchase other food grown in village gardens to take back to Suva. One important material item that I was able to contribute to my family's village was digitised copies of an ethnographic film my anthropologist father made in 1978, *Carasala Ki Lovoni* (Opening the Way to Lovoni). My father and mother narrate the video, which documents a ceremony to mark the return of the Nasinu people to reestablish lost ties to their ancestral village of Lovoni. The act of carasala in this context consisted of elaborate ceremonies that included performances of songs and dances and where items of cultural value were exchanged, such as kava, root crops, woven mats, fabric and other valuable items such as kerosene for cooking. I appear in the film as a baby and my sister as a toddler, documenting our participation in this important ceremony.

The film was filed away on 8 mm film and VHS after many years of screening in my father's Pacific Islands anthropology courses. It wasn't

until my own return to Nasinu as an adult that I resurrected, reformatted and redistributed the film on DVD to a new generation in Nasinu and Lovoni. Because I was overseas, it took about one year to finish digitisation of the VHS tape, copied over from 8 mm film in the 1990s. Within a couple of hours of the first screening of the DVD at my aunt's house where I stayed, people began appearing at the house to request copies for various families who appeared in the film 40 years ago. The younger generation of cousins who first viewed the video were eager to see their parents as children, grandparents who had passed on and great-grandparents they were named after but had never met. They watched the ceremony preparations with interest, noting the techniques the past generation used for activities such as harvesting kava and preparing pigs for the lovo (earth oven). The older generation also noted the ceremonial style of the time and expressed nostalgia over the music and singing performed after formalities were completed. Days after I left the village, I even received requests via Facebook from other relatives who heard about the DVD and wanted a copy. It is rare that family history/ vanua history would be documented on film, in addition to documentation of techniques that are no longer practised. American anthropology students had viewed the film for a decade or more and my grandmother had kept a VHS copy tucked away since the 1990s; now it was distributed to most families who took part in the ceremony 40 years ago. As the film aged, it became a rare and important source of knowledge of our vanua, veiwekani and i tovo vakavanua, as well as lotu. Later, I also presented the film to the Lovoni chief (sauturanga) and the Levuka Museum for archival purposes.

Carasala and Valuing Indigenous Knowledge through FVRF

The importance of returning to carasala, or reestablish lost ties, became a recurrent theme in my research journey, and one that represented both my anthropological and Indigenous connections to Levuka. I was reluctant to extrapolate and play with this concept as a research frame, being aware of the recent proliferation in applying Indigenous concepts and metaphor to naming systems and practices, perhaps inappropriately in some cases (Sanga and Reynolds 2017). But FVRF reminded me not to dismiss the importance of carasala to the work that I was doing, not only because carasala-ki-Lovoni was likely the most significant event in Nasinu's vanua history since colonisation but also because it is an aspect of Fijian Indigenous knowledge that I have been familiar with, and because I participated in its continuity as a baby with my parents and the village. Now as an adult, I was able to gift the film back to the next generation in the village as a reciprocal contribution, this gift in a way also serving as an act of carasala to open the way for reestablishing and maintaining our genealogical connections through applying FVRF in practice.

CONCLUSION

In reflecting on my research experience, I found that information I gathered, and the act of research itself, became inevitably organised around key cultural pillars outlined in FVRF. There were aspects of FVRF that came together for me almost subconsciously and as a matter of common sense for doing village research. While I was sceptical of how FVRF would work in practice, when I began my research in Fiji I soon found that as an Indigenous person who wanted to respect relationality, genealogy and associated protocols, I was applying FVRF anyway. It was affirming, in a way, to find that these cultural sensibilities preceded me even though I was uneasy about my Indigenous Fijian/anthropologist positionality and how I could apply FVRF.

With that said, I faced various limitations and feel that I did not perfectly execute all aspects of FVRF's prescribed approach, nor of that of anthropological methods. But I am frequently reminded in continuing interactions with relatives involved in my research that the journey does not end with a completed research project. Our ongoing relationships, reciprocity and upholding of carasala carried on from the research experience continue to play out. "Home" and "the field" are blurred for Indigenous Pacific anthropologists. We cannot disentangle the two, and most of us (most of the time) don't want to. Referring back to my aunt's comment highlighting the importance of veiwekani, or genealogical connections, and the significance of a yaca relationship, I do in fact have to keep returning because I have my grandmother's name.

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are Fijian unless otherwise stated.

carasala	open the way, reestablish lost ties
kaumata ni gone	formal presentation of eldest child to village elders
kūpuna	ancestors both living and deceased (Hawaiian)
i tatau	departure
i tavi	responsibility; obligation
i tovo vakavanua	custom
kuleana	rights and responsibilities (Hawaiian)
lotu	spirituality, both Christian and Indigenous
lovo	earth oven
masi	barkcloth
me vakilai/me na i vurevure ni veisau se na vei ka e vou ka na kauta mai na bula e sautu	transformative processes/change as a result of research reports

na i curucuru/na i sevusevu	entry
na i tukutuku	reporting; analysis; writing
na navunavuci	conception
na talanoa/veitalanoa	multilogue; dialogue; monologue; story collection
na vakavakarau	preparation and planning
na vakavinavinaka	reciprocity; gifting
sauturanga	chief
sevusevu	offering
soli	fundraising
sulu jaba	formal Fijian muumuu attire that extends down the ankles
talanoa	talking story as a way to establish and nurture relationships between people
vā	space; place
vakamarama	to behave like a lady at all times
vakarogotaki lesu tale/taleva lesu	reporting back
vanua	land and place
vasu	male's sister's child
veiwekani	kinship relationships
vola-ni-kawabula	record of patrilineal descendants
vosa vakaviti	language and translation
yaca	namesake
yaqona	kava plant

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REVISIONING THE FIJIAN RESEARCH PARADIGM

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ABSTRACT: Pacific research framings often have at their core acknowledged Pacific Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being. This positioning informs the selection of research methodologies, methods, tools and procedures. This paper explores the use of Indigenous Fijian (iTaukei) research frameworks, concepts and values presented in the literature and analyses its use within research practices. Key iTaukei concepts and values are highlighted and presented as a framework for future research within iTaukei communities. The paper explores the concept of sautu (wellbeing) and the gauna (time) and maliwa (space) associated with its attainment. Values such as veiwekani (relationship building), vakarokoroko (respect), veitokoni (reciprocity; sharing) and veiqaravi (service) are discussed in light of historical associations to the vanua (land) and the iTaukei social structure. Based on the involvement with iTaukei communities, these values are presented within a framework for research in the contemporary setting and discussions on the application of these values to research methodologies, framing and alignment. The paper concludes with a discussion on the challenges and opportunities for methodological and research growth in the iTaukei context and the contribution Fijian research approaches make to Pacific research methods and overall design.

Keywords: Indigenous Fijian, iTaukei, research paradigm, vanua, veiwekani and relationship, veitokoni and reciprocity, vakarokoroko and respect, veiqaravi and service

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Research paradigms are considered as the theoretical underpinnings of research processes, methods and methodologies. Kuhn (1970) defines a research paradigm as a "set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed" (p. 43). Paradigms also present key principles, beliefs or values that pertain to certain phenomena. According to Patton (2002), a paradigm describes a worldview through philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (ontology), ways of knowing (epistemology) and ethics and value systems (axiology).

Many scholars have written about Indigenous worldviews and paradigms (Baba *et al.* 2004; Botha 2011; Fa'avae *et al.* 2022), denoting relationality (Graham 2002), communalism (Weaver 1997) and holism through narrative and metaphoric representations (Castellano 2000; Kovach 2015). Within

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most Pacific research studies and approaches, beginning with a research paradigm involves discussions of traditional and contemporary practices and knowledge systems that influence or inform the selection and application of research methods and processes. Key Pacific symbols and metaphors have been explored, adapted and reconfigured to capture key research topics, ideas and phenomena (Johansson Fua 2021; Pulotu-Endemann 2001; Thaman 2009; Vaka 2016).

Pacific symbols and metaphors reflect Indigenous values that guide Pacific practices when carrying out research. Hart (2010) presents 11 key principles of Indigenous research, including respect, reciprocity, safety, awareness and connection. Such principles reflect holistic considerations within the Pacific about how individuals, families and communities interact and are connected. Pacific perspectives value the concept of interdependency and acknowledge life as the integration of different compartments. Traditionally, there was no distinction between the mind and the body (Sobralske 2006). This interdependence was manifested in views about health and illness. For example, in Pacific society an illness can be viewed as an imbalance of harmony within one's self (Percival *et al.* 2010). Other elements of Pacific wellbeing that relate to concepts of interdependency are factors such as culture and family. Pacific approaches acknowledge the impact of the environment, cosmology and spirituality on an individual's sense of understanding and perspective (Cammock *et al*. 2014; Capstick *et al*. 2009; Taufe'ulungaki 2004). Achieving wellbeing is often dependent on the balance of these tenets of Pacific identity.

The movement to revisit research paradigms within Fijian communities was born out of a need to share and develop a conceptual base that is supported by and culturally aligned with local knowledge bases and applicable in contemporary contexts. This discussion centres on the traditional and historical context of the iTaukei (Indigenous Fijian) worldview and the need for an iTaukei value system that can be applied to research frameworks, projects and processes involving iTaukei communities. The discussion draws on the writings of iTaukei scholars like Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, the late Ilaitia Tuwere, Asesela Ravuvu and Isireli Lasaqa on the vaka iTaukei (Indigenous Fijian way of life), Fijian Vanua Research Framework (FVRF) and iTaukei philosophical viewpoint. Their writings provide key insight into historical and traditional methods within the Fijian context. In this paper we draw on key philosophical principles from their writings and position them within a value system that research practices could be based in.

Also included in this paper are the reflections of the authors, who are both iTaukei scholars teaching and researching within the context of Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand. Radilaite Cammock is from the village of Vutia in Rewa Province with maternal links to the village of Nasolo in Ba Province.

Cammock grew up in Fiji and migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand when she was ten years old with her parents and ten brothers and sisters. Given the shifting contextual realities of her upbringing, her research practices have been driven by the intersections of traditional knowledges and sociocultural transitions and the impacts of these transitions on equity and overall wellbeing. Malcolm Andrews has tribal links to Nabukebuke and clan and subclan affiliations to Valelevu and Nabukebuke respectively. Having spent the first 16 years of his life in Fiji he recognises his insider status when carrying out research amongst Fijian communities, even though he is now residing in Aotearoa New Zealand. His work focuses on integrating Pacific knowledge systems within contemporary Pacific spaces, raising Indigenous values so that the needs of Fijians are realised. This work moves towards more meaningful partnerships with Fijians when co-designing sustainable systems that enable autonomy for self-determination. This paper shares their reflections of working with Fijian communities.

TRADITIONAL CONTEXT—VANUA

Fiji is a multicultural society with iTaukei people making up 57 percent of the population, followed by Indians at 37 percent (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2009). A fundamental component of iTaukei traditional society is the vanua (land) (Ravuvu 1983). Every aspect of life is associated with a place or vanua. Such traditions guide the way in which iTaukei communicate and behave. This connection to the vanua establishes a sense of belonging. The land provides a basis for most associations and relationships (Halapua 2003; Tuwere 2002). Without this base, people are said to be "drifting". The vanua epitomises Tamasese *et al*.'s (2010) concept of the relational self and connects the individual to their surroundings. Ryle (2010) writes:

> *Vanua* means many things to Fijians. It means land, place, clan, people, tradition and country. To talk of *vanua* is to talk not only of land in its material form, but land as Place of Being, as Place of Belonging, as spiritual quality. *Vanua* is both land and sea, the soil, plants, trees, rocks, rivers, reefs; the birds, beasts, fish, gods and spirits that inhabit these places and the people who belong there, bound to one another and to the land as guardians of this God-given world. *Vanua* is a relational concept that encompasses all this, paths of relationship, nurture, mutual obligations connecting place and people with the past, the present and the future. (Ryle 2010: xxix)

Central to the vanua is the hierarchical structure of iTaukei society. Within the context of the vanua, roles are specified and inherited from birth. For example, there are clans responsible for providing chiefs; clans responsible for installing chiefs or traditional investiture (sauturaga), chiefly spokespeople or heralds (matanivanua); the warrior clan (bati); the fisher clan (gonedau);

the priestly clan (bete), the carpenter clan (mataisau), etc. (Lal 1992; Lasaqa 1984)*.* The connection that one gains by nurturing the vanua and the structures that exist within the vanua is something many Indigenous Fijians aspire to preserve, regardless of whether they live in or away from Fiji.

Every iTaukei belongs to a yavusa (tribe). The yavusa comprises various clans (mataqali)*.* The status and rank of the mataqali in the yavusa was "determined by lineal proximity to the founding ancestor" of the yavusa (Lal 1992: 4). The chief (turaga) of the highest-ranked mataqali claimed the title of chief of the tribe, for example, turaga ni yavusa. Each mataqali or yavusa held distinct roles, such as priests (bete) or warriors (bati). Individuals' succession in their roles ensured the system survived. Alongside these hierarchical levels were organised social constructs that dictate family and tribal associations. These early structures provided governance for iTaukei society prior to colonisation (Lasaqa 1984).

The village was the most basic unit of Fijian hierarchical society and culture (Lal 1992). Processes involving decision making, economy and posterity within the village were carried out using well-defined structures and systems. These systems aimed to ensure that processes were undertaken in a respectful, effective way and maintained harmony within the village. Social structure within villages was manifested by type of dwelling and the arrangement of dwellings in the village. Status within a village could be identified by the distance individual dwellings were from the chief's residence: those closer to the chief's residence (at the highest point in the village) had a higher social status than those further away (Ryle 2010). These customs illustrate concepts of space and place.

In iTaukei homes, the highest and most private part of the house (logi) is where people sleep and is often partitioned off to indicate privacy. When receiving guests, those with higher status were invited to sit closest to the logi (Ryle 2010). These considerations of space and place and the hierarchical structure perpetuate the values of respect and loyalty that characterise iTaukei culture. Within research, entering a home or meeting people for data collection requires an understanding of the status of the participants and the place and space that the research or researcher might occupy. These considerations affect participants' overall reflection of how the research applies to their context, vanua and reality.

<div align="center">FIJIAN RESEARCH VALUE SYSTEM (FRVS)</div>

Sautu
Within the iTaukei worldview, one aspires to embrace the iTaukei philosophy of sautu (see Table 1). The term sautu denotes peace, harmony, wealth and well-being (Sevudredre 2016). Sautu is fostered through traditional rituals, protocols, feasts and celebrations. These Indigenous activities require kinship

participation through the perspective of iTaukei social cues, cultural norms and behaviour within the vanua (Cammock *et al*. 2021). Spiller *et al*. (2011) posit that sautu for iTaukei is associated with relational wellbeing and a care ethic which includes spiritual wellbeing, environmental wellbeing, sociocultural awareness, kinship and economic wellbeing.

Gauna

To begin the pursuit of sautu, one must comprehend the iTaukei philosophy of gauna (time). The two lexical words liu and muri form the basis of the iTaukei notion of time. Liu is the iTaukei word for ahead, in front of us or still to come, and the future. Muri signifies the past, what is behind us or what has previously occurred. The notions of liu and muri are understood from a Eurocentric perspective linearly in the forward or back direction. In the context of iTaukei, liu and muri take on a deeper meaning and can be used interchangeably. For example, in the saying "e na gauna i liu" (back in the early times), liu is used in the sentence to signify previous times or historically when something may have occurred. The positioning of time in this way demonstrates the value iTaukei place on the past as a tool to guide the future. In the eyes of an iTaukei, the future should not be treated with indifference, but should be one that seeks to continually develop, invest and promote sautu (Sevudredre 2016).

If one esteems, respects, honours and values the oral cultural history and historical methods, the pursuit of sautu in the future will be more effective. There is precedent and lessons from the past that can be used to better equip and prepare people for what is to come. Whilst the future is uncertain, cultural traditions within genealogy and passed down through ancestry are accessible to guide and provide insight into what the future may bring and how to successfully navigate it. Therefore, within research spaces, the concept of time for iTaukei is linked with both futuristic and historical meanings (Tagicakiverata and Nilan 2018). Research topics that consider gauna must reflect on its historical context and the future impact of the research on iTaukei and their pursuit of sautu, leaning on lessons and values that will progress iTaukei forward.

Maliwa

To effectively navigate an iTaukei context, one must understand the concept of space. Depending on the distance between items, locations or people, iTaukei words for space include vanua lala (empty space), veimama (halfway space), lomaloma (middle space), tadrua (space), galala (free space) and maliwa (space that fosters connection). Similar to Tongan and Samoan notions of space or vā (Anae 2016; Faʻavae 2018; Kaʻili 2005; Suaalii-Sauni 2017), the iTaukei concept of space is aligned with the understanding that everything is

interrelated, interdependent and interconnected. To achieve sautu, one must be conscious of the space they share with others and their contribution to its preservation. This iTaukei ethos acknowledges that space is a series of interactions rather than an independent object or isolated occurrence.

The word maliwa is often used to symbolise the word space and is typically spoken with the prefix *vei* and suffix *i*, indicating that space does not exist on its own and that it is preceded by, followed by or related to something. Veimaliwai is commonly used to define the connection between people, environment and location. Maliwa is considered the unseen element that fosters the connection between the physical, the spiritual, the past and the present. This principle recognises that all visible and unseen components of life have a level of veimaliwai, and that one can only navigate life successfully if one respects and accepts the existence of maliwa.

A term derived from the compound word maliwa is maliwa lala (empty space). Maliwa lala is a common name for the sky. When viewed through a physical lens, the word lala denotes an unoccupied location; however, the iTaukei lens understands it as the area where the birds and spirits roam. Maliwa lala is also known as the space between the vanua (land and sea) and lomalagi (heaven). There is an unseen veimaliwai connecting the vanua and lomalagi through the maliwa lala, so it may appear lala (empty) to the physical eye yet tawa (occupied) in the spiritual and iTaukei understanding.

These understandings of space indicate that the space between individuals is critical to how interactions occur and how individuals behave. Understanding those spaces as a researcher is critical in forming relationships, building trust and rapport with iTaukei communities and deepening understanding. It symbolises a connection to the spiritual realm that iTaukei value through customs and practices. Therefore, blessings before and after meetings with people or during social settings, at church or in formal ceremonies are often seen to acknowledge and open the space for connection and relationship building. Within research processes, carrying out an interview or a focus group involves understanding the space that the research topic occupies within the iTaukei cultural landscape, considerations of tabu (taboo) or cultural sensitivities and the measures needed to ensure these are addressed.

Veiwekani

Veiwekani in its broadest sense refers to the relationship between people (Cammock *et al*. 2021). Within the iTaukei context weka or vei weka refers to those related through blood lines and heritage associated with the yavusa or mataqali. Human relationships among iTaukei are characterised by where people are from and dictate acceptable behaviour between different tribes

and clans. The relationship between people based on lineage and connection to land is considered in the way Fijian people address each other, e.g., often by the type of relationship they share instead of through the use of an individual's name (Becker 1995).

Traditionally, the knowledge and practice of veiwekani within iTaukei societies were guided by principles and values that set boundaries within which individuals and matavuvale (family) operate. Veiwekani in this sense is also referred to as kinship and the structures and systems in place that reaffirm and sustain kinship ties. Such practices included solesolevaki (collaborative effort), where kin groups work together for the collective, e.g., in farming, house building or village upkeep (Nabobo-Baba 2015; Veitataa *et al.* 2020; Vunibola and Leweniqila 2021). Other values demonstrated through the practice of veiwekani include veikauwaitaki (care for each other), veisolisoli (exchanging of gifts) and veirairaici (looking out for each other). Nabobo-Baba (2015: 16) writes:

> *Veiwekani* values include *veikauwaitaki*, showing care, concern for the welfare of kin and others, or empathy in respect of others' troubles; *veikauwaitaki* may be evinced in many ways, including the gifting of land. Also, *veisolisoli*, mutual giving and reciprocal exchange of gifts; and *veirairaici*, looking out for each other in times of need.

The practice of veiwekani vakaturaga (chiefly kinship) applies to social structure and hierarchy involving chiefly ceremony and gifting. These include the gifting of land, people (often through marriage), mats and food. Within the contemporary context, kinship ties extend beyond the village setting to family members within specific matanitu vanua (confederacies), e.g., Burebasaga, Tovata or Kubuna confederacies. Many iTaukei live and work in neighbouring developed countries such as Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia and maintain veiwekani through their connections to their matanitu vanua. These kinship ties demonstrate continuous efforts iTaukei make for connections to the matavuvale, mataqali and yavusa through veiwekani.

Within the research space, similar connections and linkages are made when interacting and conversing with iTaukei. As iTaukei researchers, constant connections through veiwekani are made with participants and community members. Through the process of veiwekani, the positionality of iTaukei researchers is always posited from an insider's position. An iTaukei researcher's connections through familial ties and relationships within their matanitu vanua enable and reaffirm their place within the research space and help to reinforce notions of empathy when exploring iTaukei experiences.

Empathy is a trait Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2014) discuss as integral when carrying out research among iTaukei and especially while using

iTaukei oral communication practices like veivosaki yaga (purposeful conversation) or talanoa (oral conversation). The practice of talanoa and the reciprocal exchange needed to ensure that authentic dialogue and understanding exist occurs when researchers form and maintain veiwekani with research participants. Veiwekani, through the research process, ensures the engagement of participants at all stages, leading to greater involvement of iTaukei, improved validity of research findings and greater impact of research outcomes. This can often be seen during data collection when multiple visits or face-to-face talanoa are carried out before formal data collection begins. Similar engagement practices would also occur once data collection is completed to inform and support the community once the research is completed.

Vakarokoroko

iTaukei aspire to be selfless and hold other people's needs in higher regard than their own. Tamasese *et al.* (2010) explain that this does not mean that the individual is disregarded; rather it means that the individual is not the focus. Therefore, humility "is not the denial of the self; rather, humility is focusing on relationships and the selves in these connections" (p. 162) and is the value of the Pacific relational self. Such values provide opportunities for nurturing respect and reverence for other people. In this sense, Pacific people are encouraged to care for and protect relationships and connections with others.

> A Pacific self in relationships respects or honours God/Atua, ancestors, family names, elders, parents and other people. Respect and honour in this sense mean bringing the relational self into juxtaposition with all those entities and people with whom one has a connection, caring for them and paying tribute to them. These values are structured through Pacific etiquettes and protocols that set out proper behaviours of acknowledgement and care. (p. 162)

In iTaukei culture, respect underlies social interactions and relationships. The relationships set out by hierarchy are functional through the processes of respect. People with lower status are expected to show respect toward those of high status. Those with high status are to respect their positions, which in turn dictates their service to the people. These traditions ensure that hierarchy and therefore vanua are maintained. Showing respect toward those with higher status is a demonstration of people's loyalty and connectedness to the vanua and to each other. These ideals perpetuate communal values and ensure villagers carry out their responsibilities. Ryle (2010: 116) writes:

> Doing what is expected is a way of showing respect and also expressing and practising relationality and connectedness. This foundational concept of traditional Fijian culture is based on notions of respect of those higher in status than oneself, of knowing one's place in the system, of extending, *giving* due respect, in conduct or materially, as befits that person.

Brison's (2007) work in Fiji among villages in Rakiraki found that villagers believed that respect for culture and tradition and maintaining their customs set them apart from other ethnicities and was needed to ensure that their culture survived and flourished in multicultural Fiji. Within research, vakarokoroko (respect) dictates the power balance between the researcher and the participant. Exhibiting vakarokoroko with iTaukei participants signals that the researcher is acknowledging the participants' position in the village or research space and the knowledge and experiences they bring to the research. It also pushes researchers to present themselves inconspicuously in more humble and unassuming ways, eager to learn and listen. Furthermore, preset conceptual frameworks or rigid interview questions or schedules may impede the researcher's ability to be flexible and open to understanding the lived experiences of participants.

Veitokoni

Veitokoni signifies the support and reciprocal exchange between individuals that maintain and strengthen bonds and kinship ties. Reciprocity ties in well with respect as it provides physical representation of place, loyalty and connectedness to people, relationships and the vanua (Ryle 2010). Lasaqa (1984) discusses reciprocity in both the vertical and lateral senses. Among iTaukei culture, vertical reciprocity refers to interactions between different levels of social and cultural hierarchy (Lasaqa 1984). In earlier times the act of reciprocating vanua, good will and community was initially carried out through the gifting of food and valuables. During these times, chiefs were offered the first and best crops of the harvest (lala) (Lal 1992). Chiefs were able to call on village members for labour when the chief needed it. Commitment to the chief showcased iTaukei's loyalty and respect for the structures and hierarchy of iTaukei society.

Ideals of veitokoni transcend beyond hierarchical vertical relationships into lateral interactions (Lasaqa 1984). These transactions are often perpetuated through ideals of sharing and communality. Lateral reciprocity is showcased through hospitality where iTaukei are welcoming, kind and loving. These values generate the communal nature in which iTaukei operate. They provide iTaukei with a responsibility to support and look after other members in the community. Lasaqa (1984: 27) writes:

> Fijians belie[ved] in communal living, in doing things as a group and in the joys and satisfaction obtained from the fellowship of others in the village. Even in cases where a villager [lives for a few days or weeks away for work] … the villager continues to contribute to village activities and plays his part accordingly in the social and ceremonial life of his village.

To ensure the wellbeing of the community, veitokoni ensures that needs are met and that resources are available and used appropriately within the village and community. It further shows an individual's commitment to the community and the vanua. If individuals do not choose to adhere to values of veitokoni their standing in the community may diminish, and this may affect their sense of belonging and wellbeing. For iTaukei who live away from the island and the hierarchy of village life, forming a community is based on the lateral reciprocal nature of relationships and community. Therefore individuals who live in the diaspora congregate to form their own versions of the "village" where members support each other and uphold iTaukei values of veitokoni (Delaibatiki 2016).

Within research, veitokoni or reciprocity is key in establishing and maintaining relationships between researchers, participants and those involved in the research project. Veitokoni is also considered "knowledge sharing" or the ability of those involved in the research to benefit from the research being undertaken. Specifically:

> Veitokoni, or the notion of "knowledge sharing", ensures that participants involved in the research process will be supported in their endeavours to carry out their roles in their communities and extends to ensuring that those involved directly benefit from the aims of the research. Thus, there is onus on the researcher to ensure that Fijian values and belief systems benefit from, and are included in, the research processes and methodologies. (Cammock *et al*. 2021: 122)

These practices lead to greater inclusion of iTaukei during dissemination processes, and a greater understanding of the impact of the research being carried out.

Veiqaravi

Veiqaravi is a phrase with favourable connotations related to hospitality, service and honour. Its root is qara, which means to serve or even worship. Veiqaravi denotes an active and respectful interaction with the individual or group being served (Hooper 2013). This translation of veiqaravi involves two parties who each play a role for the purposes of a common good. The

concept of veiqaravi is highly regarded in the iTaukei context and is practised every day and on every occasion. Veiqaravi can also be explained as the art of giving. It is offering one's time, service, resources and blessings, which is intrinsic to iTaukei (Miyazaki 2005).

Veiqaravi comes with its unique practices and expectations. It is knowing when to serve, where to serve, how to serve and why someone serves. All members of the vanua are aware of their identities, duties and roles and use their traditional knowledge and abilities to interact in harmony with their environment, to produce a vanua that is more robust and sustainable. In the vanua, iTaukei are assigned responsibilities for the successful administration of the vanua.

Veiqaravi has evolved as a result of migration and exposure to non-Indigenous culture. Contemporary veiqaravi differs slightly, but the art of giving, service, hospitality and love (loloma) remain at its core. This is evidenced in the tourism business in Fiji which is prospering due to the inherent nature of veiqaravi, and its emphasis on authentic service and hospitality. Veiqaravi ceremonies that colonial authorities judged inapplicable to tourists have become an emblem of Fijian local hospitality. The commercialisation of this Indigenous ritual rendered the kava (yaqona) ceremony integral, symbolising the intrinsically friendly attitude of iTaukei (Miyazaki 2005).

Another classic example of contemporary veiqaravi is the idea of remittances. These are sent by people who permanently or temporarily live in the diaspora and continue to serve their extended family at home. This includes contributions to ceremonies, funerals, education costs and other vanua obligations requiring a collective effort. Veiqaravi is frequently associated with veivakalougatataki (blessing). When iTaukei continue to pursue sautu for the vanua, the vanua blesses them. Beyond worldly blessings, the concept of blessing encompasses generational and spiritual blessings.

When considering the process of veiqaravi through research, the projects, topics and processes used within research need to consider the benefits that iTaukei will garner from being involved. In line with Smith's (2012) notions of sharing and Nabobo-Baba's (2008) discussion on accountability, the research outcomes are to be shared with iTaukei, and research directions and initiatives are to be implemented to serve their communities.

Table 1 provides a full summary of the values discussed highlighting the research implications of the FRVS amongst iTaukei communities.

Table 1. Fijian Research Value System (FRVS) outlining values, principles and key research processes for Fijian communities.

Research value	Principles	Research process
Sautu	Pursuit of peace, harmony, wealth and overall wellbeing	– A holistic approach is considered, including culture and spirituality
Gauna	Present, past and future notions of time	– Leaning on historical understandings and realities and considering its implications for the present and the future – Consideration of future implications of the research process and outcomes
Maliwa	Occupied space where all are interrelated, interdependent and interconnected	– Space between researcher and participant for relationship building – Connection to the spiritual realm through iTaukei customs and practices
Veiwekani	Developing and maintaining relationships and kinship ties	– Understanding of kinship ties and the social positioning of researchers and participants – Exhibiting empathy through the research process – Search for mutuality and connection between the researcher and participant and greater involvement of the research participant and community in the research
Vakarokoroko	Nurturing respect and reverence for others	– Acknowledgement of the researcher's position within traditional and social hierarchies – Ensuring researchers are culturally competent – Operating with humility with research participants and throughout the research process
Veitokoni	Reciprocal exchange and support for individuals, family and community	– Reciprocal engagement in relationships – Commitment to ensuring the wellbeing of iTaukei and ongoing support after research processes are completed
Veiqaravi	To serve or respect others; the art of giving of one's resources, time and energy	– Serving iTaukei through the research process by addressing key issues or equities – Providing gifts and hospitality through loloma for their time and involvement through the research – Ensuring researcher accountability by sharing findings and outcomes with iTaukei

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Throughout this paper key values and principles are presented that have guided the way in which research within iTaukei communities both within Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand have been carried out (summarised in Table 1). Although key values and principles presented have been based on traditional iTaukei structure and systems, it is argued that they also permeate contemporary Fijian social and research settings. The understandings of sautu and the importance of time and space in the pursuit of harmony and balance among iTaukei society provide some insight into how researchers might navigate topics that have historical meaning and bring a broader understanding of relationships and reciprocal engagement. It is noted that the values presented are not an exhaustive list of principles but rather demonstrate the building blocks that contribute to the basis of a Fijian research paradigm that could be further explored. For example, other tenets of time are needed that include shifting the restrictive nature of research processes and timelines to accommodate more flexibility when working with iTaukei in the context of "Fiji time". Further research may look at the application of the FVRS within research methods and methodologies. The use of the iTaukei values in this way supports the continuous development of iTaukei knowledge and reinforces their relevance and application within contemporary societies both within Fiji and in the diaspora.

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are Fijian unless otherwise stated.

bati	warrior; warrior clan
bete	priest; priestly clan
galala	free space
gauna	time
gonedau	fisher clan
lala	empty; unoccupied; first and best fruits of the harvest offered to chiefs
liu	ahead; in front of us; still to come; the future
logi	the highest and most private part of the house
loloma	love
lomalagi	heaven
lomaloma	middle space
maliwa	space that fosters the connection between the physical, the spiritual, the past, and the present
maliwa lala	empty space; sky; space between the vanua and lomalagi

mataisau	carpenter clan
mataqali	clan
matanivanua	chiefly spokesperson or herald
matanitu vanua	confederacy
matavuvale	family
muri	the past; what is behind us; what has previously occurred
qara	to serve; worship
sautu	relational wellbeing and care ethic denoting peace, harmony and wealth
sauturaga	traditional investiture
solesolevaki	collaborative effort where kin groups work together for the collective
tabu	taboo; cultural sensitivities
tadrua	space
talanoa	oral conversation
tawa	occupied
turaga	chief
vā	concept of relational space (Samoan, Tongan)
vaka iTaukei	Indigenous Fijian way of life
vakarokoko	respect
vanua	land
vanua lala	empty space
veikauwaitaki	care for each other
veimaliwai	engagement, connection between people, environment and location
veimama	halfway space
veiqaravi	service; art of giving
veirairaici	looking out for each other
veisolisoli	exchanging of gifts
veitokoni	reciprocity; knowledge sharing
veivakalougatataki	blessing
veivosaki yaga	purposeful conversation
veiwekani	relationship building; kinship
veiwekani vakaturaga	chiefly kinship
weka/vei weka	those related through blood lines and heritage
yaqona	kava
yavusa	tribe

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NEGOTIATING TĪVAEVAE AND TALANOA METHODOLOGIES IN EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REFLECTION

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ABSTRACT: The diverse nature of Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand means that Pacific educators and researchers regularly negotiate multiple identities, voices and cultures in their work and research. Often researchers in this field emerge from an education or teaching background and wish to explore the questions they have formulated about their local or wider Pacific community with regards to education. This paper offers a reflection from a Cook Island Māori researcher who has negotiated the use of the talanoa and tīvaevae methodologies as part of his participatory action research doctoral study. The researcher's experience indicates a dynamic synergy between the two methods, as they pertain to the Pacific educational research field in New Zealand. The reflection offered aims to help inform and support other researchers, Pacific and non-Pacific, in their negotiation of the diverse landscape that this field presents.

Keywords: Pacific education, Pacific research methods, Indigenous education, Cook Island research

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Pacific research methodologies have risen to prominence in Aotearoa New Zealand educational research in recent decades, undertaken largely by researchers who desire to remain connected to culture, identity and practices that flow from culture (Naepi 2016; Smith 2012; Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea 2014). These methodologies are critical for both Pacific and non-Pacific researchers as they give priority to the diverse ontological and epistemological perspectives of various Pacific cultures and act as reference points to help us locate ourselves within the wider narrative of research in this region (Naepi 2016). This article uses my doctoral research as a case study to reflect on two specific Pacific research models, tīvaevae and talanoa, and the synergy that resulted from using them collaboratively.

I chose the tīvaevae model in my research to culturally locate myself as a Cook Island researcher among the diversity of Pacific peoples in the school community where I am located. The tīvaevae research model and theoretical framework is an Indigenous model that is based on the process of creating tīvaevae (traditional artistic quilts) in the Cook Islands and that has been slowly emerging over the last two decades as a Pacific research

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model (Futter-Puati and Maua-Hodges 2019; Powell 2013; Te Ava and Page 2018). This method was pioneered by Teremoana Maua-Hodges and further developed by several academics connected to the Cook Islands, including Te Ava (2011; Te Ava and Page 2018), Hunter (2022) and Futter-Puati (Futter-Puati and Maua-Hodges 2019). The tīvaevae model has a clear process and a specific set of values attached to it (discussed later in this article) that align with other Pacific research methods, including the talanoa model. From my perspective as a researcher, there is a relationship between both the concept of co-creation and the practical interaction between persons when using tīvaevae and talanoa.

Alongside tīvaevae, I also chose to use talanoa as a research method to respect and support my participants to have a strong voice and to story their experiences in the study. The talanoa method is "an existing cultural practice of the Pacific" (Fa'avae *et al.* 2016: 140) and relies on the development of strong relationships between the researcher and the participants (Vaioleti 2006). The concept of talanoa (open conversation) encourages participants to story their experiences through open conversation. With talanoa, the focus of the conversation is controlled by the "interests of the participants themselves and their immediate surroundings and worldviews" (Johansson Fua 2014: 99). In my research I sought to adapt talanoa to be fit for purpose in the community in which I was present—a community that is not strictly governed by a singular set of cultural norms or protocols but rather has a more fluid and dynamic reality, with multiple worldviews present in a Pacific school community.

CASE STUDY: MY DOCTORAL RESEARCH —EMPOWERING PACIFIC VOICE

While there has been a growing body of academic literature concerning Pacific educational issues at a national level in New Zealand, there remain significant calls for academic, social and pastoral improvement in the education sector for Pacific learners and their families (Chu *et al.* 2013; ERO 2013; Ministry of Education 2020). This indicates that the need for practical solutions is something that requires urgent attention across New Zealand, and particularly for the Pacific community in Christchurch, where Pacific communities experience minority status (Reason and Bradbury 2008). Currently the Pacific student, family and community voice is limited in terms of education and engagement in Christchurch secondary schools. The aims of the study included gathering the voices of Pacific students and parents, alongside teacher voices, in order to inform school approaches around curriculum, pastoral care and policy. As I wanted to place the voices of the participants at the centre of the data collection process, talanoa sessions were conducted with the following three groups within the Pacific school community:

– Students representing a range of ages and Pacific ethnicities at Shirley Boys' High School,
– Members of the broader Shirley Boys' High School Pacific community, for example, parents, and
– Both Pacific and non-Pacific teachers within Shirley Boys' High School.

I will also be reflecting on the process of engaging with the community voice in order to inform discussion about how schools are better able to listen and respond to Pacific voices.

This study employed a qualitative community-based participatory action research approach (Reason and Bradbury 2008) with group and individual talanoa sessions as the main form of data collection. In their working definition of participatory action research Reason and Bradbury (2008) state that it "seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people" (p. 4). It "aims to produce knowledge and action directly useful to people, and also to empower people through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge" (Shortall 2003: 225). This study uses tīvaevae and talanoa to underpin the participatory action research design. The tīvaevae model formed the basis of the overarching approach and of developing my own positionality, while the talanoa method was employed for the data collection processes.

POSITIONALITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT
OF A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

I come from a culturally mixed background with a diverse European ethnicity and Pacific (Cook Island Māori and Tahitian) heritage. This hybridity has contributed strongly to my teaching and research practice and the way I live my life. The weaving of different cultures, traditions and worldviews that shape my own identity allow me to walk with confidence in the world of education and be connected to my community. I have had a 14-year teaching career in which pastoral care of Pacific students and the leadership of cultural development and Pacific family engagement were key elements. In this work I have learned that the diverse nature of Pacific communities in New Zealand demand that our ways of teaching and researching adapt to and respect participants' cultural and ethnic worldviews.

At the outset of my doctoral research, I was encouraged by my supervisor to explore different methodological approaches. At that stage in the journey, I was more interested in moving through the process quickly to enter what I perceived to be the more interesting and important task of collecting the data and making use of it. The need to develop an appropriate methodological framework and to inform my actions by deeper thinking around the "how" allowed me to work on finding my place in relation to Pacific research

methodologies and give myself space, as an emerging researcher, to adjust my approach and position at the forefront of both my own identity and that of the participants in my research. This also ensured a stronger sense of cultural safety for me and participants as the study progressed because we were able to bring our ways of thinking and acting into it. I believe this will mean a greater impact when my doctorate is completed.

As an ethnically diverse New Zealand–born man of Cook Island Māori descent, living in the diaspora and relatively isolated from my cultural roots, positionality in relation to research methods has been a thought-provoking and motivating process. My original intention to include the talanoa method in my data collection was centred on a relational and voice-oriented focus in my research, which, as a teacher, made sense to me. However, in making these research decisions, my supervisor challenged me by asking where I, and my Cook Island Māori Pacific identity, were positioned within the study. While he was aware that most of my participants would be Samoan and Tongan, thus making talanoa a sensible method to include, he prompted me to remember that I was not Samoan, Tongan or Fijian—cultures from which various forms of talanoa emerge—and that I should explore a Cook Island methodology such as tīvaevae.

CONNECTING THE RESEARCH DESIGN WITH THE RESEARCHER

Traditionally, tīvaevae are crafted by mamas, or elderly women and matriarchs, their skilful hands giving visual and tangible effect to places, occasion, memory and ceremony. One has only to visit the communal locations these mamas frequent, such as Punanga Nui Market in the Cook Islands or Cook Island community centres in New Zealand, to see the ongoing creation of tīvaevae. Tīvaevae are often talked about as a legacy—as items to be left behind for the next generations, typically by these Cook Island matriarchs (Tagata Pasifika 2019). Tīvaevae expertise does not currently exist in my immediate family, with previous generations producing examples of this craft (for an example see Fig. 1). As a result, I had access only to basic knowledge about tīvaevae. I made the decision to travel to Porirua, in Wellington, to visit Teremoana Maua-Hodges, the architect of the methodological framework based on this Cook Island quilting tradition. This time spent with her helped develop my thinking around tīvaevae, particularly in relation to my research.

Interestingly, as part of the wider dialogue we have as a family, my brother and grandmother, aged 26 and 84 respectively, have recently begun making tīvaevae (see Figs 2 and 3): not as a simple hobby used to keep one's hands busy and because there is nothing else to do but rather, as is customary, to use as part of an upcoming occasion, specifically to honour our cousin and grandson for his marriage. With the intergenerational gaps that have

opened within my family due to migration and subsequent cultural isolation, this practice, both physically in the quilting sense and metaphorically in terms of my research, is helping to provide a platform for restoration and cultural reorientation.

PACIFIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Pacific research methodologies have several key elements in common. As Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019) state, "these commonalities highlight that Pacific and Pasifika communities share semiotic and representational perspectives rooted in Pacific realities" (p. 191). Two of these commonalities—Pacific values and Pacific metaphorical language—as they relate to tīvaevae and talanoa will be briefly outlined here, as will an acknowledgement of the critical lens that can be employed when working with them.

Pacific Values

Understanding and appreciating Pacific values is critical in working with Pacific peoples and Pacific research methodologies. This is not to imply that there is a homogeneity among values systems across the Pacific, even if there are multiple expressions of common values that are found in the various communities (Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). These value expressions, which have arisen out of the cultures and ethnic traditions in Pacific nations, have helped root Pacific communities in the diaspora. In countries such as New Zealand and Australia, these communities use them to emphasise a strengths-based approach to working with their people in education (Ministry of Education 1996). When it comes to Pacific research methodologies, values underpin much of the process that is developed as part of the actions undertaken (Enari 2021; Fa'avae *et al*. 2016; Naepi 2016). Values such as reciprocity, respect, family, love, service, spirituality and collectivism connect communities and provide a foundation on which to build and conceptualise new traditions in environments that are different from the traditional homelands (Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). Both the tīvaevae and talanoa methods have these underpinning values, offering a research design whereby the researcher views the participants through the lens of these values.

Pacific Metaphorical Language

Pacific research methodologies are based principally around imagery that links to practices, concepts or realities present in the Pacific and, being ethical practices, are used to guide research (Sanga and Reynolds 2017; Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). This metaphorical approach strengthens the accessibility of the methodology by grounding the research process, or aspects of it, in familiar customs or traditions. For the Pacific researcher, this

offers a tool through which to culturally locate themselves within the research process, a way to anchor their identity and a way to engage and empower Pacific participants. If the researcher engaging with a Pacific research methodology is unfamiliar with or not associated with the specific Pacific practices that underpin that methodology, this metaphorical approach offers a window into a deeper connection with Pacific epistemologies, potentially developing the researcher's approach and growing an understanding and appreciation of Pacific cultural approaches in research. However, risks of engaging with Pacific research methodologies in this way may include the researcher making assumptions about the community they are working with, appropriating cultural knowledge or misusing the method due to limited knowledge of the specific practice. Care should be taken in any work that engages with Pacific research methods.

IMPACT OF THE TWO RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES ON MY RESEARCH

The following sections will detail how the use of the tīvaevae and talanoa models affected the study with reflections on their potential use in future research. Both tīvaevae and talanoa worked in conjunction with the participatory action research approach. The tīvaevae model supported my work in the field as a researcher, and talanoa was the method through which I engaged in respectful and open data collection with the community.

The Tīvaevae Model—A Cook Island Community Approach
As briefly described in the introduction, the tīvaevae method reflects the tīvaevae construction process. This is a creative quilting or textile creation process that involves unique ideas and creations and results in significant gifting and bestowal, something that is widespread in Pacific cultures (Rongokea 2001). An example of this is the various gifting of 'ula (necklaces), lei (flower neck garlands) and other garlands that one might see at airport arrivals, university graduations, weddings and other events. In Cook Island culture, one might consider tīvaevae to be gifting par excellence.

There are three specific elements to tīvaevae creation, as outlined by Teremoana Maua-Hodges (Te Ava 2011). These three dimensions reflect the process undertaken by the researcher to develop a powerful "creation", so to speak. The ko'iko'i is the gathering of patterns and ideas to inform the creation of the tīvaevae. In research, this reflects the initial co-construction of the research objectives and questions: these emerge from the community and the discourse as opposed to merely the researcher. The tuitui is the sewing of the pattern onto the canvas—the physical making of the tīvaevae within the community of expertise. In research this reflects the collaborative data collection that occurs and the data analysis which forms the concrete

product of the research work. Lastly, the 'akairi'anga is the reflection on the completed creation and offering of the tīvaevae to others as a gift. In research, 'akairi'anga is the co-assessment or evaluation of the final product that will be "gifted" or given to the recipients—in this case the Pacific community within which the research is conducted—for their use and benefit.

Alongside the three elements of tīvaevae creation, there are specific values that accompany the process. In my research approach, I view these values as a primary guide for the researcher, as they complement my own Pacific positionality, particularly in relation to the participants. These are tā'okota'i (collaboration), 'akairi kite (shared vision), tū 'akangāteitei (respect), tū 'inangaro (relationships) and 'uri'uri kite (reciprocity). The values also serve as a strong interface between the Pacific research approach, tīvaevae and talanoa in my case, and the research design of participatory action research. These I will discuss in my reflection on the process.

Figure 1.   Example of a tīvaevae ta'ōrei (patchwork tīvaevae). Created by my great-great-grandmother, Nitika Kea, ca. 1975.

Koʻikoʻi—The Gathering of Patterns

The koʻikoʻi phase represents a beginning, the start of collaboration, undertaken by reaching out and searching for connections, motivations and ideas. What is achieved in the process of koʻikoʻi will underpin the creation of the tīvaevae and will form the basis of the legacy that outlasts the creators of the tīvaevae (Rongokea 2001). Te Ava and Page (2018: 72) state:

> The *koikoi* process required knowledge and experience in planning, gathering the appropriate materials at the right time and at the right place and ensuring that the pattern tells a story of Cook Islands history. These stories are *tapu* (sacred), central to the values of Cook Islands cultural practice and made ready for crafting into a *tivaevae*. The significance of this phase is that Cook Islanders learn to create their own way of understanding of the world in which they live. They, in effect, bring their own knowledge and investigate how the "patterns" fit together and then are evaluated for success.

At the outset of my research, I had my own motivations and ideas for what it was that I wanted to study and what I wanted to delve into as part of my doctoral journey. However, in consultation with my supervisor, we determined that as part of my initial research design, I needed to survey the Pacific education landscape. In *Decolonizing Methodologies* Smith (2012: 9) states that "research with Indigenous peoples can be more respectful, ethical, sympathetic and useful". Following this, my research needed to engage with the community from the beginning, and through a gathering of ideas or questions that helped me understand their priorities, I would be better able to focus my own research.

In the koʻikoʻi phase of my research design, I conducted seven initial talanoa with different members of the wider Pacific community, listening to their voices. They were open conversations, without a detailed preprepared question framework. The topic of the conversation was experiences of Pacific peoples in secondary education in Canterbury and what we would like to know about it. The following topics were discussed: their own cultural and educational background, their connections to education, their aspirations and hopes for young Pacific peoples, their perspective on how good talanoa could be conducted and what they felt needed to be explored in Pacific education. These conversations helped me formulate my research problem and methodological approach. They revolved around the following themes:

– Pacific values in the context of teaching and learning,
– partnerships between the school and Pacific communities (for example, churches),
– relationships between the school and Pacific parents and students, and
– the environment, both physical and social, in which schooling occurs.

These themes formed the basis of my research questions and objectives, giving me a clear way forward into the research.

Figure 2. The beginnings of a tīvaevae mānu (appliqué tīvaevae) in progress. Created in 2022 by my brother, Josua Te Maru Ariki Houghton, and grandmother, Dinah Sullivan (nee Rongo Kea).

Figure 3. Tīvaevae mānu detail in the 'akairi'anga phase.

Tuitui—The Making of the Tīvaevae
The tuitui process is where theory and practice meet and the act of creating begins. In the creation of a tīvaevae, the finished product is not achieved in a single session, but rather a collaborative effort is undertaken that will take many hours and may span several months or a year, depending on the complexity of the patterns and the size of the creation (Rongokea 2001). Technical skill and problem solving are the essential elements in this phase.

At this point in my research, I entered what I thought was going to be the relatively simple exercise of collecting the data, doing so in an environment in which I had lived and worked for many years. However, the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic had arrived, bringing with it various complexities such as lockdowns, limited group gatherings, mask use and physical distancing. COVID-19 will be discussed further in its impact on talanoa; here it is important to note its specific impact on the tuitui phase of the research. As mentioned above, the tuitui process involved data collection in the form of talanoa interviews and talanoa group sessions with Pacific students and parents, as well as teachers of Pacific students, at the school in which I taught in Christchurch, New Zealand. At the outset of each participant engagement, a brief explanation was given to the participants on tīvaevae and talanoa, which helped them understand the research process that they were involved in. Participants responded positively to the approach, and the resulting talanoa was rich.

'Akairi'anga—Reflection and Offering
The 'akairi'anga or gifting of the finished piece represents the completion of the creation process, with a view to the legacy that it embodies. The tīvaevae is now presented and can be seen by all, showcased and celebrated (Rongokea 2001). This step involves returning to the community and making the offering, understanding the reciprocal nature of the gift. At the time of writing, my research is on the cusp of the 'akairi'anga phase. The intention is to present a copy of the thesis back to the school's board of trustees as well as its Pacific staff, in order that the findings of the study may be put to use and the voices of the participants respected and treasured. Participants involved will be given a summary of the thesis and a reflective talanoa will be held. The tīvaevae methodology recognises the special relationship between the researcher and the participant, one characterised by the values that underpin the tīvaevae creation process. This comes to the fore in the 'akairi'anga phase.

Tīvaevae Method Values
I offer the following explanations of how my research approach aligns with the values connected to the tīvaevae methodology (Te Ava 2011).

Tāʻokotaʻi (Collaboration): This project was collaborative, with different parties coming around the table to offer their perspectives as part of the initial design, including members of the school's Pacific community. Just as tīvaevae are created by multiple hands, the aim of empowering Pacific voices in this research is to seek to be inclusive of the different hands that are involved in Pacific student schooling.

ʻAkairi Kite (Shared Vision): When completed, this thesis will be a shared vision for Pacific voice in secondary education, bringing together the voices of student, community and teacher to inform thinking about school approaches, values and environment and to work towards better outcomes for Pacific communities.

Tū ʻAkangāteitei (Respect): There were many occasions throughout the study that called for respectful listening, and the completed creation needs to be respectful of the voices of the participants. Just as tīvaevae are given to honour the recipients, so will the gifting of the final product be done from a position of respect for the community from which the voice has emerged.

Tū ʻInangaro (Relationships): Supporting the talanoa approach, the dialogue in the talanoa is built on existing relationships and networks. Just as creators of the tīvaevae gather and deepen bonds through their work, the talanoa between researcher and participants strengthens both research and the community. In the articulation of their voice, participants have in the researcher an active listener and an advocate.

ʻUriʻuri Kite (Reciprocity): The circular nature of this research means that what is gifted to the researcher by way of participation and voice is gifted back to the community from which it came.

Having these values underpinning the research process offered a way in which to visualise the study as a whole, particularly with the interconnectedness among participants.

The Talanoa Method—A Pacific Dialogical Approach
Talanoa is a phenomenological research method that focuses on understanding the participant experience in relation to certain events (Vaioleti 2006). The talanoa method is derived from Pacific philosophy, values and cultural traditions, and is "orientated towards defining and acknowledging Pacific aspirations while developing and implementing Pacific theoretical and methodological preferences for research" (Vaioleti 2006: 25). This can be difficult to achieve, with various processes and restraints around research installed by universities often creating barriers to talanoa in cultural terms (Faʻavae *et al*. 2016).

The central aims of my research are to examine the barriers that often exist for Pacific students in traditional schooling methods in New Zealand, and to allow the voices of Pacific families and students to emerge. This is an area of engagement that schools often find challenging, with school leaders and teachers often experiencing a disconnect between themselves and Pacific communities (Chu *et al.* 2013; Chu-Fuluifaga *et al.* 2022). Vaioleti (2006) describes how the talanoa method aims to connect to the "lived realities" (p. 22) of Pacific cultures and peoples and supports the researcher to collect authentic qualitative data in a respectful manner that creates space for the participants.

Talanoa Considerations

One consideration in the use of this approach is the growing cultural hybridity and intergenerational disconnection that many Pacific people experience (Chu-Fuluifaga *et al.* 2022). In my project, there were participants who had not necessarily previously experienced talanoa as a named concept or had never come across the explicit use of the word. In circumstances like this, I carefully explained talanoa, in an appropriate way for the different participant groups, and attempted to link it to ways of talking together that they were familiar with. This emphasises the need for researchers to have a strong understanding of the community in which they work, and to build flexibility and processes for clarification into the research design (Fa'avae *et al.* 2016). This is so that the research can support and enhance Pacific communities (Sanga and Reynolds 2017).

Another consideration is that talanoa is identified as a pan-Pacific approach, which implies a relative homogeneity across Pacific cultures and lexicons, risking an embodiment of a colonial or historical western perspective or approach (Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). In order to avoid these assumptions, I explained talanoa in Samoan- and Tongan-specific contexts, as well as giving examples of similar practice in my own Cook Island context. In my own research, I have relied on the relational nature of the methods used. The talanoa method, as applied in my study, was conducted with participants with whom I had cultivated long-standing relationships over many years, if not with a specific individual then with the community from which they emerged. As an ethical consideration, I took steps in order to try to lessen the risk around power imbalances, given that I was still a teacher at the school. So, while there were risks and challenges associated with this approach, such as power imbalance or feelings of intimidation among participants, I felt that it aligned with the assertion of Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2012: 5) that "only with prolonged periods of participant-observation can the trust and mutual respect required of valid *talanoa* research be developed. Further, the long period of residence is necessary for our participants' multiple 'truths' to be exhumed." They go on

to ask: "Is the mere effort to apply this approach enough or do short stints in the field have the potential to produce potentially invalid or even harmful research data?" (p. 5). My experience was that my long-term presence and work in the specific community that constituted my research field meant I was able to draw on shared understandings or concepts while in the talanoa. My connections with the students in the talanoa enabled me to encourage their thinking when they were unsure or shy in the discussion and gave them a level of assurance that I had some understanding of their experiences. When it came to parent participants, there was a mix of parents who had been at the school for a year and some who had had an association with the school for a decade. In all cases, I was younger than the parents. Each was approached in a specific way, and I attempted to engage in talanoa that was both respectful and provocative, in order to create a space where they felt comfortable to share their thoughts openly.

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Talanoa Method

While the initial start to my doctoral study was not affected by the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the restrictive measures through 2020 and 2021 had significant effects on the study. It was my intention to begin the data collection required for my study in early 2020, but the looming pandemic and subsequent lockdowns were disruptive and required substantial adaptation. In my view, it was essential that the talanoa sessions with participants be conducted face to face, and in an atmosphere that was calm and comfortable. This meant that I had to wait for a period where there was reduced anxiety around being exposed to COVID-19. My positioning within the community, as a teacher at the research site, meant that I was able to align my research needs with the priorities of the community. I was able to take the metaphorical temperature of the community to assess when the best times for face-to-face talanoa would be.

SYNERGY BETWEEN METHODS

A key focus of this article has been to present the ways in which I used tīvaevae and talanoa as Pacific research methodologies/methods and the impact that this had on my research, as well as the resulting synergy that occurred. The diverse nature of Pacific peoples living, learning, working and researching in New Zealand lends itself to a dynamic and collaborative Pacific research space which needs further exploration and higher levels of engagement. In my experience as a Pacific early-career researcher, talanoa and tīvaevae offered an exciting and, importantly, useful approach as I navigated the field and attempted to do so by valuing and privileging Indigenous and community knowledge. Synergy occurred around two significant concepts or principles at the root of my research questions: power and voice.

Tīvaevae and talanoa work together to support a process of power sharing. In the context of my research, the term power can be defined as the ability to achieve self-determination, where a person or collective is able to control their own life or lives (Asgharzadeh 2008; Bourdieu 1974). Talanoa and tīvaevae working in synergy is underpinned by the researcher's desire to empower their participants and offer disruption to traditional or culturally hegemonic ways of doing research (Hunter 2022; Te Ava *et al*. 2011; Te Ava and Page 2018). This stands in contrast to the way many institutions, educational and otherwise, operate or have operated in the past. It is the power relationships and principles of control that lie at the heart of the disenfranchisement and marginalisation of groups such as Pacific peoples. When processes involve power sharing or partnership to empower the community, power is siphoned away from the dominant structures. Tīvaevae privileges the ideas of the community and allows them to give direction and guidance to the process. Talanoa supports this by encouraging the researcher to listen and share the power in a reciprocal manner, centred on the voice of the participants (Puloka Luey 2021). In particular, the 'akairi'anga phase of the tīvaevae model stimulates a reciprocity which, in turn, gifts the outcomes of the research back to the community involved.

Tīvaevae and talanoa encourage a research process that values and respects the voice of participants. Voice, in the context of my research, can be defined as the right or ability to express thoughts, ideas and opinions. I agree with Asgharzadeh (2008) that across the global education landscape, there is a need for "different marginalized bodies" to come together, "empowered to come to voice and to advance their common struggle for justice and equality" (p. 339). In this case, I focus specifically on Pacific voice in the state education system in Christchurch, New Zealand. The marginalisation of Pacific peoples emphasises the importance of making space for operative and equitable platforms that empower their voices, and for them to be self-determining agents in the design of their future. Nabobo-Baba (2004) states that Pacific researchers must "represent the voices of our peoples" (p. 31), and the cooperation between talanoa and tīvaevae serves to amplify the voices of participants and provokes the researcher to ask the question of how their voice sits within the research design. The understanding of dialogue being a transformative and humanising force (Freire 2005) is essential if we are seeking to transform school to become a place of safety and equity for Pacific peoples. Empowering Pacific students, families and community voices concerns not just an attempt to fight for dominance but rather one to create opportunities for profound dialogue to occur between schools and their communities. Tīvaevae and talanoa work together to achieve this.

CONCLUSION / IMPLICATIONS

Until recently, the tīvaevae model had not been used widely in academia, with several researchers publishing literature or theses detailing its use in the last decade. Its popularity with Cook Island Māori researchers, as well as the grounding it offers in Pacific epistemologies, offers a way for other Pacific researchers to actively accept the challenges of contemporary research in communities and remain connected to Pacific values and processes as they do so.

The use of the talanoa method in a community where the researcher has a long-term association with the participants can carry with it risks around power imbalance and conflicts of interest; however, embedding the talanoa method within tīvaevae and the participatory action research framework is a way to potentially alleviate these concerns. The principles of relationality within talanoa allowed me as the researcher to remain agile and responsive to the needs of the community, not just in the setting of a focus group or an interview but also in the context around them.

The experience of the synergy between tīvaevae and talanoa has presented an opportunity to reflect on the dynamic that can arise when Pacific cultures and traditions intersect. The diverse nature of Pacific peoples in New Zealand schools and communities presents an increasing need for this to be reflected in research approaches. The positionality of the researcher and an understanding of Pacific research methodologies also played a significant role, as they can contribute greatly to the empowering of Pacific peoples as partners and stakeholders in research.

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are Cook Island Māori unless otherwise stated.

'akairi kite	shared vision
'akairi'anga	reflection on a completed tīvaevae and its offering as a gift
ko'iko'i	gathering of patterns and ideas for a tīvaevae
lei	flower neck garland
mama	elderly woman or matriarch
tā'okota'i	collaboration
talanoa	sharing of experiences and stories through open conversation
tīvaevae (tīvaivai)	Cook Island quilting tradition
tīvaevae mānu	appliqué quilt

tīvaevae ta'ōrei	patchwork quilt
tū 'akangāteitei	respect
tū 'inangaro	relationships
tuitui	the making of a tīvaevae
'ula	necklace (Samoan)
'uri'uri kite	reciprocity

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COLLECTIVE OR INDIVIDUAL—WHY NOT BOTH?

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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

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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 (Vaioleti 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

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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 Yugambeh 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 (Wolfgramm-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. Vaioleti (2006) states that talanoa "holistically intermingles researchers' and participants' emotions, knowing and experiences" (p. 24). It is Vaioleti'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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Part 3

Moving Forward with Pacific Research Methods and Methodologies

FEILOAʻIGA MA TALANOAGA MA ʻĀIGA: TALANOA WITH FAMILY IN THE ARCHIVES

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ABSTRACT: This paper applies the Talanoa methodology as an archival approach to historical objects. This engagement with archives departs from, or perhaps expands, Timote Vaioleti's initial envisioning of Talanoa as an approach for research into educational and social issues confronting Pacific people in Aotearoa. This shift employs Talanoa in the context of interdisciplinary, historical, literary, Pacific studies and Indigenous studies research. In particular, I am interested in the underexamined potential of Talanoa in particular disciplinary sites and objects of study. This paper engages Talanoa as a philosophical paradigm (methodology) and a research method in the study of ancestors' feau (messages) in the London Missionary Society (LMS) Gagana Sāmoa (Samoan language) newspaper *O le Sulu Samoa* (*Sulu*). I argue that the *Sulu* archival record is a palimpsest through which we can see the multiple articulations of Indigenous presence that exist within and beyond the page. Firstly, Talanoa renders these embodied memories in a feiloaʻiga ma le tālatalanoaga ma ʻāiga (meeting and gathering of family) as a contact zone, where descendants reconcile affective feelings and emotions. Secondly, as a method Talanoa produces a generative dialogical Samoan reading between texts, memory recall and oral histories. Ultimately, although conversations about Pacific research methodologies have been dominated by social science disciplines and thinkers, this paper argues that in the context of archival and historical research, Talanoa methodology can be conceived as a highly productive facilitator for embodied conversations with and between relatives that cross spatio-temporal, national, cultural, ideological, corporeal and disciplinary dimensions.

Excerpt from the obituary for Tiakono Vailuutai (Deacon of Vailuʻutai) Faleū Tuigamala T., written by Moreli Alama F.S., 1961:

> Sa iloa o ia i le Matagaluega ma le Ekalesia i le faautauta tonu, ma e vave manino lona mafaufau, ona o ia uiga, sa iloga ai lona tomai i le auauna atu i le Atua i ana mea na fai. Sa fai o ia ma tinā faamoemoeina o faifeau uma sa latou feagai.

She was well known as a judicious authority in the district as well as the church. Her intellect was sharp and clear, and this was demonstrated in the many forms of service she performed for God. She was a honourable matriarch, on whom many faifeau [pastors] depended.

Figure 1. Faleū's obituary in the Aperila (Apr.) 1961 edition of *O le Sulu Samoa* newspaper, written by Moreli Alama F.S. (Faifeau Sāmoa).

I remember the "jolt": a blow to the moa, the centre of my being. Awash with warmth, it worked its way into my chest, smothered my breath before trailing in its wake a stifled gasp of pained awe. Auē! The physical reaction was palpable. How startling it was to find, in a foreign place and under such unusual circumstances, my great-grandmother, Faleū Tuigamala, and my grandfather, Moreli Alama, in the Aperila (Apr.) 1961 issue of the London Missionary Society newspaper *O le Sulu Samoa* (*Sulu*) (Fig. 1). In the austere, upper stained-glass floor of a nineteenth-century church library in Ōtepoti Dunedin, Aotearoa New Zealand, encased in a Samoan language publication and so far from the balmy Samoan motu (islands) where they lived full and prosperous lives, I found them—or had they found me? We sit, nestled between tall rimu[1] bookcases bathed in the dimming autumn light, child and tua'ā (ancestors), silent and contemplative in a daze of profound loss, joy and bewilderment.

I am moved by Alama's sense of duty and humbled by my presumptions as he introduces me to Faleū through stoic stories of Spanish flu survival, the shifting stations of her role within the church and the solemnity of her final funeral service. While Alama was a known village pastorate leader and *Sulu* writer, the happy figure who appears in Figure 2 depicted what little I knew of Faleū. Perhaps my consternation was attributed to the lost memory of

Figure 2. Faleū Viliamu Tuigamala (centre) and her sons, Rev. Peni Tuigamala (left) and Tuiloma Vilia Tuigamala (right), at the 1953 LMS Mulifanua church dedication, led by another son, Rev. Filemoni Tuigamala. Photo courtesy of Faleū Sapapali'i Savaiinaea.

her, the incongruous setting or the circumstances of the find. Perhaps it was even the weather on that particular day, in Ōtepoti Dunedin: an often snow-capped Victorian heritage city established by Scottish colonial settlers during the nineteenth century on Kāi Tahu whenua (sovereign land of Kāi Tahu, the local Māori tribe). The grandeur of the church library obscured earlier memory of an Indigenous presence, despite Māori kupu (words) affixed to the library shelves above us. Rather than affirming a mana whenua (Indigenous authority over land) presence and connection to the vast Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa (Pacific Ocean), of which Aotearoa was a part, the shiny brass catalogue signs ironically accentuated a cultural and geographical dispossession.

Similarly, the *Sulu*, a Gagana Sāmoa (Samoan language) publication, was out of place. Despite Faleū and Alama's presence in this rich Indigenous Samoan text, the location of the archive itself in the Ōtepoti library was disorienting. Many questions arose. While Alama's role as a *Sulu* writer was known to the family, I was baffled by Faleū's presence. How is she here in this text? I recalled her neither as a teacher nor as a church leader, which would have explained her presence in the missionary paper I was investigating (Fig. 3). Moreover, how is this archive, resplendent with other Pacific voices, so removed from the people and fanua (land) who have yearned for them for so long? Faleū's dislocation was compounded by her name, bestowed upon her to honour her birth village of Faleū on Manono Island, Sāmoa, where her faifeau (pastor) parents served during the nineteenth century. She, me, and others, it would seem, were unmoored.

It became apparent that Dunedin city, the grandeur of the library and the *Sulu* archive were colonial artefacts that had travelled through entangled British circuits, underpinned by the logics of empire and upheld by associated discourses of European supremacy. This church archival network recorded and contained an Indigenous presence which my body was reacting to in unsettling ways.

The voluminous *Sulu* newspaper archive was primarily written in Gagana Sāmoa, with German and English added in the back page to placate the European missionaries and colonial administrators of the time (Fig. 3). It contained canonical LMS church annals, which were produced by generations of Samoan, Tuvaluan, Niuean, Rarotongan, Tokelauan, I-Kiribati, English, German, American, British and New Zealand faifeau, misionare (missionaries), faiāʻoga (teachers), tamaʻitaʻi fōmaʻi (nurses) and tiʻākono (deacons), many of whom formed the leadership of the various LMS Sāmoa church committees in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the *Sulu*, launched in 1839, was one of the earliest Samoan newspapers to publish Indigenous Pacific writers and enjoy a significant Pacific circulation and readership, most of its rare and extant copies are found in metropoles outside of Sāmoa.

Figure 3. *Sulu* newspaper issues in the Alexander Turnbull
Collection, National Library of New Zealand.

TALANOA IN THE ARCHIVES

My strong visceral experiences in the archives compelled me to theorise
Timote Vaioleti's approach of Talanoa as both a methodology and method
for research in an interdisciplinary setting. In particular, my objective is
to decolonise colonial archives through the use of Talanoa. It follows my
interest in the use of Talanoa in particular—underexamined—disciplinary
sites and objects of study. This entails conceptualising and situating affective
Samoan knowledge as Talanoa in the context of interdisciplinary, historical,
literary, corporeal, Pacific studies and Indigenous studies research. In this
framing, archival jolt is a form of Talanoa: a multisensory embodied memory
summoned through language, literacy, genealogy and sociohistorical links
that cross temporal, ideological, sociopolitical, corporeal and disciplinary
boundaries. This engagement with archives departs from, or perhaps

expands, Timote Vaioleti's initial envisioning of Talanoa "as an appropriate approach to researching Pacific educational and social issues in Aotearoa" (2006: 21). Moreover, it heeds Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea's call for further inquiry into Talanoa research methodology and methods so as to make "more nuanced sense of what they carry conceptually and involve methodologically" (2014: 333).

Specific attention to the *Sulu* archive as an artefact and a text further warrants the dual application of Talanoa methodology because, as identified by Alice Te Punga Somerville, "there are as many stories about archives as there are stories kept inside them" (2016: 121). Therefore, I argue that Talanoa methodology mobilises two complementary reading strategies in archival engagement. My objective has two underpinning goals. First, as a philosophical paradigm (methodology), Talanoa facilitates the coming together of people for a conversation. The *Sulu* artefact is the site of occurrence for a feiloaʻiga ma tālatalanoaga ma ʻāiga (family gathering and discussion) because archives are where "things, people and ideas come together" (p. 121). I use tālatalanoaga, talanoaga and Talanoa interchangeably because while tālatalanoaga connotes a casual informal family gathering and talanoaga assumes a more formal and purposeful discussion, both terms capture the free-flow discussion of Talanoa as envisioned by Timote Vaioleti (2006). Feiloaʻiga ma tālatalanoaga pays specific attention to the seemingly fleeting archival jolts in the archives that arise when encountering the writing of tuaʻā. As Samoan custom dictates, it involves the preliminary acknowledgement of all those present before proceeding to engage with their textual messages.

Second, Talanoa epistemological engagement of archives is a recovery method. Such a Talanoa process grounds the fleeting affective jolts and conceives these connections as an embodied Samoan memory. I use Sara Ahmed's (2004) economies of emotion and affect and Upolu Lumā Vaai's (2015a) notion of the faitau faʻa-usuga (dialogical reading) tool to mobilise a Samoan communal approach to engaging the jolts in the *Sulu* archive. In other words, I apply the Talanoa *method* to the multiple sites and genres of Samoan Indigenous knowledge in and beyond the archives because, as identified by David Faʻavae, Alison Jones and Linitā Manuʻatu, "talanoa encompasses a practical method and the theoretical concepts used to enact that method, as well as the analysis of the information collected" (2016: 140). This practical Talanoa research method is important in archival engagement, as it pertains to the affective and emotional bridging of sites and sources of knowledges that are inherent in a Samoan reader.

For this reason, both Talanoa methodology and method are crucial to producing articulations of Indigenous presence in the *Sulu* archive, free from, or perhaps in relation to, its colonial confinement. Nonetheless, it is

the epistemological centring of the Samoan body that mobilises a highly productive reading and decolonisation of the *Sulu* archive itself. Talanoa recovers elements of communal memory by situating me in a greater Talanoa dialogue between Faleū and other family writers in the *Sulu* archive. Our bodies, which bear the brunt of colonial exchanges, are also the fecund grounds of recovery. An archival jolt which may have been momentarily experienced and lost is captured, grounded and materialised instead, thus providing deeper and richer meaning in the text. Moreover, it reclaims space for Samoan knowledge production.

TALANOA AS A DECOLONIAL FRAMEWORK

Jacques Derrida's precautionary assertion that there is "no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory" (1996: 4) provides insight into the colonial rubrics of power inherent in British archival practices. As experienced in the Ōtepoti Dunedin library, Faleū was a surprise find, disconnected and dispossessed from her ancestral land and reduced to a beautiful but brief description of her church life. However, as advised by Alice Te Punga Somerville, researchers must conduct the "time-consuming and risky unbalancing work of 'reach[ing] among comments' (in the archives but also in the stories we tell ourselves)" (2016: 124, quoting Patuawa-Nathan 1979). This resonates with Arlette Farge's powerful advice to "unlearn and not think you know it from a first reading" (quoted in Stoler 2009: 23).

The unbalancing work therefore required being cognisant of my own research foibles, prejudices and complicity in the conception of archives as monolithic and all-knowing institutional bastions of truth. It also involves moving away from an exhaustive conservatory approach in the treatment of archives to a generative and more liberating meaning-making process, as advised by the Te Āti Awa historian Rachel Buchanan.[2] Thus, colonial archives written in our gagana (language) are opportunities to interrogate and read deeply beyond the page using our own Indigenous frames of reference. Reading from the moa—the centre of being—is Samoan affective knowledge. It entails assuming and foregrounding Indigenous presence in colonial spaces because, ultimately, Indigenous spaces are created by the very presence of our own bodies and languages (irrespective of brass-plated enclosures). A "grounded" embodied Talanoa reading decolonises the colonial parameters of the *Sulu* archive by centring Samoan epistemological frameworks and producing highly generative readings which talk back to the fixed, displaced and reductionist colonial view of Samoan people in the archives.

Talanoa proffers a creative and meaningful platform to apply the distinctive Samoan-specific literary reading strategy that Upolu Lumā Vaai (2015a: 5) describes as faitau faʻa-usuga (dialogical reading). Situated in contextual theology, Upolu Lumā Vaai applies this as Talanoa methodology

where a lalaga faʻatasi (stitching) of itulagi (perceptions) of the text, author and readers is possible. This method bodes well with engaging the *Sulu* because, according to Matt Tomlinson (2020), theological studies and literary studies have applied Talanoa to literature comfortably. However, unsettled by the prescriptive nature and openness of the dialogical process, and somewhat reminiscent of a colonial hang-up with surveillance, Matt Tomlinson cautiously asks "who we expect to engage in it, and what kinds of consequences we allow, expect and try to produce" (2020: 224). Nonetheless, the quandary, according to Tomlinson, can be resolved through an interdisciplinary study of what dialogue entails. This challenge further warrants the application of Talanoa as an embodied archival approach due to its constitutive nature and its culturally specific context.

While traditionally Talanoa is derived and formulated in Tongan and Fijian cultural settings (Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba 2012: 3), the philosophical principles that resonate with Samoan epistemological process can also lead to its application trans-Indigenously. Where the Faʻafaletui methodology has more recently arisen out of Samoan epistemological frameworks, I have chosen Talanoa instead for its informal and flexible nature. The creative and cross-disciplinary openness is inspired by a cultural appropriateness rather than specificity. At the micro and culture-specific level, Faʻafaletui research methodology, which is based on the specialist domain of Samoan oratory and guilds of oratory houses, does not allow for the flexible, intimate and multitextual interrogation that Talanoa provides. Thus, rather than be restricted by strict Faʻafaletui protocols of agaʻifanua (Samoan relational protocols specifically relating to land and locality) (Simanu-Klutz 2002: 68), Talanoa is applied practically, intimately, interdisciplinarily and cross-culturally so as to produce convivial and inclusive spaces, open to the inclusion of oral histories and memory recall methods and textual bodies.

This is apt because in the realm of decolonial historical analysis, according to Richard Campbell (1993: 6), a dialogical process is a liberating force, in which a researcher is in a never-completed dialogue between "finitude, naturally and historically given, and the potentially infinite possibilities which can be entertained in thought". Thus, Talanoa brings into conversation the archival researcher as the reader, the text and the author. The temporal flexibility of Talanoa reaches beyond time and space to bring together writers, texts and a descendant of the writers in a space to meet, see connections and wrestle with meaning. Talanoa in the archive collapses time as space and place, whereby the past is no longer just a time but also a place, as asserted by Damon Salesa (2014: 43).

In the context of archival engagement, Talanoa orients us to a past that is living, dynamic and present. David Welchman Gegeo further affirms this Indigenous notion of space as a temporal "place not of one's existential being but rather of temporary or even long-term staying" (2001:

494). In the absence of bodies (but not of presence), space and place become interchangeable sites for critical literary and embodied exchange. Indigenous Pacific conceptualisation of time as a place and space therefore conceives archives as fertile temporal and material grounds for conversation, meaning-making and more.

TALANOA AS EMBODIED EXPERIENCE

Upolu Lumā Vaai's dialogical and presuppositional reading strategy of faitau faʻa-usuga identifies the community reading strategies employed by Samoan readers (2015a: 9). In the context of archival engagement, reading archival texts becomes a performative act of reading alongside one's ancestors. Reflections on my powerful embodied response to the sighting of Faleū's name, and that of my grandfather, the author, required reckoning with the ways in which ideological tensions (and Indigenous presence) in historical colonial archives breach the confines of colonial surveillance, in what Bronwen Douglas identifies as "Indigenous countersigns" (2009). Peter G. Toner's (2018: 656) notion of historical archives as "contact zones", where our bodies, as stated by Melanie Benson Taylor (2019: xiv), "explode with blood, both of loss and new life", therefore provides compelling challenges for Samoan researchers working in the archives to intimately reimagine, reclaim and reproduce new ways to attend to Samoan knowledge production.

Talanoa in the archives is an embodied experience because, as identified by Melanie Benson Taylor (2019: xii), "our bodies themselves are the richest of archives". It is through the Samoan body that jolts are read, interpreted, enacted and mobilised to give meaning to the feau (messages) of ancestors. It is useful therefore and highly productive to conceive the Talanoa rendering of affective knowledges through a circulatory system between emotion and affect. Sara Ahmed's (2004) notions of affective economies in critical race theory asserts that emotions render themselves as a form of capital, which accrue value—affect—in a culture-specific system of circulation. Archival jolt grounded by emotion becomes embodied memory and vice versa; it is inhabited by the body and called into being through specific Samoan sociolinguistic and historiographical Talanoa strategies.

The grounding of archival jolt therefore demands a logical research framework, as urged by Laumua Tunufaʻi (2016), to excavate and contextualise possible meanings. Talanoa is the dialogical and cyclical process which draws on multiple sites of knowledge to draw Faleū (and my own mother) from the archival margins and centre her in a network of proximity and genealogy where she had always belonged. Archival jolts, therefore, are not just a happenstance encounter. Rather, they are the activated, affective and animated rendering of family histories because, as asserted by Patricia Norby (in Schweitzer and Henry 2019: 10), "archives become alive when Indigenous people talk about archives in their own language".

When I read Faleū's obituary, there is clarity. The archival jolt is the wielding of my grandfather's words, the summoning of unconscious embodied histories and calling of Faleū into being. In the Ōtepoti Dunedin library, we meet. In the Ōtepoti Dunedin library I am in conversation with Alama and Faleū, and I am immediately taken back to my youth at Fasitoʻotai[3] during my parent's tenure as faifeau, to a place where Faleū once worked the land and led community initiatives.

The affective jolt is the embodied remembering of Faleū's tulagāvae (footsteps). These footsteps had been occupied by own my mother, Tifilelei Alama Ieremia, unbeknownst to me, as a faletua (faifeau's wife) on the same fanua at Fasitoʻotai 72 years after Faleū's return upon the death of her first husband. The jolt is a realisation of a new Fasitoʻotai, the land that is no longer foreign and where I, like my mother, was never a guest. It is a realisation that we were always children of the land. It is a new and compelling recognition of our connections to Faleū, our fanua and our faʻasinomaga that fundamentally underpinned the village pastorate leadership roles performed by my parents.

To conduct archival research is to do more. For Hayden Lorimer, "more than" representational theory pays attention to "self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multisensual worlds" (2005: 83). Talanoa activates embodied knowledges which emanate from within and beyond the conscious and unconscious. In Pacific and Indigenous theorising, reading from the moa or from the naʻau/ngāhau (gut) in Hawaiian or Māori epistemological sites of knowledge is indicative of the Pacific conscious and unconscious worlds (and more). Moe mānatunatu (dreaming), which also offers possible affective insights, will not be discussed in this essay. Nonetheless, reading archives written by ancestors involves drawing forth embodied knowledge from what Kekuewa Kikiloi calls a "preconscious reservoir of past experience [… and] and a storehouse of knowledge called ancestral memories" (2010: 74).

The Samoan saying "E leai ni tagatanoa pe o ni tagata tu fanua i lo ta lalolagi o Samoa" asserts that a Samoan person is never without connection to land, honorifics and family (Le Tagaloa 1996: 11). Ancestors, who constitute the mamalu tauʻave (sacred dignity) inherent in every Samoan person, are also invoked in Upolu Vaai's presuppositional reading. He states:

> In the islands, what conditions a *tagata* (person) is his/her *tuātagata* (community). As an *island reader*, his/her identity cannot be separated from the community. This is premised in the fact that a *tagata* is not just an individual. *Tagata* is communal. … *tuātagata* includes father, mother, extended family, village, land, sea, ancestors, family titles, spirits and so forth. *Tuatagata* means *tua atu o le tagata* (deep within the person). (2015b: 36)

Reading the *Sulu* "along the archival grain", as suggested by Ann Stoler (2009), allows for the sotto voce of my ancestors to decolonise the archive. Reconceptualising power relations as moral authority and vā tāpui'a (sacred relationalities) allows us to "map the multiple imaginaries" in the archives that break the "ideological captivity" of "order, linearity and totality" which hinder Island readers (Vaai 2015b: 30–31). Attending to the ways in which my grandfather Alama wrote in deferential ways about Faleū allowed me to glean the interpersonal relationalities between people, sites, networks and movements. Alama's own practice of vā tāpui'a and feagaiga (sacred covenants), which could have been mistaken for an obsequious obligation to *Sulu* editors, shone through the fissures of Christian archives instead. This is shown through the Alama's poignant description of the majesty of Faleū's funeral procession, located in the solemnity and rituality of the ceremony performed by her children: a recognition of their mamalu tau'ave.

TALANOA AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PARADIGM (METHODOLOGY)

Conceiving the *Sulu* archive as a site of interaction between family members, feiloa'iga ma tālatalanoaga ma 'āiga helped me reckon with the embodied memories that surged forth in the Ōtepoti Dunedin library. Ancestors, such as Moreli Alama, who wrote in the archives were the harbingers of more relatives, larger networks, transnational movements and intersections that lay at the heart of the LMS church. Ancestors were present in their words. Their personas, values, attitudes and commitments to their respective roles and politics are revealed through the specific Samoan ways in which they wrote.

Archives, therefore, are contested sites of possibilities. In particular, the *Sulu* archive is a site where the political act of reading in specific Samoan ways facilitates the recovery of dormant embodied memories and the coproduction of knowledge. Producing distinctive generative readings of the archives, therefore, relies heavily on the contextual positionality of the researcher who, as Upolu Vaai asserts in his hermeneutical study of Pacific Island readers, is constantly producing a fa'atuatagata (holistic community) reading, a presuppositional engagement with texts alongside their community (2015: 11). For Upolu Vaai, Samoans read texts alongside their ancestors by embodying all the respective elements of their fa'asinomaga (cultural identity). These elements include histories, family, status, gender, village, lineage, upbringing, language, culture and appointments. Samoans read through the lenses of their ancestors, whom they carry with them at all times.

Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa's conceptualisation of tōfamanino (philosophy) asserts two important points: first, that Samoan philosophy (and language) is underscored by multiple notions of relationality; and second, that Samoan philosophy predates literacy (Le Tagaloa 1996). Understanding the mutual

constitutive relationship between genres of Samoan knowledge, Gagana Sāmoa and Samoan literary devices reframe the *Sulu* archive as a site of different forms of exchanges. In other words, an understanding of the cultural, socioreligious, literary and performative elements of Samoan lāuga (oratory), solo (poem/chant), fāgogo (storytelling), pese (song), faleaitu (theatre), tupua (riddles), tala fatu fau (discourse), tala faʻasolopito (history), muāgagana (proverbs) and tala o le vavau (Indigenous narratives) opens up the *Sulu* archive as a compelling ontological site. Reading the interplay of these poutū (pillars) renders the *Sulu* archive more than a staid colonial ledger and into becoming a generative and resplendent site of Samoan expression and identity instead.

The meeting of family in the archives, through historical texts and embodied memories, renders archives as sacred points of connection that transcend time and space. Talanoa is reimagined as a casual evening meeting, after evening prayers, while awaiting the announcement of dinner, to share a convivial intimate space couched in alofa (love) and mālualiʻi (dignity). Functionally, this tālatalanoaga serves to discuss the adventures of the day, take an inventory of the required resources for planned activities and share knowledge. The tālatalanoaga, by its inclusive, casual and dynamic nature, assumes the involvement of all members of the kin. It takes into account the bodies in the fale (house): those who are sitting in the front, those in the back preparing the food and those in repose listening intently in silence.

In this respect, Talanoa methodology as archival engagement facilitates a genealogical faitau faʻa-usuga reading in the archives that sees everyone, including the ʻau tāpuaʻi (support people), such as my great-grandmother Faleū and many more. These support people (in the margins) are fundamental players within the family, villages, pastorate and regional networks. The proverb "E lē sili le taʻi i loʻo le tāpuaʻi", which translates as "those who lead are not as important as those who support", further affirms the shared responsibilities in the collective. Such a coconstitutive practice mirrors the coproduction of Samoan historical practices, which Samoan paramount chief and author Tui Atua Tamasese Taʻisi Efi identifies as being located in ʻāiga, malae (meeting grounds), fono (meetings), ceremonies and courts, and the academy (Efi 2008).

<center>TALANOA AS RECOVERY (METHOD)</center>

The Talanoa method reads Faleū's obituary as a palimpsest: a multilayered text that demands a logical research framework for the production of new meanings. This process includes unpacking the specific Samoan content, form and style of Faleū's obituary. Reading her obituary alongside the positionality of the writer, family oral histories, embodied memories and the text sheds light on her incredible contribution to the LMS missionary enterprise. To

counter problematic parsimonious research cultures of "sufficiency"[4] that Puakea Nogelmeier (2010) highlights as pervasive amongst historical researchers, attention to faitau fa'a-usuga is imperative because it facilitates the necessary sociolinguistic reading of Faleū's obituary. This process situates her life in relation to Alama, other family writers (of which there are many) and me in the moment to see the vast geographic, cultural, gendered and historical networks that she inhabited in the material world.

Engagement with archival texts, therefore, is a performative act of reading alongside one's ancestors. Reflections on my powerful embodied response to the sighting of Faleū's name, and of that of the author, my grandfather, required reckoning with the ways in which ideological tensions in historical colonial archives, according to Ann Stoler (2009: 19), "spil[l] over and smudg[e] the archive's policed edges". Talanoa facilitated a faitau fa'a-usuga of texts that revealed many forms of exchanges between an array of interrelated bodies. Not only do the words written by Moreli Alama provide key information about Faleū's life, his use of allegory and allusions and his relational position as a faiāvā (son-in-law) elucidate a broad and deeper understanding. He invoked Faleū as an authoritative and influential matriarch that had up until that point been unseen and unknown amongst my generation of Faleū's descendants. Her obituary, restrained and evocative, soon became the text where ancient protocols of vā tāpui'a are inscribed.

Talanoa reading and writing in Samoan language archives provides literal, cultural and historical inroads into Samoan epistemological thought. Furthermore, it was also through a dialogical engagement with texts alongside one another that a multidimensional picture of Faleū's life was produced. Although Faleū is introduced to us by Alama as a figure of maternal moral authority, the scale of her influence can be gleaned in her daughter Litara Viliamu's tala fāgogo (story) that was published in the December 1954 issue of *Sulu*. Through Litara's didactical fāgogo, we gauge Faleū's influence as pae ma le āuli (conflict resolver). This characterisation is represented by the unapologetic protagonist of Litara's fāgogo, Sieni, an Italian matriarch in the village of Genoa, Italy, who saved Christmas by chastening her wayward husband. The moral of Litara's fāgogo is that the gift of Christmas was found in overcoming troubles in the home. For Litara, the gift was found in the opportunity to resolve conflict and provide moral guidance rather than in her husband's behavioural reform per se. I deduce that such a powerful lesson would have been drawn from Faleū, because Litara demonstrates through her plot and setting that these duties are not bound by geography, genre or time.

I took my grandfather's lead literally as an archival approach to engaging with the *Sulu* archive. His deferential stance, motivated by fa'aaloalo (respect), customarily paid tribute to the genealogical links as a faiāvā. He was duty-bound to pay attention to integral parts of Faleū's life: her career as a teacher;

her survival of the 1918 influenza epidemic which killed her first husband; her second marriage to Tuigamala and the associated shift from faletua to lead tiʻākono; and the prolific counselling work she conducted for many faifeau. This ministry work was continued by her children and grandchildren; I was privileged to watch this through my own mother's faletua work.

It would, therefore, not seem incongruous to conceive this encounter in the archives as generative, living and enduring because, as attested by Marshall Sahlins (1985: 34), "different cultural orders have their own modes of historical action, consciousness, and determination—their own historical practice". In the archives, Faleū found me and continued to talk to me through the snippets of memory, through oral history and through reflection on the highly productive literary efforts and feau produced by her children. In the archives, Faleū emerges as both the lead and supporting protagonist—the centre of a lot of church activities conducted and recorded by her children. The substantial and wide-ranging writing of her children in the *Sulu* archives reflected both Faleū's and their own contributions to literary production, education, pastorate church buildings, infrastructure developments, church administration and medical missionary work.

Specifically, this corpus of family writing in the *Sulu* included an ethnographic study of maternity practices in the Papua New Guinea highlands by her faletua granddaughter, Tafagamanu Sapolu (Aperila (Apr.) 1962: 54); the production of tala fāgogo (parables along Christian doctrine) by her faletua daughter Litara Alama (Tesema (Dec.) 1954: 43); the transportation of leper patients from Sāmoa to Makogai, Fiji, by her native medical officer son, Ropati Viliamu (Ianuari–Fepuari (Jan.–Feb.) 1932: 7–8); carpentry tutorial work at the LMS Lawes College in Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea, by her missionary son, Livigisitone Viliamu (Me (May) 1955: 112); church construction work in Mulifanua (Tesema 1953: 87); chairing national executive committees by her faifeau son, Filemoni Tuigamala (Ianuari 1955, 1977–1978); rural infrastructure development by her faifeau son-in-law, Moreli Alama (Fepuari 1956: 75), and many more.

Readers who are not related to both Alama and Faleū may not see layers of family connections, nor will they see the ways in which my grandfather exercises vā tāpuiʻa. In writing Faleū's obituary, Alama navigates the institutional tensions of his roles as a lead *Sulu* faifeau writer and a dutiful faiāvā. Alama's description of Faleū's funeral alludes to his own proximal relationship to the maliu (funeral ceremony) he is witnessing. He extols the magnitude of her influence on generations of ministers (including himself). His relationship to her is inferred: so too are the ways in which he lovingly pays tribute and portrays Faleū as a western queen, in accordance with the colonial tenets of the *Sulu* newspaper. However, the mamalu (majesty) of Faleū's funeral procession was not found in the one person but rather in the Indigenous relationalities of the collective. He wrote:

The district was in attendance. Her body was escorted to the church by a long procession led by the Fasitoo brass band. Her children dutifully escorted her into the church. This moving procession was long, and the family were resplendent both in white and in numbers. This spectacular display was likened to the office of a reigning Queen and her court. (*Sulu* Aperila 1961)

Faleū's obituary is a palimpsest on which family members belonging to the 'au faigāluega a le Atua (servants of God) retrace and recentre lost connections to ancestral lands. Talanoa allows for descendants such as me to trace and recall the warm familial embrace of the Fasito'otai village where my mother lived during her tenure as the faletua of the Fasito'otai EFKS church. This process allows pastorate workers, who were once required to disavow their fa'asinomaga upon entering village pastorate work, to reestablish and reconcile disconnections from ancestral lands.

While some of these nuances are clear from first reading, absence of commentary can also be seen as deferential restraint. The exercise of reading and engaging archival materials, therefore, requires identifying considerations of vā tāpui'a. Doing so requires tracing links, invoking oral histories and listening to the embodied memories that spill over and "excee[d] the archive's ability to capture [them]" (Taylor 2003: 19–20). In the context of *Sulu* writing, these understated restraints are also deep articulations of covenant relationships situated in relationality, not only between the reader and writer but also with and alongside other *Sulu* texts.

TALANOA AS A HARBINGER

Understanding the workings of vā tāpui'a in Faleū's obituary archive requires a familiarity with subtle and nuanced forms of expression presented by metaphor, allegory, allusion and Samoan idiomatic expression. These literary devices are deployed to convey an āva fa'atamāli'i (respect) that protects and upholds the vā (sacred relational ties between bodies) when faced with ideological tension. Reading "along the archival grain" with ancestors activates texts; it is a performative and transformative act that draws on multiple genres of Samoan knowledge to reorient the *Sulu* archives from a colonial ledger of white supremacy into a rich site of Samoan resilience, autonomy and celebration, because, as advised by Albert Wendt, "Oceania deserves more than an attempt at mundane fact; only the imagination in free flight can hope—if not to contain her—to grasp some of her shape, plumage and pain" (1982: 202).

Talanoa offers the freedom and flexibility to apply Samoan-specific research philosophical paradigms and research frameworks. Talanoa also offers critical and creative platforms to facilitate embodied conversations with and between relatives that cross spatiotemporal, national, cultural, ideological, corporeal and disciplinary dimensions. The call to do so is loud and urgent because, as identified by Albert Wendt, "[o]ur dead are woven

into our souls like the hypnotic music of bone flutes; we can never escape them. If we let them, they can help illuminate us to ourselves and to one another" (1982: 203).

In this context of archival engagement, Talanoa is invoked as a philosophical paradigm brought into being as an imagined space and place where family members meet and talanoa, each representing their respective roles and status in the family in exchange of a feau. This is helpful when considering Samoan historiography as a communal affair, derived from multiple sources and invoked in the ceremonial and literary ways in which we, as recipients of that knowledge, can be gratefully cognisant (even from cold library attics in Dunedin). Talanoa in Samoan language archives provides literal, cultural and historical inroads into stories that lie at the margins of colonial archival practices and bodies. Talanoa reveals tension and possibilities of meanings; both methodology and method provide richer and more productive ways of reclaiming our stories.

Thus, the responsibility is borne by not only the collective to guide the researcher, particularly when she or he is of their own blood, but also by the researcher to reciprocate in kind; to offer rich and aesthetically pleasing multitude of meaning that is neither constrained nor singular. The willingness to see one's relatives, wrestle with their writing, draw on oral histories and recover embodied memories centres our Indigenous epistemologies and conceptually and practically opens up generous new research spaces.

Because to read alone is a disillusioning and disembodied experience.

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NOTES

1. Rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*) is a conifer endemic to Aotearoa New Zealand whose soft wood is well suited for furniture construction.
2. Personal communication with Alice Te Punga Somerville, April 2020, University of Waikato.
3. Fasitoʻotai on the east side and Vailuʻutai on the west comprise two sides of the same Fasitoʻotai village.
4. The notion of "discourses of sufficiency" is invoked by Nogelmeier to describe the parsimonious research practice of using a small selection of Hawaiian language sources as an autorepresentation of centuries of Hawaiian history. Noelani Arista (2010) expands the term "sufficiency" in relation to her work with kaona (hidden meanings) in historical Hawaiian texts.

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are Samoan unless otherwise stated.

agaʻifanua	Samoan relational protocols relating to land and locality
ʻāiga	family
alofa	love
auē	expression of deep emotional reflection
ʻau faigāluega a le Atua	servants of God
ʻau tāpuaʻi	support people
āva faʻatamāliʻi	respect
faʻaaloalo	respect
faʻasinomaga	(cultural) identity
faʻatuatagata	holistic community acknowledgement
fāgogo	storytelling
faiāʻoga	teacher
faiāvā	son-in-law
faifeau	pastor
faitau faʻa-usuga	dialogical reading; genealogical reading
fale	house
faleaitu	theatre relating to the "house of spirits"
faletua	pastor's wife
fanua	land
feagaiga	sacred covenants
feau	messages
feiloaʻiga ma tālatalanoaga ma ʻāiga	family gathering and discussion
fono	meeting

gagana	language
Gagana Sāmoa	Samoan language
itulagi	perceptions
kaona	hidden meaning (Hawaiian)
kupu	words (Māori)
lalaga faʻatasi	stitching
lāuga	oratory
malae	meeting ground
maliu	funeral ceremony
mālualiʻi	spiritual protection
mamalu	majesty
mamalu tauʻave	sacred dignity
mana whenua	authority over land (Māori)
misionare	missionary
moa	centre of one's being
moe mānatunatu	dreaming
motu	islands
muāgagana	proverbs
naʻau	gut (Hawaiian)
ngāhau	gut (Māori)
pae ma le āuli	conflict resolver
pese	song
poutū	pillar
solo	poem; chant
tagata	person
tala fāgogo	story
tala faʻasolopito	history
tala fatu fau	discourse
talanoaga	formal, purposeful conversation
tala o le vavau	Indigenous narratives
tālatalanoaga	casual informal gathering
tamaʻitaʻi fōmaʻi	nurse
Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa	Pacific Ocean (Māori)
tiʻākono	deacon
tōfamanino	philosophy
tuaʻā	ancestors
tūatagata	holistic understanding of community
tulagāvae	footsteps
tupua	riddle

vā tāpuiʻa	sacred relationalities
vā	sacred relational ties
whenua	land (Māori)

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YUMI TOK STORI: A PAPUA NEW GUINEA MELANESIAN RESEARCH APPROACH

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ABSTRACT: The tok stori research approach is described as a Melanesian informal meeting including a storytelling session that enables embedded information to be released through conversation and, as the literature suggests, is contextually flexible. This paper looks at using the tok stori approach in research contexts with Papua New Guinea (PNG) communities in Aotearoa New Zealand and endeavours to contextualise tok stori by explaining how it is used in the PNG community contexts from where it originated. When the term tok stori is used alone, it is a verb that indicates an informal storytelling meeting in a social context with conversation. When contextualising tok stori using PNG Tok Pisin in most group meeting settings, the term tok stori alone does not convey invitation and inclusivity; therefore, a pronoun must be added to convey this for an informal (or formal) meeting. In this case, the pronoun yumi (you and me, you and us) is used. Yumi tok stori can be used for one-on-one and group meetings. Writing about tok stori and its application in various contexts and situations will enable this approach to be revised and rendered relevant in its applicability rather than used only as a generic approach given the variations in the pidgin creoles spoken in the different pidgin-speaking countries in Oceania.

Keywords: yumi, pidgins, creole, Tok Pisin, Melanesian research methodology, Pacific research

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> Advocating for Melanesian methodology as a fit with Melanesian research is an act of decolonisation. (Sanga *et al.* 2018: 3)

This paper stems from my research experiences using the tok stori approach with Papua New Guinea (PNG) communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. This paper focuses not on my study's topic but rather on use of this approach in the study's information-gathering (data collection) phase. Tok stori is a Melanesian pidgin creole term meaning the act of storytelling, and it involves those participating, speakers and listeners, becoming part of one another's world as they exchange stories through talking or conversation (Sanga, Reynolds, Houma and Maebuta 2021: 379). The term is used in the western Pacific in the Melanesian countries where a pidgin creole is spoken (Sanga *et al.* 2018). These countries include PNG (Tok Pisin), Solomon Islands (Pijin) and Vanuatu (Bislama). In each of these countries, people use tok stori to communicate in various situations.

Tok stori has been discussed previously in research, including its importance and suitability in Melanesia and the contexts where it is used (Sanga *et al.* 2018). Building on the recognition of tok stori as contextual and relational by Sanga and colleagues (Sanga *et al.* 2018; Sanga, Reynolds, Houma and Maebuta 2021: 379), this paper focuses on the importance of using contextual pronouns to signify meaning alongside the term tok stori in a specifically PNG Tok Pisin context, where the term tok stori may not convey an invitation to participate or share a story unless the pronouns yumi (you and me; you and us) and/or yupla (you all; you people) are used alongside it. For example, a person who will conduct a tok stori session says "yumi tok stori", "yumi stori" or "yupla kam yumi stori", which means "you all are invited to come to an informal gathering or story session". For my study's purposes, I used yumi tok stori as a way to invite participants to engage in an informal meeting, either one on one or in a group. The difference between tok stori and yumi tok stori is that the former is the root verb and the latter serves as an invitation to a meeting. The use of the term yumi tok stori in given contexts is important and links to cultural approaches, specifically through its association with being inclusive, inviting and hospitable.

Knowing the context in which one's research is conducted, taking into consideration one's relationships with the communities with which one interacts, and presenting oneself in culturally appropriate ways is crucial in any research situation, and this point needs to be constantly emphasised. In agreement with Fasavalu and Reynolds (2019), I emphasise my relationships with my research participants as a PNG woman in order to centrally position PNG epistemologies and support the decolonising and Indigenising of research in our Pacific region, as discussed by many scholars (Kelly-Hanku *et al.* 2021; Sanga *et al.* 2018; Smith 1999; Thaman 2003). My research walks the path paved by other Pacific scholars, especially those from Melanesian countries such as Bernard Narokobi, David Gegeo, Kabini Sanga and many others who have written about the Melanesian way of tok stori. In contributing to the decolonisation of research within the Pacific region, this paper builds upon the work of these scholars, contextualising the use of tok stori as a research approach with PNG communities in Aotearoa. This is how many of the Indigenous scholars or students such as me, engaging with our communities and writing about them, will contribute to the continued effort to Indigenise our research.

CONCEPTUALISATION OF MELANESIAN PIDGINS AND TOK STORI

Melanesian pidgins emerged from the region's colonisation, with scholars describing pidgin as a type of language that developed in colonial territories and trade forts (Mufwene 2015, 2020). The pidgin language Tok Pisin has become the lingua franca in PNG, sharing common words and similar

meanings with the pidgins of other countries in the region. One such shared term is tok stori, used by Melanesians to refer to communication in various situations. The art of storytelling is central to human experience, and, in Pacific communities, storytelling is a timeless way of passing information on to people and communities. It is relational and can be based on mutual genuine relationships (Iseke 2013; Sanga, Reynolds, Houma and Maebuta 2021: 381; Vunibola *et al*. 2022). Tok stori is an informal way of discussing and resolving issues via conversation and the sharing of a meal. The notion of tok stori was conceptualised as a research approach by Melanesian scholars. In the context of my research, it is a practical way of engaging with communities to converse and share stories and knowledge. Tok stori encourages togetherness and enables collective action, and in a research context, it enables the gathering of collective perspectives (Sanga *et al*. 2018). Like the Aotearoa Māori practice of manaakitanga (showing respect, generosity and care for others), tok stori builds mutually respectful relationships through sharing, love and kindness in hospitality and generosity to create good rapport, equality and empowerment (Rātima *et al.* 2022).

As a research method practised in many Indigenous cultures, storytelling validates the experiences and epistemologies of local people, as with the Kakala framework in Tonga, the Vanua framework in Fiji, Kaupapa Māori approaches in Aotearoa and the Aboriginal Dreamtime stories in Australia (Geia *et al*. 2013; Iseke 2013; Power *et al*. 2014). PNG philosopher Bernard Narokobi's (1983: 9) view that "unless we succeed in establishing a philosophical base, founded on our ancient virtues, we stand to perish as people of unique quality, character and dynamism" can be linked to the establishment of a Melanesian tok stori research method. Narokobi's call is to take advantage of western ways of recording and writing to document the authentic philosophy, doctrines, theologies and all other things Melanesian—including, in my view, our ways of information gathering and sharing, such as our Melanesian tok stori.

Variations in Pidgin Creoles and the Transformation of Tok Stori into Yumi Tok Stori

This paper endeavours to contextualise the use of tok stori approaches and, in doing so, note the variations in pidgin creoles in the different Melanesian countries resulting in differences in these approaches. In my research, I use the term yumi tok stori from a PNG context, where it conveys inclusivity and whereby individuals and groups can be included in informal tok stori sessions. The rationale for using this term from a PNG relational point of view is that the addition of "yumi" evokes invitation and inclusiveness and helps motivate people to participate in the tok stori session. When someone conducts meetings or interviews as part of research or information-gathering sessions that require people's time, attention and space, they need to use appropriate

language that is inviting and incites people's interest in attending. If the language used is not inviting or does not convey inclusivity, people can feel left out or may perceive that they are not welcome and may not participate.

The Melanesian pidgin creole varies across countries in the western Pacific where pidgins are spoken; in PNG, some Tok Pisin speakers say tok stori while others say yumi toktok (let's talk). The connotations of yumi toktok depends on the speaker's tone. A harsher tone can have negative connotations, translating to "let's talk because something is wrong" or "you have done something wrong and need to explain yourself". Instead I use the PNG Tok Pisin terms yumi tok stori or yumi stori, which are positive and welcoming in tone. Yumi tok stori can be a less formal way of discussing and resolving issues via conversation, betel nut chewing and sharing food such as sugar cane, cups of tea or cooked food. It can involve one-on-one conversations or group meetings and is usually informal with the conversations unrestricted and unstructured, although some can be formal. Overall, yumi tok stori is an effective informal way to engage with people in the community.

The approaches from this research highlight that the term tok stori used alone may not necessarily convey a sense of inclusivity and invitation, especially in group settings. This was displayed on two occasions where the participants mentioned that the invitation did not say yupla kam na bai yumi stori (you all come and we tell stories or have an informal meeting). The term yumi has not been included, meaning additional participants would not show up and that only the person to whom the invitation was sent would feel they could come. People would only come if the person playing the gatekeeping role or snowballing made it clear that it was a stori session.

Tok stori   **Yumi tok stori**

No indications for participation, not context specific

Indigenous approach, (in)formal meeting, talk, conversation, involves meals, Pacific countries using pidgin creole

Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

Invitation, indicates participation (one-on-one, group), gender inclusive, hospitable, can be context specific
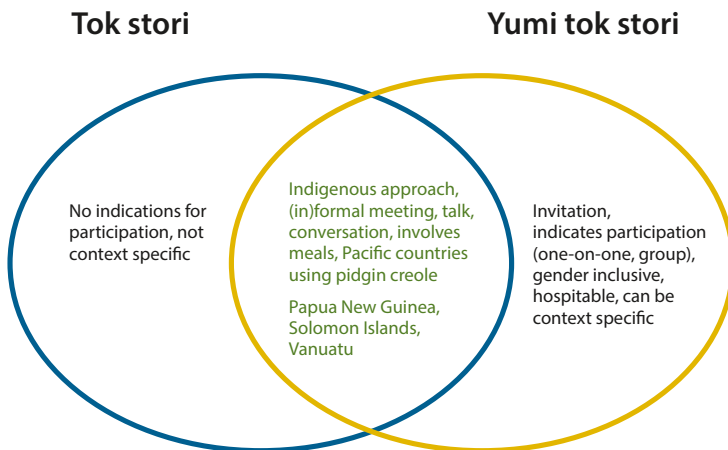
Figure 1. Comparison of tok stori and yumi tok stori.

I have made a simple diagram (Fig. 1) drawing a context-specific comparison of tok stori and yumi tok stori. This enabled me to revise my approach and use yumi tok stori. The diagram can also be seen as a way to enable continued revision of and engagement with our Pacific research methods and methodologies and allow researchers to compare them and choose culturally appropriate approaches applicable to their work.

This paper recognises the differences in pidgin creole variations and the need to contextualise tok stori's use, including pronouns, to bring out specific meanings. It aims to address some of the knowledge gaps on the tok stori approach in Melanesia and contribute to its application in various contexts and situations, as I have done by using the term yumi.

METHODOLOGY

My decision to use yumi tok stori as an approach to gathering information for my research was made before COVID-19 emerged, and I intended to meet the participants in person. This meant that conversations would take place over food and in settings that participants are familiar with and in which they feel comfortable. However, this was not possible with the COVID-19 situation becoming a global pandemic. I thus had to be flexible in terms of how I gathered data using the yumi tok stori approach, reflecting Sanga *et al.*'s (2020) discussion of how tok stori, as an informal or conversational meeting approach, possesses situational and contextual flexibility. This flexibility was relevant during my research data collection as people accepted that they could not meet in person and expressed their willingness to speak virtually.

The approach to collecting data or information gathering in this research is a function of context, relationality and my positionality as a PNG Melanesian person using the yumi tok stori approach. Yumi tok stori is a part of my research process, specifically in terms of data collection. Data collection is essential for research as it includes a series of interrelated activities that aim to gather the information that facilitates answering the research questions (Cypress 2018). The interrelated activities carried out in my research to elicit primary information as part of the data collection were done through yumi tok stori. The procedures involved in my yumi tok stori data collection are outlined in this section, starting with the factor of my own position as a PNG woman researcher.

Lukluk blo Mi yet (My Position)
My approach to data collection involved me positioning myself as a PNG woman who is part of PNG diaspora here in Aotearoa and who, as such, can be seen as an insider with knowledge about PNG as a country. Terms such as "insider" and "outsider" are used to signify where one is placed to gather knowledge, and each has its own advantages and disadvantages (Enari 2021). At the same time, because PNG is very diverse, with more than 800

languages and cultures and a diverse range of worldviews, I do not wish to impose fixed insider/outsider categories as I cannot make assumptions of any shared experiences with others in the PNG community.

From a general PNG context, I possess a culturally established understanding of the appropriate ways to conduct meetings, the power dynamics between genders and people's positionality. While I possess and maintain this information and traditional knowledge from my own specific area of origin, I acknowledge that my research participants have their own knowledge from their own areas which I cannot necessarily verify, given PNG's diversity (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 2001). This paper is about acknowledging the differences and commonalities and the relationships that we have, and that is the knowledge I want to contribute toward enhancing and building an understanding of our world (Naepi 2019; Ryan 2015). In agreement with Fasavalu and Reynolds (2019: 11), in my research I emphasise my relationships with my research participants as a PNG woman to centrally position PNG epistemologies in support of decolonising and Indigenising research in PNG and the Pacific. This is emphasised by Kelly-Hanku *et al.* (2021), who point out the role that PNG researchers can play in decolonising research practices, processes and institutions in PNG and beyond.

Luksave long Yumi Olketa (Recognising the Positionality of All)

Discussions on the positionality of Indigenous researchers and the appropriate means for conducting the collection of information for research are crucial. Indigenous researchers are thus enabled to position, think about and become aware of their Indigenous epistemology, supporting them to formulate their views in the context of the research and acknowledge the worldviews of others. In my case this is illustrated in the way I have interacted with other Indigenous peoples from PNG. There are also challenges or disadvantages in being part of the PNG communities, especially where there were complacencies and assumptions (Enari 2021). For example, the participants assumed that I, as a PNG Highlands woman doing a PhD in Melanesian ways of gifting and development, knew everything about the Highlands ways of gifting and reciprocity. Recognising these assumptions, I endeavoured to ask follow-up questions and validate what was discussed and made sure assumptions or other doubts were addressed. Furthermore, I tried to be conscious of my position as a PNG Highlands woman and of the position of my fellow PNG community members who were not necessarily from the Highlands; consequently, I consciously asked them about gifting from the parts of PNG they were associated with. I also tried to ask where people came from in PNG and tried to use appropriate examples of gifting from their respective provinces.

Using the yumi tok stori approach placed me as a PNG researcher in a position to consider both ontology and epistemology. I have my worldviews

and at the same time I use the yumi tok stori approach to gather specific information and gain knowledge from other Papua New Guineans relevant to my study. From an epistemological perspective I hold information and traditional knowledge from my area. As I conducted my research, I was aware of other Papua New Guineans and people with connections to PNG in Aotearoa and their ways of constructing knowledge from their worldviews based on their positions and places in PNG. Being aware of and knowing how participants in the research positioned themselves was an important point to consider, as it has enabled me to acknowledge each individual's position and the places they have a connection to. The yumi tok stori approach, like other Oceanic research data collection methods, can be seen as a way to approach communities with empathy and ethically and to engage in culturally appropriate ways (Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba 2014). It is important to recognise that people who hold knowledge can have their own worldviews and cosmology, and this must be considered as they can contribute meaningfully to research processes in providing both knowledge and information.

When I started talking to people about my research and how they, as people from PNG or with connections to PNG, would participate in it, one of my first experiences was that at first people were a little reluctant to engage, for various reasons. One of the main ones was their discomfort with speaking formally during interviews, especially when I met participants for the first time. As a PNG woman, I know that engaging with people for the first time formally can be uncomfortable, especially as a woman researcher with men I had not met before. I endeavoured to address this by asking informal questions or using other basic PNG approaches people are familiar with, such as making a popular PNG joke or asking about where in PNG they are from.

I am also aware that people can hold particular views about Indigenous people engaging in research, as some with colonial experiences have been taught to see research as tied to power, as outlined by Naepi (2019) as well as by Narokobi (1983: 4) who wrote about "know[ing] ourselves through books written by others". Enari (2021) suggested that when researching Pacific peoples, researchers must acknowledge the effects of colonisation on intellectual spaces and take proactive measures to decolonise research methodologies and interweave Pacific worldviews and knowledges into them, or what Sanga and Reynolds (2021: 536) referred to as emphasising common reality by actors weaving their creations cohesively using language that is culturally shared. The interweaving is done through social engagement, and this is the case for yumi tok stori, where the stori sessions provide a space for the communal construction of knowledge as people come together and talk from their own positions and perspectives.

The Approach to Data Collection

Initially, I wanted to use the focus group as my method for gathering information, but then I revised my approach and used yumi tok stori, given it is a term used and understood by our people. I note the points raised by Pacific scholars about replacing or using the Pacific words to describe a western research practice, as "offering a Pacific name does not necessarily ensure alignment with Pacific thought or practice" (Sanga and Reynolds 2017: 201). The use of yumi tok stori for my research was done on the basis that it is culturally appropriate for people of the western Pacific, especially PNG, as PNG Tok Pisin speakers are familiar with it and as it connotes being inclusive, inviting and hospitable as well the sharing of food/meals (most stori sessions involve food). In the yumi tok stori situation, the meeting is conducted in the language that people are familiar with, and the informal setting creates a relaxed environment for the meetings. In contrast, with a focus group, firstly, the term focus group is generally not familiar to people from PNG or Oceania (unless they encountered it through formal education); and secondly, it does not signify the informality and relaxed meeting environment that yumi tok stori signals to those being invited.

The storytelling (yumi tok stori) approach is used to meet with people, collect information, gain knowledge and gather specific information as part of the research design (Anderson 2002; Packer and Goicoechea 2000).

Research Tools and Data Collection

After obtaining the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee clearance in November 2021, I was able to start gathering data for my research. I did this adopting the yumi tok stori approach alongside other standard research processes to ensure I gathered the relevant information specific to my study. These included the use of a guiding questionnaire with three sections of questions that were used consistently for all the participants during the stori sessions.

I spoke to a total of 44 participants (23 men and 21 women) all across Aotearoa, including PNG citizens in Aotearoa as students, PNG descent/ diaspora community members and non-PNG citizens with personal connections to PNG, such as those married to Papua New Guineans or who have lived and worked in PNG.

The identification of participants in Aotearoa involved the snowball method, which was perfect for the PNG students' group. A PNG student representative was identified, and they contacted other PNG students under the New Zealand government's scholarship scheme. These student groups were involved because they maintain their personal connections and tribal affiliations in PNG through remittances and other support systems. Only those who opted to participate were contacted, and yumi tok stori sessions were conducted.

At the start of the yumi tok stori sessions with people I had not met before, I was conscious that it was superficial at first, but then, as the process unfolded and people became comfortable, more serious conversations developed. This has been expressed by other Pacific researchers, especially those who used informal meeting approaches like talanoa (Fa'avae *et al.* 2016). As a researcher, I needed to build rapport with the participants. As a PNG woman I made some adaptations without thinking too much about it during the research, which included speaking Tok Pisin at the beginning of the stori sessions and asking about general things like the weather or where participants were from, which gradually enabled them to feel comfortable and build rapport. Apart from building rapport, I had to adopt culturally appropriate ways of communicating with the participants. These included introductions and opening and closing meetings being done in culturally appropriate ways, which I did inevitably without thinking about it.

Yumi Tok Stori in the Year of COVID-19

The initial plan was to travel around Aotearoa to the main towns and cities and conduct the yumi tok stori sessions in person. This plan was disrupted when Auckland became a COVID-19 hotspot and went into lockdown, with internal travel restrictions for Aucklanders until 15 December 2021. This meant all the in-person tok stori sessions had to be conducted online, mainly using Zoom and Microsoft Teams sessions. Pacific societies, including PNG, are oral societies, and key to that is face-to-face interaction; and so when situations like COVID-19 force physical separation, there is need to modify the approach. Sanga, Reynolds, Ormond and Southon (2021) outline the renegotiation of methods in Pacific contexts and the navigation and shift to virtual or digital space depending on the realities of those participating in storytelling.

The online sessions still involved the yumi tok stori approach, which was useful where multiple participants were linked in. Using technology for qualitative data collection is becoming more prevalent and frequent among social researchers (Linabary and Corple 2019). The online meetings meant I could talk to people at times that worked for families, with most meetings conducted during evenings or weekends.

Despite the success of the online yumi tok stori sessions for data gathering, there were a few challenges. One of these was that there were technical issues, especially with Zoom and Microsoft Teams, as some people were unfamiliar with online technologies or platforms and were uncomfortable and reluctant to use them. This situation defeats one of the characteristics of yumi tok stori, where people should feel comfortable meeting and talking. To address this, in one instance phone calls were made to a family group, and in other instances people preferred group calls via social media platforms such as Facebook

Messenger or WhatsApp, which seemed accessible for most. These various options were explored and used because many people are familiar with them.

Another disadvantage of meeting online was that there was no food sharing, establishment of rapport or relationship-building before the meeting. The building of rapport before the meeting is important, especially when people have not previously met, as it allows for informal conversation to help people feel comfortable; in particular, conversation over food conveys a meeting's informality. To address this, time was set aside for people to introduce themselves and chat before beginning discussions focused on research. Also, as a Papua New Guinean, I was aware that the usual yumi tok stori session will involve food, and given this was not happening, it was only appropriate to let the participants know that kaikai moni (money for food) would be given in the form of a food voucher. This is also what is commonly referred to as luksave, or a culturally appropriate way of acknowledging people for their time and contribution and for sharing their knowledge. Acknowledgement is culturally appropriate in many societies, and the acknowledgement of participants for my research was done accordingly. During the COVID-19 period, even if meetings were conducted online I maintained the luksave by posting gift cards or vouchers to participants.

With the COVID-19 restrictions and most participants being at home, I endeavoured to ask them about their sense of privacy during the meeting; if they were uncomfortable with a video call, we would only do an audio call. However, many agreed to do video calls as that would serve the purpose of yumi tok stori as a way to hold face-to-face conversations, even virtually. The convenience of the latest technology, such as Zoom, included the possibility of using virtual backgrounds to ensure that only the families taking part in the yumi tok stori session were visible and the rest of the home space was kept from view.

After the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, I started the in-person stori sessions involving a small number of participants in each session (fewer than ten), and these sessions did involve food. Most meetings held after restrictions were lifted were done so in person.

<div align="center">MANAGING THE YUMI TOK STORI APPROACH
IN A PNG MELANESIAN WAY</div>

When I told my participants that we would tell stories, one participant stated, "PNG em yumi lain blo stori" (Papua New Guineans, we are a storytelling people). This statement alludes to storytelling as a way of life in PNG and Melanesia, which has been written about by Melanesian scholars (Sanga *et al*. 2018: 9). People use storytelling to pass on an important message or, in most

cases, simply as an informal meeting and conversation. Tok stori is usually an informal, unstructured conversation, although the person who organises it may have a plan or agenda in mind. This was true in this research as I approached data collection using yumi tok stori sessions with my research objective in mind and a desire to discuss the research topic. This was also reflected by Tongan academic Semisi Prescott (2008), who was critical of the talanoa research approach. Prescott (2008) claimed that even if talanoa is to be used as a research method, the researcher is tasked with gathering specific information, so the conversation must flow with some guidance. For yumi tok stori, I did, as the person organising the meeting, let the participants know the reasons for or objectives of the meeting. The main characteristic of yumi tok stori is the free-flowing nature of the conversation; people are free to talk, but they know the reasons for the meeting. The participants and researcher are involved in the conversation and engage together in the co-construction of knowledge (Vaioleti 2013).

When I engaged with the different groups, one participant pointed to her signed consent form as she handed it back and said, "Mi ting yu mi stori nating na nogat pepa wok" (I thought we were only telling stories and no paperwork). This feedback illustrates that the term yumi tok stori is associated with informal meetings, as some people do not see filling out formal paperwork as characteristic of yumi tok stori. This experience raises the question of how yumi tok stori can be used as an academic research method. From my experience of this, the researcher must reach out to participants and provide background information before the interview sessions. I found in this research that providing details beforehand lets people know that it is an informal meeting but for a specific purpose and course of study, and ensures people are aware of what the meeting will be about and the fact that there will be paperwork.

One of the limitations of the informal nature of yumi tok stori is that conversations are relaxed, enabling people to talk on many topics; in doing so there may be a lot of time taken up with discussions not related to the objective of the research. To address this the researcher must cautiously facilitate the group and use the research question guide to steer conversations back to the topic and objective of the research. The researcher must also facilitate to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to talk or be part of the discussions if a few people are dominating the conversation and leaving others out.

The participants must be notified in advance to ensure they understand the purpose of the study. The notification of participants also fulfils the ethical requirements of the university by letting people know so they can opt out if they do not want to participate.

CONCLUSION

Many Indigenous research approaches have been described by various authors from Aotearoa, such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), and from other parts of the Pacific, such as the educator Konai Helu Thaman (2003), who wrote about decolonising Pacific minds and recognising Pacific worldviews in higher-education settings. Indigenous research approaches are continuing to progress and grow as more Pacific people engage in research (Naepi 2019). There is much more to learn from Melanesian research methods and methodology, as there has been little engagement in that space. Melanesian scholars have pointed out that tok stori scholarship has been less developed in the conversational modes and spaces of Indigenous research than other methodologies, such as talanoa (Sanga, Reynolds, Houma and Maebuta 2021: 378), thus holding much potential. It is hoped the yumi tok stori approach can contribute to this and continue to be part of the advocacy for a Melanesian methodology as an act of decolonisation (Sanga *et al*. 2018: 3), and that writing about yumi tok stori and suggesting context-specific approaches will enlighten researchers and contribute to the knowledge of Melanesian research approaches that can be used by those wanting to conduct research in Oceania.

For those wanting to use the yumi tok stori approach, understanding the cultural context is essential, and it must be recognised that the context can vary and shift depending on where yumi tok stori is used and who with. There are also the challenging questions of whether yumi tok stori can be used by anyone and whether it requires someone with culturally located knowledge. The answer is yes to both. Yumi tok stori at its root is based on the positionality of the researcher who identifies as Indigenous and can use the appropriate approaches. For researchers who are not Indigenous but want to use it, the onus is on them to be aware of the culturally appropriate ways of using the storytelling approach specific to the geographic area they are working in. It is important to note that the Melanesian tok stori approach can be contextualised by using the appropriate pronoun or terminology rather than regarded as a generic approach, given the variations of pidgin creole in the region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are Tok Pisin.

kaikai moni	money for food
luksave	acknowledgement
manaakitanga	showing respect, generosity and care for others (Māori)
tok stori	Melanesian informal meeting; storytelling session through conversation
yumi	you and me; you and us
yumi toktok	let's talk
yupla	you all; you people

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VĀ: A PRAXIS FOR PACIFIC ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT: The architecture of Pacific peoples has always been people centred. Vā is the relational space that mediates Pacific peoples' relationships with one another and their environments. This paper extends the understanding of vā as a model of research and presents vā as a praxis framework for Pacific architectural action research. In an architectural project, I suggest vā can shape the whole process from conception to completion beyond just the built and occupied spaces. When practising architecture, I argue that vā can be a governing design principle as well as the approach to deliver Pacific architectural projects appropriately. Vā, therefore, is significant for all architects working in cross-cultural settings that involve Pacific peoples. Coming full circle back to my first publication, "Tauhi Vā: The First Space", the paper begins with an architectural understanding of vā before framing a scoping review of vā research published over the last 40 years. The paper then discusses how vā can be unsettling and innovative as a praxis for design, procurement, building and project management on an architectural project. As a Tongan architect and researcher, I draw on experiences from architectural projects in Aotearoa New Zealand and in Te Ao Moemoeā (Australia) and the wider Moana (Pacific Ocean) completed over the recent years.

Keywords: Pacific and Māori codesign, architectural vā praxis, Pacific architecture, Tongan architecture, vā, tauhi vā, teu le va

Vā (Pacific relational spaces), as a construct, is a well-established Pacific research concept and methodology that emerged in Pacific research during the 1980s. This paper considers vā as discourse 40 years on and aims to extend existing studies of vā by demonstrating vā as a praxis, as illustrated through my lived experiences as an architect and researcher. To this end, case studies are presented from architectural projects conducted between 2017 and 2022.

If research methodology describes the approach to one's research and application of research methods, then praxis-based research best frames the findings of this paper because vā reaches across both architectural theory and its practice. As transformational research (Given 2008: 887), research praxis reflects and seeks to improve outcomes and, therefore, must shift between theory and practice. I propose vā as a research and design praxis that is essential to our understanding of Pacific architecture because vā

combines ways of knowing, seeing, being and doing for Pacific peoples. The blurring between method, methodology and practice becomes more relevant when applying, observing, facilitating and corresponding to vā as a Pacific architect and researcher on Pacific and Māori architectural projects. Within this space, I operate between these roles, moving outside and inside the cultural communities, whilst seeking transformational outcomes through action research.

Space making in Pacific cultures is a highly sophisticated and ancient expertise. Fundamentally, at the core of making Pacific spaces are the sociospatial values that underlie the conception, curation and establishment of physical spaces. The values-driven process of Pacific space making is attributed to the praxis of vā. It could be argued that vā, as a concept of spatial relations reflecting social values, is not exclusive to Pacific architecture since all architecture since time immemorial has reflected the fundamental values and aspirations of its culture at the time. However, each culture has its own nuances, and for the architecture of Pacific peoples, vā as a praxis—bridging theory and practice—can develop designs and project approaches that are culturally specific for Pacific peoples.

With renewed interest in participatory design methods (cf. Mark and Hagen 2020) in recent years and particular emphasis on cross-cultural design engagements, vā reminds us how prevalent and established people-centred value systems are for Indigenous communities of the Moana (Pacific Ocean). Since relational spaces have always been critical to Pacific architecture, vā as a praxis demystifies how Pacific peoples use and occupy spaces, how we engage Pacific communities as stakeholders and clients on building projects, and how future projects could apply vā to frame their architectural design processes. Vā as a praxis has much to offer the predominantly western discourse of codesign methods.

This paper begins with positioning vā within my own work, before presenting a scoping review of academic literature to help inform future research about vā. The architectural examples presented within the discussion of the paper then seek to expand the current understandings of vā as a praxis from the viewpoint of cross-cultural architectural design.

ARCHITECTURAL POSITIONING OF VĀ

My first academic publication, titled "Tauhi Vā: The First Space" ('Ilaiū 2009), described how the contemporary fale (houses) in Tonga—although built as fakapapālangi (western-looking) residences—were in fact occupied according to anga faka-Tonga (Tongan ways of being and living) within built spaces. What, then, makes this fakapapālangi fale a Tongan fale is in fact that people within the domestic spaces enact tauhi vā (the nurturing of the Tongan relational spaces). That publication was a response to an earlier symposium in

honour of the renowned architectural historian and critic Joseph Rykwert and his 1972 book *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (Rykwert 1981). Rykwert's work was concerned with a return to architectural origins and the foundations of modern architecture across different societies. My paper returned to what is essential for Tongan architecture by reviewing the contemporary transformation of Tongan domestic buildings. I explained how Tongan customary behaviours have continued to organise and shape the contemporary fale. These sociospatial values, I argue, are more established than the building itself. I moved the discussion about Tongan architecture beyond the tangible realm to the relational realm of the "first space", as I described tauhi vā—this first space that is ever-present and embedded in all we do as Tongans. Vā is the relational space that nurtures, adorns and perpetuates the social connections between all Pacific peoples and their environments.

As a Tongan researcher with an emic understanding of my culture, I was able to see past just simply architectural westernisation (ʻIlaiū 2011) and similarly the colonised view of "mimicry" (Bhabha 2004) that is assumed by others unaware of Tongan values and aspirations. Moreover, I argued for the recognition of contemporary fale transformations as valid examples of Tongan architecture that unsettles the traditional depiction of a "primitive" thatched hut as our only form of architecture. This self-determining narrative disrupted the architectural history of Pacific spaces at the time, because, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021: 250) reinforces, "[w]hen Indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. Questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, and people participate on different terms". It is in this same vein that the paper discusses vā as a praxis for architectural research and design: to determine an Indigenous approach to understanding and designing contemporary architecture of Pacific peoples.

I left Aotearoa New Zealand in 2010 to live abroad and practise architecture in Fiji and Australia. In 2022, I returned to take up an academic position at Te Pare School of Architecture and Planning, Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland, and it became evident to me that vā has become more widespread in its usage across architectural students' works, appearing in the studio and the teaching curriculum and beginning to influence how we begin and end university meetings. This is great to see. However, Pacific architectural students complained that the literature about vā is dispersed and fragmented. Although it is heartening to see greater interest in and publications about vā, a valid critique is that it has resulted in a "cluttering", to borrow Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi's use of the word (2005), where focus is undefined and there are inevitable gaps. An objective of this paper is to position vā in architectural research and contribute to

organising the existing literature by reviewing what has been published to date about vā for future students. This is a scoping review to determine the extent and major facets of the discourse, and therefore is by no means an exhaustive list, as my focus is on architecture. I started at this point more than ten years ago when I left Aotearoa, and now as an emerging academic, this paper is my own reconnection to the ways of thinking, making and doing that have always made true sense to me as a Pacific architect and researcher.

VĀ DISCOURSE WITHIN ACADEMIA

Vā is a way of being for many Pacific peoples that existed well before any academic mentioned it. It is a construct formed from within Pacific communities, using their respective ideologies and terminologies, to frame sociospatial relationships established between themselves, others and their environments. Moreover, by enacting vā these relationships are maintained according to the communal values and aspirations of their time, and the reciprocal actions enable the relationships to continue and thrive, such as tauhi vā in the Tongan context, or teu le va in the nurturing of Sāmoan relations. Vā for this paper is both the sociospatial values performed in time and space and the generative ability of vā to create or respond to architectural spaces that all together mediate Pacific peoples' relationships with one another and their environments.

From a scoping review of the Pacific research published about vā over the last 40 years, I present four categories, as tabulated in Table 1. The first category of publications discusses vā by way of explaining other prominent research objectives. Within this category are, for example, works about Sāmoan polity (Shore 1982), Tongan ethnographic studies (Morton 1996) and works examining Tongan perspectives of health and wellbeing (Young-Leslie 1999).

The second category presents Pacific-led explanations to theorise the meaning of vā. Here in this category, literature is traced back to the writings of Sāmoan poet and academic Albert Wendt regarding postcolonial identities in Aotearoa New Zealand (Wendt 1996). By the early 2000s, such discussions were moving from sporadic mentions within academic studies towards focused works to broaden our understanding of Pacific relational spaces and connections. This includes, for example, the work of Tongan academic Konai Helu Thaman (2008) about vā as a paradigm to nurture intercultural relationships and improve pedagogies for Pacific education. At the same time, Tongan academic Hūfanga 'Okusitino Māhina was developing the tā–vā theory (2004), with fellow Tongan academic Tēvita Ka'ili (2008, 2017) contributing to it thereafter. The Sāmoan interpretation of vā within Sāmoan mobility studies has also been addressed by Sāmoan academic Sa'iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor (2009).

Māhina, Ka‘ili and Lilomaiava-Doktor moved the discourse into the third category where vā is discussed through its various Pacific manifestations. It is here, in this third category, that my publication "Tauhi Vā: The First Space" (‘Ilaiū 2009) as it relates to fale architectural transformations is also situated. An important work relating to Sāmoan architectural spaces and vā is Albert Refiti's PhD thesis (2014), with Refiti co-founding a research platform, Vā Moana/Pacific Spaces, in 2012 to foster further discussions. Refiti's earlier work (2002) refers to vā as an ordering mechanism for the "in-between" spaces of Pacific architecture.

Finally, the fourth category of literature seeks to rationalise a research and learning framework guided by vā. It is in the last two emergent categorical themes of vā that I locate this paper. Teu le va has been featured in the context of improving Pasifika education (Airini *et al*. 2010) and its relevance to Sāmoan relational ethics to research (Anae 2016, 2017). In recent years, the work of ‘Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki and Hinekura Smith (2020) return us to Indigenous translations of vā and now connect its usage to the Māori word kā (to ignite). Wolfgramm-Foliaki and Smith's study of vā is part of a proposed framework to promote collaborative efforts across Pasifika and Māori research and educational aims in Aotearoa. Literature in this final category has also shifted towards studies of vā as a research method, such as the work of Faleolo (2021), who combines talanoa moe (and) vā (conversations nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships) as an approach to e-talanoa (online conversations; see Fa‘avae *et al*. 2022) during the COVID-19 pandemic. I propose that these publications within the fourth category all attempt to rationalise a praxis of vā for Pacific research and education.

Given the increased interest within architectural education, I see the need to organise the academic interpretations of vā to develop ways of learning the construct and promote further research along these suggested categories of vā, as a growing discourse. This scoping review of literature is an attempt to establish the existing positions, as part of the decluttering of existing discussions about vā. It is however prudent for anyone using this analysis to avoid formularising and generalising vā across Pacific peoples. Instead, any researcher using vā should clearly define their use of vā drawing from the various existing positions and take into consideration the nuanced meanings of vā for different Pacific peoples. At present the literature about vā is defined mainly by academics of Sāmoan and Tongan descent and their experiences. Although their positions appear parallel, they do show an important theoretical difference in current discourse. The key distinction is marked by vā in relation to tā (time; markers of time, like things or people). According to Māhina (2004) and Ka‘ili (2017), there is a need to consider how tā interacts with vā to fully comprehend vā in the Tongan sense. The architectural findings of this paper do sit within this

conception of vā marked by tā, because the realisation of Pacific values is manifested through the architecture. However, the findings also support the transformational praxis of vā, as presented in Anae's educational work (Airini *et al.* 2010), whereby vā can guide architects working with Pacific peoples and the delivery approach of Pacific architectural projects. Vā within the study of architecture, then, is multidimensional and influences design thinking, design process, project relationships, project delivery and the architectural outcome itself.

Table 1. Four categories that emerge from the vā discourse from 1980s to 2020s according to selected published sources.

Vā: to explain other ideas	Vā: theorising its meanings from an Indigenous perspective	Vā: translating its tangible and intangible manifestations	Vā: as a framework for learning and research
Shore 1982; Morton 1996; Young-Leslie 1999	Wendt 1996; Refiti 2002; Māhina 2004; Thaman 2008; Ka'ili 2008, 2017; Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009	Refiti 2002; Māhina 2004; 'Ilaiū 2009; Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009; Ka'ili 2017	Airini *et al.* 2010; Anae 2016, 2017; Wolfgramm-Foliaki and Smith 2020; Faleolo 2021; Fa'avae *et al.* 2022

VĀ AS ARCHITECTURAL PRAXIS:
CROSS-CULTURAL DESIGN IN AOTEAROA

Cross-cultural design describes how architectural design is negotiated across cultures. Over the last ten years, the architectural industry in Aotearoa has experienced a significant shift towards greater recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi). In turn, this has enabled Māori peoples' cultural narratives to determine appropriate placemaking designs, and particularly on projects funded by Māori iwi (tribal groups) and by the New Zealand government alike. Although Pacific peoples are not Indigenous to Aotearoa, their narratives and motifs are reflected in the design of, for example, shopping centres and community and religious spaces. Moving across to domestic buildings, in 2002 Housing New Zealand published its *Pacific Housing Design Guide* (Faumuina & Associates). Also, in recent years, Pacific communities have been a focus of Kāinga Ora government housing projects, such as the Modernising Pasifika Homes development in Māngere, Auckland, that began in 2022 (Kāinga Ora n.d.). The need for cross-cultural

design expertise has therefore increased with such demand in Aotearoa.

Architectural practices specialising in cross-cultural design prior to the early 2000s were exclusive to firms managed by Māori or Pacific peoples— like the late Rewi Thompson, designTRIBE directed by Rau Hoskins, and Faumuina Architects directed by Polisi Faumuina—that all inherently had connections to these communities and were motivated to work with their respective cultural groups. Larger architectural firms employed to provide full architectural services for Pacific-styled or Māori-styled buildings in Aotearoa would also work with such cultural design experts. A good example is the architectural firm Jasmax that led the design services for the University of Auckland Fale Pasifika in the early 2000s and collaborated with many Pacific cultural experts and artisans. Some large architectural practices had in-house cultural designers, like Creative Spaces and its Tongan architect, Andrew Tuʻinukuafe. However, it was still considered a niche area of design more than a decade ago. But today, such shifts within the architectural industry and acknowledgement of Māori rangatiratanga (sovereignty) as tangata whenua (Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand) in the design process and as custodians of project sites has meant a design trend towards appropriate cross-cultural design processes. Over the last decade cultural advisory groups with Māori and Pacific graduates leading the process have emerged within firms that were once exclusively mainstream in their architectural services. Indigenous-led design associations like Ngā Aho and architectural companies directed by Māori and Pacific directors like TOA, MAU Studio and New Pacific Architecture are also a response to the need for more cross-cultural design experts. Within this context, vā is being socialised and, I would add, treated as a praxis, beyond it being just a design idea and research methodology for architecture.

Architectural design services commonly start with a brief from the client and stakeholders, although the brief is sometimes generated together with the architects. The briefing process is project-dependent, but at its centre is how one chooses to engage their client and stakeholders to understand their values and aspirations from which to design. The briefing process ranges from community-wide forums to providing voluntary feedback on design proposals or gathering community data for a project—all referred to as community engagement. Similarly, there is stakeholder or user group engagement, which is similar to community engagement; however, this kind of engagement is limited to stakeholders or user groups directly affected by the project outcomes. With standard engagement processes the design authority typically flows one way from architectural professionals outwards. Codesign, on the other hand—although not entirely studied in relation to Indigenous communities—describes the coming together of professionals and non-professionals to collectively inform the design outcomes. Vā as praxis abuts neatly into such participatory design methods used on cross-

cultural design projects, because nurturing vā as a design professional means being mindful about, but not limited to, the delivery of services and how to enable Pacific stakeholders' full participation, alongside identifying their sociospatial perceptions of vā for the actual design of the project.

Vā as a praxis is about the decentring of architects or design professionals as the sole designer and learning how to listen without designing ahead. Vā is critical to gaining the trust of Pacific peoples before they fully participate and share their knowledges. It is no surprise then that those who specialise in codesign within cross-cultural design in Aotearoa are usually of Pacific or Māori ancestry, because their cultural upbringing and experiences develop and hone relational soft skills needed to facilitate collective design practices: they can learn and share genealogies; listen to and respect kaumātua or mātu'a (people with cultural seniority) included on projects; appreciate and easily grasp the allegory within storytelling; read the room and navigate social spaces; think allegorically about design and cultural translation; and also understand the sense of time and trusting reciprocation within the relational space.

The architectural translation of cultural knowledges, gifted by the Indigenous community for the designers to use, is part of the codesign process. Since vā is also about cultural values and enactment of those values within a space, then designing Pacific and Māori architecture is about being an expert at understanding and translating those values and aspirations and the tikanga of Māori peoples, anga faka-Tonga of Tongans or other equivalents like fa'a Sāmoa for Sāmoans, which all refer to culturally specific customary behaviours and ways of being. In designing cross-cultural spaces, an architect learns how to translate these cultural concepts and their culturally specific nuances into the design of the built environment in the most culturally appropriate and acceptable way. Vā, then, becomes a praxis that concurrently is the driving design principle and frames the design process and the project delivery, alongside being the approach to nurture the project relationships.

The development of cultural narratives takes time, and this is not always a smooth process within an architectural programme governed by client budget and timelines and existing power dynamics within cultural groups. But patience and nurturing the vā that has been established with cultural stakeholders can then lead to a successful project embedded with cultural meaning. On the Tauranga Moana courthouse project in Aotearoa, the presence of Māori kaumātua at every formal codesign meeting ensured immediate endorsement of design decisions. As I observed, the inclusion of cultural seniority on this project provided a strong relational space, or vā, with the esteemed values of old and continuation of accepted tikanga for the project's spaces. Since each Pacific and Māori community provides voices for their own realities, the design engagement methods should not be

formulaic. Rather it is necessary that architects, within or outside of Pacific and Māori cultures, aim to be more innovative, be more agile, be better at listening (and being quiet), enable safe spaces for communities to engage meaningfully and acknowledge other experiences that may exceed their own worldview to operate successfully within vā.

<div align="center">VĀ AS ARCHITECTURAL PRAXIS:
PROCUREMENT OF CULTURAL AND BUILDING EXPERTS</div>

Typically for architectural design services the project phases consist of pre-design, concept design, preliminary design, developed design and detailed design prior to the construction and defects liability phases. Historically, cross-cultural engagements were conducted only at the start of projects, but with the shift to codesign approaches, Māori and Pacific communities are increasingly engaged throughout all project design phases, as important partners on a project. Procurement consists of not only obtaining architectural services or building labour but also finding the building materials. I begin with procurement, because it is here that Pacific architecture traditionally begins (ʻIlaiū 2007: 137, 145; ʻIlaiū Talei 2018: 710). Pacific peoples historically had our own approach to procurement, which often starts with who one knows. In other words, the vā between the building owner and their environment and the people with building skills available to them is what initiated the project.

To find a tufunga (builder; artisan; craftsperson), one's social network is considered to determine at best a family or clan member, or a contact who can recommend someone else. This initial act of building then starts with finding the most suitable tufunga from amongst the existing relationships with building experts available in the community. An advantage when sourcing a relative or an acquaintance is the opportunity to gain building services at a more affordable rate or engage in customary transactions of reciprocity. The latter means that the service by the tufunga can be returned by the receiving party at another time or through another way, such as through a meʻaʻofa (monetary gift) at a daughter's wedding, assistance with agricultural planting and harvesting, or later providing pigs and root crops for a funeral.

Historically, the tufunga would orchestrate the collection of the suitable natural vegetation and the people to harvest and prepare raw materials for thatching, floor materials and structural elements. In Tonga, I found the collection of materials involved relatives sourcing upcycled building materials from demolition yards, inorganic materials left on suburban curbsides, or websites like Gumtree (in Australia) or Trade Me (in Aotearoa) where leftover building materials may be sold. I coined the term "architectural remittances" (ʻIlaiū 2009: 28; ʻIlaiū Talei 2018) to describe this procurement praxis of maintaining and nurturing the vā between family members located in the village and those within the diaspora. Kaʻili

(2017: 5) refers to the symmetrical aesthetics of māfana (warmth) in the relationship, when the enactment of tauhi vā occurs through fetokoniʻaki (mutual support) in Tongan communities, which is also a cultural value of other Pacific peoples. Importantly, what I want to draw attention to is that the contemporary sourcing and gathering of construction materials and expertise by Pacific peoples today reflects and perpetuates earlier methods of building procurement that is still based on vā.

During my experience on large infrastructure aid projects in the southwestern Pacific Islands, I observed how the procurement of cultural specialists or local expertise is required within the project tendering documents (ʻIlaiū Talei, forthcoming). This meant that foreign companies were required to source local consultants and provide capacity-building services to be eligible for the project's services. These Indigenous-centred procurement methods for aid projects are similar to what is occurring in Aotearoa with the inclusion of mana whenua (specific Māori custodians of a territory) on government projects. However, sourcing the right people for the job involves finding cultural advisors who can determine the iwi-endorsed cultural representatives for the project. Architectural projects involving Māori often start with meetings to determine genealogies and descent lines to the whenua (land) of the project. On government projects in particular, it is also common for both the client side and architect side to have cultural engagement advisors, strengthening a sense of reciprocity. By pairing cultural expertise across the client and design team, kotahitanga (cohesion and unity) in the design vision is better aligned.

Although there have been some significant improvements in making space for cultural experts and the participation of Indigenous communities, it is not always a smooth and simple process. This may include the oversight by a client to allow within a project budget the meʻaʻofa or koha (monetary gift) to cultural stakeholders to compensate them for their engagement. Reciprocity is not always understood as a value of vā by non-Moana peoples. Thus, it falls on informed design professionals to request and support this enactment of vā as a praxis.

VĀ AS ARCHITECTURAL PRAXIS: BUILDING WITH VĀ

My parents' house in Ōtara, Auckland, has a garage that was renovated in the early 1990s into a granny flat by my uncle Tauē. My mother employed her brother to extend our family's living and sleeping spaces beyond our four-bedroom house. Included in my parents' reasoning was the desire to uphold fakaʻapaʻapa (respectful cultural relations) between my older brother and us girls, who were staying in the main house. The vā that existed between my mother and her brother was also governed by the customary values of fahu (a type of Tongan matriarchal system), since my mother is the eldest sister

amongst her siblings. My mother, on the other hand, did not overburden her brother and reciprocated by giving him a cash payment at the end of his services, paying for all the materials and providing all his daily meals on our construction site. Thus, via these sociospatial transactions in our Auckland suburban family home, vā was maintained and nurtured.

My personal anecdote and lived experience is not different from historical ways of building in Pacific communities, which relied on collective efforts to gather raw materials, make the building materials, organise and instruct the building labourers, make the food for those working and provide the construction labour. It is very true the Pacific saying that before one builds a fale, they plant their garden full of crops to feed and thank the future workers, emphasising again how the intangible relational space, or vā, initiates the tangible built spaces. The blessing of the site prior to the builders beginning work on site and the blessing at the completion of the project brings full circle the vā required to finish the building. Such associated building ceremonies continue on important community-engaged projects, and in Aotearoa on government projects mana whenua are notified to attend and bless the site prior to land disruption. Just as in the past, once a project reaches completion it concludes with a celebration and feasting, and so we are reminded of the vā that was activated and nurtured during the project and now reciprocated.

For the construction of a Queensland Government correctional project that I worked on from 2020 to 2021, there was an allowance for Australian Aboriginals to collect, inspect and advise on cultural artefacts found during ground excavation. In New Zealand and Australia, heritage specialists are engaged to advise on how to adhere to cultural heritage laws.[1] Their guidance involves establishing a process to mitigate the destruction of taonga (valued cultural landscapes and artefacts) or Aboriginal cultural artefacts that may be found during site excavation and involve cultural landowners in managing coincidental finds. As these illustrations explain, vā as a praxis continues to order the relations involved during the construction phase between ancestral land, artefacts of that land, the land's owners and those involved in the architectural project.

VĀ AS ARCHITECTURAL PRAXIS: DESIGNING WITH VĀ

While I was working on the refurbishment of Fuaʻamotu International Airport in Tonga as a project architect, I sat in a meeting room with the Tongan client-side project manager, Tongan airport stakeholders, my design colleagues and the Pākehā (New Zealand European) construction manager. Our meeting began with a lotu (Christian prayer). Prior to the lotu there was informal banter of "Ko hai koe pea ʻoku ke haʻu mei fē ʻi Tonga?" (Who are you and where do you come from in Tonga?). My client, knowing that I am Tongan, wished to first connect with my ancestral origins. I found that this

establishment of vā—to understand one's whakapapa (genealogy) from past to present—represents an innate need to make connections and develop a relationship prior to getting to official business ('Ilaiū Talei, forthcoming). In my meetings with mana whenua on the Tauranga Moana courthouse project the need for creating and nurturing vā was no different. Formal meetings began with a karakia (Māori prayer or incantation) and, when required, a round of whakawhanaungatanga (establishing and maintaining relationships) for team introductions. Without this human transparency, warm-up and display of professional vulnerability, it is generally sensed that such meetings did not start off appropriately. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the protocol to offer a karakia prior to a Zoom meeting continued. I have observed that such vā-derived protocols can be unsettling for some, because they require learning a new language and taking on customary practices that go beyond one's belief systems. However, by indigenising these architectural meetings, a safe cultural space was created for those involved from Pacific and Māori communities, and others learnt new approaches to design engagement.

On the Tauranga Moana courthouse project, mana whenua highlighted the need for a full cultural immersion trip consisting of a wānanga (educational cultural sleepover) at the site's local marae (a communal centre of buildings and courtyard spaces used by a particular Māori clan group) and a hīkoi (walk; trek) to visit and experience the wider site's taonga surrounding the project. To be guided by vā as architects means that we should be open to sources of inspiration beyond the project site, which acknowledges the cultural milieu of time and space for Indigenous peoples involved in the projects. Attributed to the relational values of mana whenua on this project, such hīkoi adapted the typical architectural project for architects to first engage the people of the land and what they value as taonga. In doing so, this design process inspired, challenged preconceptions and educated non-Māori designers on what is specifically valuable to mana whenua, or the Māori representatives of that site. Such innovations to cross-cultural design projects present exciting opportunities to enact and deepen vā as a praxis for architectural design for Pacific and Māori communities alike.

Beyond pre-design phases, a project may make space for Indigenous communities to advise or generate artistic works for the architectural project. Engaging local cultural artists can embed appropriate meanings that support placemaking strategies for the project. This may include a design for the ceiling, carpet or tile layouts, the façade design of the building or the patterns on the structural pou (posts), all reflecting a selection of cultural values and narratives. Such a collaborative design and building approach can strengthen the vā between designers and cultural representatives, offering the latter a sense of ownership and a culturally safe and welcoming environment that reflects ancestral narratives for future generations.

CONCLUSION

Vā within architecture, with its own distinct cultural descriptors (including tauhi vā and teu le va), is at present a cultural design concept that Auckland-based educators and students (primarily of Pacific descent) explore through architectural school projects. Within the architectural industry, it has yet to emerge distinctly as a governing design principle or design praxis of architectural projects—but this paper argues that it can. Codesign approaches need to be customised to suit Pacific peoples and their architectural approaches. Architects working on cross-cultural design critically need to understand the importance of vā to Pacific communities before vā can emerge more meaningfully as a formalised praxis. Having Pacific architects and designers positioned as design leads on the right architectural projects is also crucial to manifesting what vā *can be*. Wellington's new Fale Malae, designed in collaboration with Albert Refiti, Michel Tuffery and the firm Jasmax, is a sign of what is to come.

The future of vā as a praxis will become more critical as participatory design processes underscore successful and aspirational architecture for Pacific and Māori communities. Currently such projects do follow cultural protocols that foster whakawhanaungatanga and vā. However, it is hoped that cultural introductions at the start of architectural research and practice projects do not end there, without further meaningful engagement. I assert that vā as a praxis is central to Pacific project delivery, design processes and design outcomes, and it should continue from this precedent when developing contemporary forms of Pacific architecture. My illustrations demonstrate how vā can inform all of the relationships of the project, including the holistic connections to a project site. Moreover, vā influences *how* we conduct community or stakeholder engagement and the participatory design process. Vā as a praxis frames the management of the project delivery, sets its realistic timeframes and embeds culturally appropriate activities to support relationships before the design activities even begin. Vā is about understanding well the values and aspirations of the community engaged. Vā is about how to translate those values through the architecture and creating safe and inclusive spaces. Vā is about protecting taonga found in construction sites and its safeguarding. Vā is an all-encompassing and multifaceted praxis, perpetuating cultural meaning and values throughout the entire life cycle of an architectural project.

Future research focused on developing codesign tools for engagement according to vā and as applicable to Pacific peoples is very much needed. Vā influences design thinking and design process on architectural projects and moves easily between methodology and method as action research. The architectural dialogue of vā is focused predominantly on the occupation of spaces, but, as this paper argues, there is more to say about vā before

relational spaces are enveloped within the tangible architectural form. For this reason, reframing vā as a praxis is a critical step for those researching and practising Pacific architecture in the future.

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NOTES

1. This is done in accordance with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 and Protected Objects Act 1975.

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are Tongan unless otherwise stated.

anga faka-Tonga	Tongan customary behaviours and ways of being
e-talanoa	online conversations
faʻa Sāmoa	Sāmoan customary behaviours and ways of being (Sāmoan)
fahu	head person(s) within a type of Tongan matriarchal system
fakaʻapaʻapa	respectful cultural relations
fale	house
fakapapālangi	western-styled; Europeanised
fetokoniʻaki	mutual support
hīkoi	walk; trek (Māori)
iwi	tribal group (Māori)
kā	to ignite (Māori)
karakia	prayer or incantation (Māori)
kaumātua	people with cultural seniority (Māori)
koha	monetary gift (Māori)
kotahitanga	cohesion and unity (Māori)
lotu	Christian prayer
māfana	warmth
mana whenua	specific Māori custodians of a territory (Māori)
marae	a communal centre of buildings and courtyard spaces used by a particular Māori clan group (Māori)

mātuʻa	people with cultural seniority
meʻaʻofa	monetary gift
Moana	Pacific Ocean
Pākehā	New Zealand European (Māori)
pou	posts of a building (Māori, Tongan)
rangatiratanga	sovereignty (Māori)
tā	time; markers of time, like things or people
talanoa moe vā	conversations nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships
tangata whenua	Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand (Māori)
taonga	valued cultural landscapes and artefacts (Māori)
tauhi vā	nurturing of Tongan relational space
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitingi (Māori)
teu le va	nurturing of relational spaces (Sāmoan)
tikanga	Māori customary behaviours and ways of being (Māori)
tufunga	builder; artisan; craftsperson
vā	relational space that mediates Pacific peoples' relationships with one another and environments
wānanga	educational cultural sleepover at a marae (Māori)
whakapapa	genealogy (Māori)
whakawhanaungatanga	establishing and maintaining relationships (Māori)
whenua	land (Māori)

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THE FALA METHODOLOGY

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ABSTRACT: "Fofola e fala, kae talanoa 'a e kāinga" is a Tongan proverb meaning "to respectfully unravel the fala (traditional mat) for the family to talk". It emphasises the significance of the fala in enabling robust talanoa (conversations) to occur. My doctoral research explored the factors influencing health choices of Pasifika peoples in South East Queensland, where I developed a Tongan-centred methodology for research using ten stages of the fala-making process. It is recognised that Pasifika peoples experience disproportionate rates of obesity and diabetes-related conditions, reducing quality of life and resulting in premature death. My research explored the health perspectives of elders, parents and teenagers, as this influences their health choices. I began with talanoa and constructivist grounded theory methodologies, but cultural tensions and significantly differing perspectives between Island-born elders and New Zealand–born parents, in contrast with Australian-born Pasifika teenagers, led me to search for a resolution. The fala-making process offered a way of weaving the divide between three generations' perspectives of health. Visual illustrations provided by Her Royal Highness Princess Angelika Lātūfuipeka Tuku'aho and her Tongan weavers are used and credited for their Indigenous knowledge of fala making. By applying the fala-making process in my research, I developed the Fala methodology, which is grounded in Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing.

Keywords: Pasifika, Pacific methodologies, Indigenous, wellness, health, talanoa, constructivist grounded theory

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The purpose of my doctoral study was to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence health choices of three generations of Pasifika peoples, as they continue to experience disproportionately higher rates of obesity and diabetes-related conditions, reducing their quality of life (Matenga-Ikihele *et al*. 2021; Ndwiga *et al*. 2018; Tin *et al*. 2021). Data shows that the rate of these preventable diseases affecting Pasifika communities continues to increase, with diagnoses in younger patients becoming more prevalent (Faletau *et al*. 2020; O'Dea and Dibley 2014).

My research had three aims: (i) to explore the perspectives of Pasifika peoples regarding what health means to them, (ii) to gain insight into how and why these perspectives influence their health choices, and (iii) to identify a response that ensures healthier lives and greater longevity

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in Pasifika communities. Twenty-nine participants informed the research, which included individual talanoa (conversations) with 12 elders of varying Pasifika ethnicities from communities and churches across Queensland. Gender- and age-specific group talanoa with parents and teenagers from one Pasifika church, predominantly Samoan, were also held with five families.

The findings revealed conflicting perspectives regarding the definition of the term health, instead emphasising cultural terms which predominantly translated to wellness. The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity (World Health Organization 1993: 1). Elders and some parents perceived health as a western term that they were "divorced from" (Māori Elder Mary), as it was deemed as being critical of their bodies and a term devoid of the spirit. This influenced choices with a preference for familiar spiritual and Indigenous healing practices such as prayer, fasting, food, herbal treatments and cultural massage. Factors influencing health choices included their Christian faith and church priorities, which determined where resources were invested. Commitment to family, cultural beliefs regarding food and the quest for prosperity took precedence. These findings informed the development in this project of the Dominant Pasifika Perspectives of Wellness model, capturing the interaction of core factors influencing health choices.

Another significant finding was that some participants challenged these dominant Pasifika perspectives of wellness in efforts to improve their quality of life. This change did not result from an external intervention working on participants from the outside in. Changes occurred after a near-death experience or a significant incident which catapulted the individual, and selected others, into a state of readiness. As a result, wellness priorities were redefined and pursued through collective-individual agency. This means the individual working alone could not withstand the dominant cultural environment that influences wellness choices, particularly regarding financial priorities: a cohort of like-minded people, otherwise known as the collective, was required to rally around the individual's needs to obtain wellness. Within the pressures of the dominant cultural factors, the collective-individuals were at work to improve wellness, resulting in the development of an Alternative Pasifika Perspective of Wellness model.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Vaioleti (2006) introduced talanoa as a Pacific methodology, extending upon Halapua (2000, 2013), who used talanoa as unconcealed storytelling for conflict resolution. Talanoa is rooted in Polynesian languages and worldviews (Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea 2014). Tala means to relate or talk informally or formally (Vaioleti 2006), while noa means reaching harmony

or balance between equal or opposite forces to establish an equilibrium (Tecun *et al*. 2018: 157). Whilst talanoa has been widely used in research, this has not been without challenges. Tunufa'i (2016) suggests that talanoa lacks a logical process for how to collect, analyse and disseminate data. Others argue talanoa is not about analysis but rather is a holistic interaction inclusive of the environment concerned with forging relationships (Anae 2019; Matapo and Enari 2021) and co-constructing meaning through conversations (Matapo and Enari 2021). Cammock *et al*. (2021) defines the lack of structure in talanoa as a strength, providing flexibility and vā (space) to navigate complex cultural systems and nuances.

Critiquing Pacific methodologies and methods facilitates the development of Pacific research and knowledge creation (Baice *et al*. 2021; Koya-Vaka'uta 2017; Sanga and Reynolds 2017; Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). However, this can be challenging given the cultural notions of respect, humility and maintaining the vā (Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery 2019). As a result of these diverse opinions, Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery advocate for the use of multiple perspectives, as no single approach "carries the monopoly on truth and knowledge" (p. 197). It is this multiplicity of perspectives that resulted in the decision to combine talanoa, constructivist grounded theory and Tongan fala (traditional mat) making as the methodology in my PhD project. Weaving together a Pasifika and western methodology finds precedence in the Lālanga (weaving) methodology that combined constructivist grounded theory and the Kakala framework (Malungahu *et al*. 2017). Goodyear-Smith and 'Ofanoa (2022) identify how Fa'afaletui, a Samoan philosophical paradigm meaning ways of (fa'a) weaving together (tui) the deliberations of different groups, enables the mixing of methodologies. This mixing adds breadth and depth, as each covers the limitations of the other (p. 39). In the following section, I present a brief overview of constructivist grounded theory and its use in the research project.

Constructivist grounded theory (CGT) was developed by Kathy Charmaz, a student of Glaser and Strauss, in the mid-1990s (Charmaz 2014). Charmaz accepted constructivism as a social scientific perspective seeking to understand how realities are created, and accepting that people create their own realities (Charmaz 2014; Lauridsen and Higginbottom 2014). Differentiating from Glaser and Strauss, Charmaz proposed a CGT methodology founded on a relativist epistemology that included the researcher as a subjective interpreter who weaves into the data their own lifelong interactions with people, places, knowledge and learnings (Charmaz 2014). Charmaz (2020) emphasised the importance of the researcher following what participants reveal by privileging the voices and perspectives of the participants. A theory is then developed from the ground up. In the context of this research project, what emerged was a fala of knowledge I have referred to as the Pasifika Perspectives of

Wellness. This focus on voice presented various challenges given the research was conducted with three generations. There were three complexities that instigated the search for something more, as talanoa and CGT could not address these cultural tensions.

The Complexities Giving Rise to the Fala Methodology
There were three core challenges that arose during the research project. The first was the tensions regarding how to weave together the perspectives of three Pasifika generations from various communities, which differed between Island–born, New Zealand–born and Australian–born participants. Furthermore, the divide between the dominant Pasifika cultural perspective in contrast to the western cultural context was significant. Finally, the cultural hierarchy privileges the voice of elders and parents over that of teenagers, as the teenager's role is to offer tautua (service) (Fa'aea and Enari 2021: 96). These three tensions affected my capacity to hear the voices of the young people without being tainted by the amplified stories of elders and parents who were strongly aligned in their perspectives of wellness. As a result of these dilemmas, I was drawn to the Tongan fala-making process after facilitating an event as the master of ceremonies for Her Royal Highness Princess Angelika Lātūfuipeka Tuku'aho where she presented on the ta'ovala (traditional mat worn wrapped around the waist) and fala making. As I observed this process, I could identify significant stages which I could adapt and use in my research to reconcile these numerous tensions, particularly the stage where the kie (pandanus) leaves soak in the ocean, devoid of human manipulation. I did not realise the power of this soaking-in-the-ocean process until I applied it to my research. I made the deliberate choice to cease analysing, note-taking and interacting with the data due to the irreconcilable tensions. I allowed for a time of soaking in the ocean. After weeks of completely disengaging from the research, I returned to the data and applied the unveiling stage of fala making. The tensions were resolved and I was able to weave together the three differing perspectives. Indigenous epistemological ways of producing knowledge (Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea 2014) were intrinsic to this study given it was conducted by, with and for Pasifika people. The fala-making process will now be discussed, identifying how it guided the research and filled the gaps that were missing from the talanoa and CGT methodologies.

FALA MAKING

Fala is a Tongan and Samoan word for a traditional mat, also known as ibe in Fijian. Fala are highly valued cultural artefacts passed through generations of Tongan, Samoan and Fijian peoples. They are gifted at significant events such as weddings, funerals or birthdays. The fala has also become a commodity

which is bartered or sold to serve the financial needs of families ('Ilaiu Talei and Memmott 2014). In Samoan culture the fine mats are called 'ie toga. For Samoans, Tongans and Fijians, the fala is a measure of traditional wealth for families (Goodyear-Smith and 'Ofanoa 2022). Importantly, weaving a fala takes time, requiring the right people and the right skills. The next section will identify each stage of the fala-making process and how these were applied to the research project.

   All images that appear in this article are owned by Her Royal Highness Princess Angelika Lātūfuipeka and her Tongan weavers.

Tā 'o e lau'i kie (Selecting the Right Kie Leaves)
When making the fala, certain leaves are selected depending on the occasion and the type of fala being woven (Fig. 1). Kie leaves are renowned for being difficult to work with. There are particular ways in which the leaves must be handled, and failing to do so will render the leaves unusable. To create the fala of Pasifika wellness, it was imperative to have the right people as opposed to selecting random participants solely based on cultural heritage and age. Pasifika informants sourced from the communities recommended particular elders best placed to participate in the research, based on their reputable, selfless service to others and integrity. This community knowledge informed the development of a criterion that the elders were born and raised in the islands for their insight they would have gained into Pasifika ways of being prior to migration to New Zealand and Australia. Parents born in the

Figure 1.   Tā 'o e lau'i kie (selecting the right leaves). Making the fala requires
            selecting the right leaves, as not all leaves can be used to weave a fala.
            The occasion will determine which leaves are used.

islands and New Zealand were sought after for their lived experiences in the islands, New Zealand and Australia. Australian-born Pasifika teenagers were recruited to gain their Pasifika-Australian perspective and experience. This criterion aimed to identify who would be the "right people" to inform this work as defined by the informants and participants. A person's character traits, capacity to serve others, and presence, engagement and reciprocal relationships within the community, family and/or church were crucial for their local place-based knowledge. These were the consistent traits that were of importance to them as the criterion for selecting the right people was founded upon long-standing relationships established by these individuals through their service amongst family, community and church. This resulted in the development of three phases of data collection: Phase 1 was individual talanoa with elders; Phase 2 involved talanoa groups with families; and Phase 3 included observations. The need to carefully select participants is symbolised in the tā ʻo e lauʻi kie process.

Charmaz (2014) defined this process in CGT as purposive sampling; however, the fala-making selection process is distinguished by the need for awareness of the cultural and hierarchical context to select the right participants.

To'o e tala (Cutting Off Sharp Edges)

Toʻo e tala involves removing the sharp edges of the leaves (Fig. 2). The literature review identified sharp edges or key areas of strengths and concerns regarding the health of Pasifika people locally and globally. Cutting off sharp edges of the kie leaf was conducted through one-on-one talanoa with elders followed by gender-specific group talanoa with parents and young people. It was important that the literature did not drown out the lived experiences of the participants and their perspectives. This meant privileging the voices and perspectives of participants, identifying their strength and power, as opposed to the issues which were emphasised in the literature. In cutting off the sharp edges, the most prominent issue identified by participants was the differences between western perspectives of health versus Pasifika perspectives of wellness. This was reflected in the fala-making stage referred to as toʻo e tala.

Takai (Coiling)

Once the sharp edges have been removed, the kie leaves are coiled together into bundles (Fig. 3). The research phase involved decisions about how to group families to ensure all members can speak freely. For example, teenagers may be restricted by cultural protocols privileging the voice of elders or those in senior positions. Teenagers are required to respect elders and their authority, whilst growing in service to the family, church and community (Faʻaea and Enari 2021). There are cultural taboos and gender-sensitive

Figure 2. To'o e tala (preparing the leaves). The sharp edge of each leaf is sliced off from the sides and in the middle.

Figure 3. Takai e lau'i kie (coiling the kie leaves). The kie leaves are coiled after their spikes have been removed.

topics that cannot be discussed between males and females (Anae 2016). The coiling process involves grouping participants based on advice from elders and Pasifika informants and according to age and gender, in an attempt to ensure the environment is conducive for the participation of all (Anae 2016). Charmaz (2014) emphasised the importance of ensuring the multiple standpoints and realities of each participant are given space to have voice.

Haka (Boiling)

This stage reflects the talanoa process with participants which is integral to establishing an environment conducive to depth of conversation. The kie leaves are boiled over an open fire in a pot, which takes time to heat (Fig. 4). As the water boils, the kie leaves begin to change in form. In the same way, the talanoa must allow for unconcealed conversations to occur, including deep listening to hear and understand the context of each participant. Some of these talanoa processes took up to seven hours, consisting of light-hearted conversations about our lives, families and projects of interest. Such discussions evoked varied emotions of laughter, tears and frustration. Key elements were used to move through a process of change.

The first type of talanoa was informal, light-hearted fun, defined as talanoa usu (Vaioleti 2014: 200), which includes humour. It is māfana (warm emotions) and mālie (energising; infused with the spirit; creating positive enlightenment) (Faʻavae *et al.* 2016: 148). Talanoa needs to be generationally adjusted. For elders, cultural protocols of respect are reflected through sharing traditional foods such as taro, raw fish, pork and palusami (spinach or taro leaves in coconut cream), and allowing for silence and space. As the researcher, I tailored my dress code to the generations, wearing a conservative long dress, namely a puletasi (traditional two-piece dress worn by women) with a sarong, when meeting with Samoan elders. With the young people, wearing casual street wear and providing pizzas and a speaker to blast music allowed for conducive talanoa. Generationally tailoring talanoa enabled a

Figure 4. Haka ʻo e lauʻi kie (boiling the kie leaves). Boiling the kie leaves reflects a process of change and the need for the right elements within the talanoa to be present. This includes the dress code, traditional or modern foods, humour and fun to soften the kie leaves that are symbolic of the participants.

process of change as parties delved deeper into understanding one another through their mutual exchanges (Anae 2019). Anae (p. 1) defines vā as the sacred, spiritual, social space and relationship between parties. As the researcher I too am positioned within the boiling pot as a participant who receives and who gives to the talanoa exchange (Charmaz 2017: 2).

DATA ANALYSIS

Tatala (Unveil)
Tatala refers to the unveiling of each kie leaf where they are split in two for the purpose of using the upper layer, which is soft and pliable (Fig. 5). In the research context, the tatala process involved reading through every transcript, line by line, or each sentence, to identify themes. The transcripts were placed into NVivo and individually coded. Tatala is a meticulous process that explicitly unveils the Pasifika ways of being, knowing and doing, which are intrinsic to how we conduct talanoa. Each kie leaf or sentence required a macro and micro perspective of what categories were being presented from

Figure 5. La'i kie kotoa pe kuo pau ke tatala (every kie leaf must be split in two). Each leaf is split in two to use the upper layer that is soft and manageable. This can be likened to the line-by-line coding found in grounded theory (Charmaz 2020).

the talanoa. This mirrored Charmaz's (2008) line-by-line coding of the raw data identifying concepts and categories as they arose, rather than forcing preconceived ideas upon the data. The distinction, however, between the tatala process and the line-by-line coding of CGT was the identification of the cultural practices followed as a Pasifika researcher. Each sentence required an awareness and perspective of the Pasifika paradigm, cultural protocols and nuances, which are often inherently used; however, the tatala process required explicit identification and defining of these cultural protocols. This process proved fruitful for my three non-Pacific supervisors, who were not aware of the distinct Pasifika cultural nuances. For example, with two Samoan elders, I purposely began with light-hearted humour, uplifting the elders by emphasising their service and faithfulness and thanking them for their leadership in the church. As I conducted the tatala process of unveiling, I identified this Pasifika way of being. The tatala phase shone a light on these Indigenous ways which are of great benefit to informing best practice when working with Pasifika communities. It also empowered the participants by enabling their voice to define their cultural protocols in conducting talanoa which informs outsiders.

When the participants' own words provided the best explanation of concepts, this was captured in NVivo software during the coding process to preserve speech and meanings (Charmaz 2014). Analysis and coding of each talanoa included comparing data with data. Comparisons were also made between categories, for example, defining "health" with the "holistic wellness" category (pp. 42–63). The frequent mention of words or categories contributed to the development of the fala of (k)new knowledge. This means that these knowledges have always been known by Indigenous communities and whilst they are not new to them, they are new to western society (Edwards 2009). As the data was analysed, questions were raised simultaneously about connections with and distinctions from other categories (Charmaz 2014). This process would include an ongoing talanoa with participants and Pasifika community leaders.

The analysis is built from the ground up, meaning the participants' talanoa create the initial codes. Similar to the process of unveiling each kie leaf, Charmaz (2020) recommended an openness to possibilities during the initial process. Further data was sought for categories that were thin in detail (Charmaz 2020). The literature and discussions with participants, Pasifika researchers and Pasifika community members continually informed the categories until they were fully developed and explained (p. 166). Regular meetings with stakeholders to ensure the accuracy of findings, perspectives and frames of reference were important processes (Charmaz 2017, 2020). Phase three, the observation phase, also confirmed emerging categories. Each kie leaf is split in two as the process of unveiling, which is reflective of the tatala and analysis phase.

Ngaohi e maea (Making a Rope)
After the kie leaves are split, they are bundled together in groups to create a rope (Fig. 6). This mirrors the process of grouping line-by-line codes into key concepts, allowing for the theory to emerge from the data as the research narrative begins to form (Charmaz 2014; Chun Tie *et al*. 2019). Whilst there were interesting findings, such as the extent of the historical impact of missionaries, the comparative process of emerging categories must be considered in terms of the research questions. The fala, despite being made of many kie leaves, forms one design. This process of ngaohi e maea (making a rope) groups the codes into categories.

This focused coding process allows for unnecessary data to be omitted. As a result, core categories emerge. To understand the relationships between categories produced from the tatala phase, diagrams serve as visual aids representing the core categories and including variations (Charmaz 2014; Chun Tie *et al*. 2019). This process continued until saturation, after exploring and considering the categories carefully (Charmaz 2014; Chun Tie *et al*. 2019). Ongoing consultation with willing participants, community leaders, pastors, Pasifika researchers and the supervisory team to review the categories for accuracy is imperative. This is best captured in the fala making where the kie leaves are bundled together.

Tuku 'i tahi (Soaking in the Ocean)
Tuku 'i tahi (soaking in the ocean) differs from the CGT process, revealing an Indigenous way of creating new knowledge which is unique to the Fala methodology. It is also not part of the Talanoa methodology. Once the kie leaves are bundled together they are soaked in the ocean for three to four

Figure 6. Ngaohi e maea mei he tu'a kie (plait a rope from the lower layer of the kie). After splitting the kie to extract the soft upper layer, the leaves are bundled together. Grouping the kie leaves occurs in partnership with other weavers, which reflects an Indigenous way of knowing and being in a collective manner as opposed to an individualistic process.

weeks for the purpose of changing the colour and texture of the leaves (Fig. 7). Soaking in the ocean presented a process to use in the analysis phase given the ongoing cultural tensions I was grappling with. I found that I was too deeply connected to the knowledge and cultural insight from the elders because they offered understanding into Pasifika ways of being, knowing and doing that I had never been privy to until the research journey. I was given sacred cultural knowledge about the ways of wellness practised by our ancestors in the islands. This depth of insight was abruptly disrupted by the talanoa with young people, some of whom identified as plastic islanders, that is, people not familiar with their ancestral island culture. Such tensions created barriers within my own perceptions that became a blockage to my ability to hear and give voice to the young participants. Detaching completely from the data for three to four weeks allowed for time and space; however, it also created further challenges when failing to meet writing deadlines set by supervisors. Despite these issues, the persistence in upholding the soaking phase proved fruitful. Tuku 'i tahi is devoid of human manipulation, allowing the ocean and environment to play a part. It differs from the ongoing analysis and note-taking phase that Charmaz (2014) advocates for in CGT. It also differs from talanoa as this was no longer about talanoa. As the researcher, I completely ceased interacting with the research project in order to listen.

Here I digress to draw from my Yolngu (a First Nations people of Australia) heritage growing up in the Northern Territory on an Aboriginal mission called Yirrkala. The Ngangikurungkurr people of the Northern Territory have an Indigenous practice known as dadirri (inner deep listening and quiet still awareness) (Ungunmerr 2017; West *et al*. 2012: 1582–90). It encompasses spirituality in Yolngu culture that is centred upon listening, not asking questions, but listening, waiting and then acting (West *et al*. 2012: 1582–90). Ungunmerr (2017) defines dadirri as the deep spring that is inside us and the strong connection Yolngu people have to nature, which has informed the listening process for over 60,000 years. Ungunmerr explains: "We cannot hurry the river. We have to move with its current and understand its ways" (p. 14).

Hau'ofa (2008) also emphasised the connection Pasifika people have with nature through our connectivity to the ocean and it being in our blood. Tuku 'i tahi required a deliberate choice to step back from the research project to create a space, devoid of human manipulation, acknowledging the connection Indigenous peoples have with the land and environment as part of the whole fala-making process. After weeks of not reviewing, note taking or analysing, going against what is fundamental to CGT (Charmaz 2017), I returned to the data to continue the analysis process. Time and space away created a fresh lens for analysis. I reviewed the talanoa of the young people and repeated the tatala process. This time a new category was created under the "voices of young people". Whilst they are at the bottom of the cultural and social hierarchy (Fa'aea and Enari 2021), their voices

Figure 7. Tuku 'i tahi (soaking in the ocean). Soaking the kie leaves in the ocean for three to four weeks results in the ocean changing the colour of the leaves from green to cream. The texture and form of the leaves also change.

are still significant. Like the kie leaves, every leaf matters. New categories emerged which were previously invisible due to the prominence of the elders' voices. Categories such as obesity, aspirations for health, takeaway food and personal laziness were new codes. Given the revelation of such findings, I repeated the tatala process for parents. Tuku 'i tahi enabled me to develop clarity on the differing perspectives of three generations. The time and space of soaking created an opportunity for the talanoa in this research to be transformed, resulting in a fala of (k)new knowledge.

Ha'alo (Straighten or Smooth Out)

The ha'alo stage involves an ongoing process of scraping each kie leaf with a sharp instrument until the leaf is smooth and able to be woven (Fig. 8). In the context of the research process it required a deep probing of each talanoa to analyse what is happening. Further questions were developed in light of the research objectives, such as: Are changes occurring? If yes, what and how, and if not, why not? The answers to each of these questions were collated into a spreadsheet to create an overview, revealing the conditions that are present, acting as catalysts causing individuals to change, despite their dominant cultural environment. It also highlighted factors that were preventing change. Ongoing talanoa with participants, Pasifika academics, leaders, pastors, community stakeholders and young people continue during this process. Drawing pictures that visually capture the fala of knowledge being developed is also a key component. Writing notes and recording reflections regarding the core themes also simultaneously occurred.

Lālanga (Weaving)

Lālanga is the weaving together of the kie leaves into the fala (Fig. 9). In this research it is the weaving together of the talanoa to create the fala

Figure 8. Haʻalo (straightening). Each kie leaf is scraped to ensure a smooth
texture for weaving.

of new knowledge. This is not an individual task. It involves the input of many. Teams of people are involved in weaving the final fala that best represents the people (Malungahu *et al.* 2017: 49). In the research context, this meant that the participants, community leaders and Pasifika peoples from the wider community were consulted regularly to check themes and gain ongoing input throughout the process of weaving together the fala. As a result, the fala of new knowledge was developed, namely the Dominant and Alternative Pasifika Perspectives of Wellness models, which were both represented visually. For the models, the five core themes identified by all three generations were stated, analysed and discussed, including the generational differences that were unique to each group.

The final phase is foaki, meaning to give away. The gifting of the fala occurs at a significant occasion. For this research project, the gifting has been in the work I currently do with the families involved in this research, their local church and their community. This work has continued beyond the doctoral studies into a community research fellowship in partnership with my university and the Pathways in Place project, which is philanthropically funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation. The purpose is to establish Pasifika wellness through pathways and opportunities centred upon the social determinants of health. This work is defined by the Pasifika community based on the primary needs of the people, which include opportunities into training and education. As a result the development of a Pasifika Registered Training Organisation is being established in partnership with Griffith University.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

This research project began in 2013 and was completed in 2022 as part of the fulfilment of my doctoral candidature. As an early researcher, I urgently sought a Pasifika methodology that would guide me through the research

Figure 9.   Lālanga (weaving). The weaving of the kie leaves begins in
            collaboration with others.

phase, from the literature review to identifying gaps in knowledge, recruiting participants, collecting, analysing and presenting data, and lastly, giving back to the people. Unfortunately, at the time I was unable to find a methodology that had capacity to meet all of these needs. As a result, the weaving of talanoa, CGT and the fala-making process occurred. This research project has thus demonstrated that the fala-making process has the capacity to function as a methodology in its own right as it is rooted in Pasifika philosophical and cultural values (Goodyear-Smith and 'Ofanoa 2022: 34).

During the research project, while I followed closely the processes defined by CGT, at each stage I was constantly reflecting on the Pasifika ways of being, knowing and doing to further inform the process. CGT offered a data analysis process that was missing from the Talanoa methodology. CGT also emphasised the importance of the knowledge and theory development being drawn from the ground up, meaning the participants, whilst also including the researcher, being woven into this process of knowledge creation (Charmaz 2014). However, when applying Pasifika cultural protocol, elders and parents are privileged with the responsibility and voice to speak on behalf of families, while young people are not. These are cultural tensions which could not be ignored, and CGT and Talanoa did not offer a solution. It was upon observing the fala-making phase, particularly the tuku 'i tahi (soaking in the ocean) process, that I was encouraged to also take time to "soak in the ocean", given my ongoing lack of resolve during the analysis phase. This

soaking proved highly beneficial once I returned to analyse the talanoa of each young person. Suddenly, like the kie leaves being transformed by the ocean in colour and form, I too had been transformed. I had detached from all the voices, in particular those of the elders. I could finally hear the young people clearly, and the tatala (unveiling) phase was repeated to give voice to the young people's perspectives and context.

Decolonisation challenges the unspoken hierarchies of knowledge that are deeply ingrained in Eurocentric systems (Leenen-Young *et al*. 2021). Sacred knowledge is restricted and privileged information within families, which is passed on to share with others. It is done so with the trust and willingness of the expert cultural knowledge holders (Koya-Vaka'uta 2017; Nabobo-Baba 2008; Teaero 2002). The fala-making process is knowledge that has been practised by ancestors and Tongans for centuries. This knowledge was generously shared by Her Royal Highness Princess Lātūfuipeka and her Tongan weavers, which I adapted and developed into a research methodology.

The Fala methodology is an alternative to western methodologies as it is grounded in Pasifika philosophical and cultural tenets of spirituality, collectivity and holistic connectivity, which includes the environment (Goodyear-Smith and 'Ofanoa 2022). A Pacific Indigenous research paradigm is founded upon cultural protocols, spirituality, relationships, language and metaphors that are reciprocal, environmental and intergenerational (Anae 2019).

Focusing on Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies creates a space and voice to challenge western research paradigms that have misinterpreted Pasifika communities and their knowledge (Leenen-Young *et al*. 2021). As a result, three Pasifika generations presented a fala of (k)new knowledge, meaning that this insight has always been with the Indigenous participants regarding what it means to them to be well. These perspectives refute the narrative that often emphasises the health disparities spotlighted by mainstream services to unravel Pasifika wellness defined by Pasifika participants. The Tongan proverb "Fofola e fala, kae talanoa 'a e kāinga" (to respectfully unravel the fala for the family to talk) emphasises the importance of the fala in creating a space for robust talanoa. Future implications for the Fala methodology is that it will be of service to others seeking to conduct research with Pasifika communities that are grounded in Pasifika ways of being, knowing and doing.

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary Tongan unless otherwise stated.

dadirri	inner deep listening and quiet still awareness (Ngangikurungkurr (Aboriginal Australian, Northern Territory))
fa'afaletui	Samoan philosophical paradigm meaning ways of (fa'a) weaving together (tui)
fala	traditional mat (Samoan, Tongan)
foaki	to give away
ha'alo	straightening; smoothing
haka	boiling
ibe	traditional mat (Fijian)
'ie toga	fine mat (Samoan)
kie	pandanus
lālanga	weaving
ngaohi e maea	making a rope
māfana	warm emotions
mālie	energising; infused with the spirit; creating positive enlightenment
palusami	spinach or taro leaves in coconut cream (Samoan)
puletasi	traditional two-piece dress worn by women (Samoan)
takai	coiling
talanoa	sharing of ideas or conversations based on histories, realities and aspirations
talanoa usu	informal, light-hearted, fun conversation
ta'ovala	traditional mat wrapped around the waist
tatala	unveil
tautua	service (Samoan)
tuku 'i tahi	soaking in the ocean
vā	the sacred, spiritual, social space (Samoan)

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A Reflection on the Special Issue

PACIFIC RESEARCH VIBES: CARING FOR OUR RESEARCH INHERITANCE POST-COVID TALATALANOA

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ABSTRACT: The past views of the Pacific region and its Indigenous peoples have often been depicted through the lens of outside "others". This paper is a brief talatalanoa (ongoing conversation) with the insights shared by early-career Pacific scholars. My reflections here on Pacific research are imbued with a sense of "looking ahead and moving forward" whilst simultaneously reflecting on past and present research moments and experiences. As Pacific-heritage researchers, we share intentions to meaningfully care for our inheritance, shaped across our own local communities as well as universities and polytechnics. If Pacific research intentions seek to activate and transform the dominant western academe through the creatively critical ways we know-see-do-feel as Pacific-heritage researchers, then grounding our Indigenous Pacific ways of knowing and becoming is deeply meaningful. In this we require analytical tools that interrogate our existing methodologies and methods, particularly in how we each integrate these across our new contexts in settler-colonial nations. This article is critical post-covid talatalanoa that recognises and honours our places and contexts, place-based research connections and methodological durability and practicalities.

Keywords: Indigenous Pacific research, Pacific-heritage researchers, post-covid talatalanoa, making connections, methodological durability, utilitarian value of Indigenous Pacific research

> A hallmark of our human existence is our relentless desire to search for things that we believe will enhance our knowledge and understanding of ourselves as human beings, of the meaning of life, and the contextual framework wherein this drama is enacted. … This same impulse is encapsulated in the efforts of our ancestors to discover appropriate and life-giving ways to ensure the survival of our people [including our knowledges and practices]. … In all of these efforts, there is something uniquely prominent and common to all: that those things of value that are being sought are always found in the depths. (Nokise 2017: xiii)

As I pen my reflections, Nokise's words "those things of value that are being sought are always found in the depths" took me back to memories of my late paternal grandmother. One memory was of her spending hours with her daughters removing ngatu (tapa cloth) and fine mats from under

the mattress of her adopted granddaughter's bed. To access her launima (a lengthy piece of ngatu[1] of high value), her daughters were tasked with the slow unpacking and unfolding of many koloa (articles of material wealth) under which the launima was stored.

I have titled my reflection paper "Pacific Research Vibes: Caring for Our Research Inheritance Post-Covid Talatalanoa". For many Pacific-heritage[2] scholars, doing research involves more than an extractive engagement. For us, it is caring for our ways of knowing, seeing, feeling and becoming in diasporic places and contexts in which our communities have opted to settle. The caring for our Indigenous Pacific ways ensures the next generation will thrive in settler-colonial nations. Indigenous Pacific research is vibin' in the diaspora, evident in the felt intentions of next generation of Pacific-heritage scholars through each research project's sense of being mālie (inspiring) and māfana (heart-warming) (see Manuʻatu 2016), creative (Dyck *et al*. 2022; ʻIlaiū Talei 2018; Matapo and Allen 2020; Refiti *et al*. 2022), critical (Fehoko *et al*. 2022; Leenen-Young *et al*. 2021; Pacific Early Career Researchers Collective *et al*. 2022; Rew 2022; Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea 2014; Tecun and Siuʻulua 2022; Uperesa 2021), life-giving (Iosefo *et al*. 2021; Mullane *et al*. 2022; Sanga and Reynolds 2020) or mana-enhancing (Baice *et al*. 2021; Pasisi *et al*. 2022; Sisifā and Fifita 2021) or for its embodied learnings (Lopesi 2021) and transformative potential (Naepi 2019a, 2019b; Thomsen and Brown-Acton 2021).

> *Thinking* by Konai Helu Thaman
>
> you say that you think
> therefore you are
> but thinking belongs
> in the depths of the earth
> we simply borrow
> what we need to know
>
> these islands the sky
> the surrounding sea
> the trees the birds
> and all that are free
> the misty rain
> the surging river
> pools by the blowholes
> a hidden flower
> have their own thinking
>
> they are different frames
> of mind that cannot fit
> in a small selfish world

Konai Helu Thaman's (1999: 15) poem *Thinking* highlights the level of depth and meaning that exists in Oceanian[3] thinking. The materiality of objects defined in western science and research—such as river pools, the earth or the sea—are spiritual entities and have life and spirit of their own in accord within Oceanian knowledge systems. Indigenous Pacific research has the capacity to evoke and invoke these kinds of relational vibes that recognise spirituality and wisdoms that still matter to our Pacific communities in the diaspora.

Pacific research centred on making visible Indigenous Pacific/Pasifika[4] ideas, experiences, voices, philosophies and practices to counter dominant western discourses are often driven by decolonial intentions. Such aims are intentional and deliberate and articulate decolonial work and research priorities as a desire to (re)claim and (re)vive our traditional ways of living together and in balance with the earth, an idea that Vaai (2021) refers to as ecorelationality. There are ethical considerations that we ought to bring to the fore when engaged with Indigenous Pacific/Pasifika thought and practices in the diaspora. Where each Pacific-heritage researcher chooses to do this kind of decolonial work requires a consideration of *place*. For instance, whenua and fonua (the Māori and Tongan words for "land") are critical ideas and concepts that need to be considered, interrogated, unpacked and clearly articulated by Pacific research theoreticians and practitioners to appropriately ground their sense-making of relational connections and meaning-making of ancient and contemporary thought, ideas and analyses both in academia and in wider society. In the same way, fanua, ʻenua and vanua (the Samoan, Cook Islands Māori and Fijian words for "land") are central ideas that can provide Samoan, Cook Islands and Fijian researchers support with their unpacking, interrogation and clear articulation of research-related ideas and modes of analysis within and beyond the university setting in Aotearoa New Zealand. We see this, for example, in Radilaite Cammock and Malcolm Andrews's (this issue) positioning of vanua as a contextual source that aids them in their development of iTaukei (Indigenous Fijian) concepts and research frameworks within health and wellbeing studies. Overall, all authors in this special issue tell their stories linked to the use of Māori and Pacific concepts, theories, methods and methodologies against a backdrop of who they are, where their ancestral and heritage affiliations are rooted and how "place" (including modernity) has shaped their thoughts and analyses of research ethics, conduct and decisions. My own Pacific research reflections were sparked and provoked by the early-career Pacific-heritage scholars' insights included in this special issue.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (L. Smith 2012) is a seminal text that all researchers and higher-education postgraduate students must engage with. Her unpacking of the term "research" and how such related colonial activities linked to scientific exploration and western imperialism

have defiled Indigenous peoples and their knowledges is a key fact that we must carry with us as minoritised scholars/researchers. As well, she unpacks how capitalism and its associated ideals and practices (re)construct neocolonial intentions and agendas in research with Indigenous communities. Even for Pacific-heritage researchers, articulating the practical challenges we face when implementing our research tools with our local communities and how we mediate such challenges, both practically and ethically, can provide understanding for those to come. Thinking about our next generation, Inez Fainga'a-Manu Sione's individual paper (this issue) explains her mediation of and choice to adopt multiple approaches in her doctoral research that accommodate multiple perspectives. Consequently, she wove together talanoa (conversation), constructivist grounded theory and Tongan fala (traditional mat) making to appropriately gather and capture the health and wellbeing concerns of Tongan and Samoan families in the Australian context.

My brief reflection contributes to talatalanoa (ongoing conversation), a traditional oral method of engagement and cultural practice rooted in Tongan and Samoan worldviews (see Ka'ili 2017). As a derivative of talanoa practice, talatalanoa is ongoing in nature and is designed to enable further discussion and unfolding of concerns that matter not only to those involved in its practice but to the extended family and village as well. I recognise the post-covid context as a critical moment in our global and local histories that has reshaped the way communities make meaning of relational connections. In this intellectual moment and space, the "post-covid" is not an afterthought but rather is symbolic of an ontological and epistemic turn, shaping the way we construct the "self" and what it means to know-see-do-feel across research contexts (see Fa'avae *et al*. 2022).

MAKING CONNECTIONS: TU'UFONUA, TULAGĀVAE AND TŪRANGAWAEWAE AS MEANING-MAKING PLACE-BASED RESEARCH

This special issue of *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society* is a deliberate act to make space for early-career Pacific-heritage voices and stories from Oceania. The stories told, and the provocations made, echo sincere care for their inheritance, through the sharing of research-related thoughts, tensions, actions, cautions and negotiations with our next generation of Pacific-heritage (and even to some extent non-Pacific-heritage) researchers. Although I have treated Māori and Pacific as two large social groupings, within each are an array of diversities, distinct subgroupings in the form of hapū (subtribes), iwi (tribes), ha'a (descendants; tribe), gafa (lineage; genealogy) and more. At the same time, despite the specificities that distinguish between Māori and Pacific, there are shared connections and stories, often forgotten and invisible in the thoughts and conversations of early-career scholars. Alice Te Punga Somerville's (2012) text *Once Were*

Pacific: Māori Connections to Oceania is a useful source to draw clarity and understanding. Knowing our shared ancestral histories and connections is significant because more and more of our Pasifika/Pacific young people in Aotearoa New Zealand now also have close blood and kinship ties to Māori through their parents and grandparents (Vakaʻuta 2021).

Place-based research enables a critical space for researchers to closely probe into their connections to and responsibilities toward the environment, people and research communities and their knowledge systems. Doing place-based research well can call into question our taken-for-granted privileges and the associated tensions of power we carry into Pacific research undertakings in Aotearoa New Zealand. As a response to the tensions of power, the concepts of manaakitanga (respect; generosity; care), kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and tino rangatiratanga (self-determination; sovereignty) are key ideas and ideals that draw attention to who benefits more from research and whose voices and stories are consequently sidelined.

Tuʻufonua is a concept that enables Tongan-heritage scholars' understanding of self and their connections to other people and places. The literal translation of tuʻufonua is "to stand on land". Figuratively, however, tuʻufonua refers to one's sense of affinity or belonging. It symbolises one's sense of Tonganness (Kaʻili 2017). Māori use the notion of tūrangawaewae (Brown Pulu 2002) and Samoan people refer to tulagāvae as descriptors of their identities and feelings of Māoriness or Samoanness, connections or belonging (Efi 2005). Tuʻufonua, for Tongan people, is also used to define one's sense of Indigeneity, because fonua as a concept can have physical, symbolic, sacred and spiritual meanings (Kaʻili 2017; Manuʻatu 2016). Fonua can also be attributed to the faʻē (mother earth), a provider and giver of life. The baby's placenta is also called fonua. The fonua feeds and nourishes the unborn child and, at birth, is returned to the land. In death, she/he is returned to the fonua, often through the family's fonua loto (family burial site). Across the stages of a Tongan person's life cycle, the fonua is central to our understanding of life and death being deeply interwoven and interconnected. From a Cook Islands ontological and epistemological understanding, Emma Ngakuravaru Powell, in her contribution, positions the ʻenua (which she defines as islands, lands and waters) and te akau roa (the long reef) as powerful metaphors that symbolise Cook Islands people's lived realities and ways of relational meaning-making. She unpacks in her paper how the Cook Islands metaphors have inspired the methodological innovations and theorisations within academic research. Making connections to land (and moana or ocean) is our grounding as Indigenous Oceanian researchers.

Still, Indigeneity/Indigenous as an identity construct is not always visible or named and articulated by Pacific-heritage researchers. During my doctoral studies in 2014, being located/housed in Te Puna Wānanga (School of Māori

and Indigenous Studies) at the Faculty of Education and Social Work enabled a deep engagement with the idea of Indigeneity and the implications of being a Pacific-heritage researcher in relation to Māori within settler-colonial Aotearoa New Zealand. There were moments in which I felt at odds with my attempts to dive deep into Tongan knowledge systems in search of appropriate ways to ensure the continuity of our people, language and culture in a whenua not Indigenous to us, a whenua tied to long colonial histories and politics of resistance that are ongoing for tangata whenua (lit. people of the land; Māori, the Indigenous people of Aotearoa) on their motu (island; for Māori, their country).[5] This tension was a consequence of me not giving time to critically engage with, unpack and clearly articulate the genealogical tracing back of the histories, connections, struggles and lived stories faced by Māori and Pacific in the region and by Māori and Pasifika within Aotearoa.

Recognising historically why and how contemporary Pacific peoples came to "settle" in Aotearoa New Zealand can highlight our connections with tangata whenua. Melani Anae (2020) described the 1950s and 1960s as decades that "witnessed a large wave of Pacific migration to New Zealand—especially by Samoans, followed by Tongans [who] tended to take up residence in low-cost areas, and Ponsonby and Grey Lynn were two such suburbs. By the 1970s, Pacific migrant workers, along with other ethnic groups, had created a distinct culture in the area" (p. 32). Today, being on other people's land carries complicated dynamics associated with "settler" becoming in Aotearoa New Zealand. Recognising "connections" for Pacific-heritage people in settler nations continues to be a complex and complicated task. In her contribution Sam Iti Prendergast reminds early-career researchers to critically engage in deeper probing and unpacking of our Pacific Indigenous relationality as settlers on other people's land.

Our Pacific migrant stories in settler nations are imbued with hope and struggle. The historical and political accounts of the 1970s dawn raids[6] is evidence of the unjust ways in which Pacific/Pasifika peoples were treated by the nation's government (Anae 2020). As a response, the naming of *Pasifika peoples* was one way that our communities at the time strived for self-determination, seeking to create a critical space that collectivised our shared struggles and motivations (Samu 2020; Si'ilata *et al*. 2017). The shift in research to include "with Pacific" (as evidenced by the Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative for and by Pacific Peoples (RPEIPP)[7]) is a move toward a for-by-with Pacific objective. This provides space for the critical exploration of who counts as Pacific, and what constitutes a Pacific person on land whereby both Pacific and non-Pacific are positioned as tangata tiriti (people of the treaty (of Waitangi) as well as tauiwi (anyone not of Māori descent) (Huygens 2016), both migrants and settlers, on Aotearoa New Zealand whenua.

Indigenous Pacific knowledge systems are built on relational philosophies that centre deep relational meaning-making. Nanise J. Young Okotai, in her contribution, articulates a tension in her research when, despite her attempts to hold back the Fijian Vanua Research Framework (FVRF) because of her own internal grappling with whether she was Fijian enough and suspicions of the framework's capacity to recognise diverse worldviews, the vanua itself and its people determined FVRF's place and Okotai's responsibilities within her ethnographic fieldwork. By nature of Fijian relationality and the cultural protocols expected of her as a researcher of Fijian heritage, she could no longer avoid implementing FVRF. Such relational philosophies privilege the intimate interconnections between the human and non-human worlds and the physical and spiritual worlds (Efi 2005). As such, vā (relational space) provides a relational theory that makes meaning of the interconnections between people and other entities in the world (Kaʻili 2017). When considering architectural design, procurement, and building and project management, in this issue Charmaine ʻIlaiū Talei positions vā as a disruptive but innovative educational praxis. Vā offers a theoretical lens that enables sociospatial and sociorelational analysis between people and their environment, including architectural structures.

The Struggles of Diving Deep into Indigenous Oceanian Knowledge Systems
Digging down into the roots of Indigenous Oceanian knowledge systems within Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean) often requires getting our hands dirty in the struggle. For Kaupapa Māori research, Graham Hingangaroa Smith (G. Smith 2012) argues that action and analysis (i.e., praxis) are at the heart of its political-cultural intentions. He reminds us that as we seek to unfold our Indigenous and cultural ideas and reinvigorate them in our research work, neglecting the associated economic power and historical analyses of doing such work and their "related actions of economic self-development" (p. 13) can deter our progress. The deep dive into the roots of Indigenous Oceanian knowledge, concepts and theories will test our capacity to withstand the struggles, and grappling with them involves grit, patience and courage.

Many of us born and raised in the diaspora of the USA, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand struggle with the deep dive into our Indigenous knowledge systems. Although being open about our struggles can leave us feeling vulnerable, even within our own local communities, articulating the ways in which we grapple with Indigenous Oceanian concepts, theories and approaches would be useful to many others (Faʻavae *et al*. 2016). I continue to grapple with the appropriate application of Tongan concepts and frameworks in my own research and teaching. These tensions linked to grappling with the "appropriate implementation" of Indigenous Oceanian knowledges and

practices are necessary because, whether we like it or not, they are evolving in the diaspora, and so are we. The key for us is to continue being "present" and to remain with(in) community. This matters to our Pacific communities.

As a matter of identity negotiation and affirmation, Sanga and Reynolds (2017) argue that naming is claiming. Naming Pacific/Moana/Oceania/Pasifika without the researcher grounding their whakapapa (genealogy) and origin story continues to be a concern. Similarly, the clear articulation of how each name/notion/identifier is utilised within Pacific-heritage scholars' disciplinary contexts are often absent from their academic papers. Consequently, we are more likely to do more harm for the next generation of researchers coming through when we ignore such grounding and unpacking of positionality in our own writings.

The authors in this special issue value positionality. Research positionality is a practice of acknowledging, honouring and reconnecting with our whenua, fonua, fanua, vanua, 'enua, knowledge systems and language. Not only is positioning ourselves, our identities and our aspirations within a research project (including teaching) necessary, but by doing so we ground ourselves ancestrally to our homelands and provide meaningful reasons for our decisions, desires and efforts that are aligned to our community's survival and sense of thriving in the diaspora. Joseph Houghton articulates in this special issue how his positionalities as an educator of Cook Islands, Tahitian and European descent living in Christchurch helped shape his research methodology choices and empower the Pasifika voice in an academic space largely dominated by non-Pasifika voices. For him, 'enua and place matter when positioning one's mixed identities. Similarly, based on Melanesian practice and relational positionality, Catherina Bolinga grounds her use of yumi tok stori in this special issue as a method linked to one-to-one and group meetings and conversations with Papua New Guinean communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. My fonua is buried on the island of Niue, a coral atoll often referred to as "the Rock". My ancestral lineage can be traced back to Tonga and Sāmoa. Vagahau Niue (the Niuean language) was my first oral mode of communication. Alongside my older sister and younger brother, we learnt Tongan after my parents made the decision to migrate to Aotearoa in the late 1980s, when I was 8 years of age. Articulating our positionalities and connections to our ancestral fonua, vanua and 'enua helps us and others understand our meaningful connections and our ethical responsibilities within research to make decisions that benefit and uplift our local Pacific communities.

Additionally, intergenerational knowledge-sharing has always been a priority for our Pacific communities. This way of communal living is how we learn to work through our shared struggles. Tauhi vā (nurturing respectful

relations), teu le va (maintaining reciprocal relationships), veitokoni (reciprocity; sharing) and vakarokoroko (respect) (see Cammock and Andrews, this issue) have been identified as useful cultural values employed by Pacific communities to work through their struggles in the diaspora. In the settler-nation context of Australia, Inez Fainga'a-Manu Sione, Glenda Stanley and Dion Enari shine a light on how the talanoa method aided them in the co-development of their SSAVI Collective-Individual framework, an approach that explores how their communities affirm their sense of thriving and flourishing in a new land and, in turn, how such collective learnings influence their own individual becomings as Indigenous Pacific researchers. Their experiences provide examples of how collective struggle and Indigenous Pacific knowledge and practices equipped them with the spirit and cultural values to counter deficit narratives of Pacific people in the Australian context.

METHODOLOGICAL DURABILITY: THE PRACTICALITIES OF PACIFIC RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS

The practicalities of Pacific research methodologies and methods are not always openly discussed in literature. And even when they are, there is little critical unpacking of their durability when implemented and adapted across diverse contexts. Durability is a methodological quality that frames whether Indigenous Pacific methodologies and methods, approaches and frameworks are fit for purpose based on the communities involved, the purpose and intentions of the project (i.e., research questions, variables researched and phenomenon of interest) and the settings/places/contexts in which the investigation is to take place. Another aspect to consider is whether the theoretical or analytical frames also align well with the ways Pacific methodologies and methods are implemented and adapted in new contexts. Fleshing out the challenges and ways researchers grapple with the practicalities of implementation is the practice of decluttering (Efi 2005), a necessary responsibility so that those of the next generation are aware of how Indigenous knowledges, theories, ideas and practices have morphed over time, places and spaces.

Analysis of Our Indigenous Pacific Research Analytical Tools
The *Pacific research thought space* requires a review of its analytical tools. Even though I am somewhat uncomfortable with the naming of our Indigenous Pacific theories and frameworks as "research tools", doing so has provided me with a lens through which to consider their utilitarian value and interdisciplinarity (see the next section for more). Yet, it also allows me to maintain an overall ethical approach to the project of ensuring that Indigenous Pacific ideas, theories and frameworks are sustained for cultural

continuity. Of significance too is that when our research focus is mainly on cultural reinvigoration agendas but ignores the historical economic and political struggles, tensions and implications for communities and place, the agentic and transformative aspects of our research thinking and on-the-ground work with communities can become stagnant and somewhat contained and limited (G. Smith 2012). Developing analytical tools to interrogate our existing research tools can move our thinking and work ahead.

Talanoa, for instance, is a popular Pacific method used in both qualitative and mixed-methods studies across the diaspora. Despite its early development in Pacific coup negotiations by the late Sitiveni Halapua (2002) and in the field of education research by Timote Vaioleti (2006), the talanoa method (and methodology) has crossed into other disciplinary fields. However, only a few studies have critiqued the talanoa method and methodology and their contextual relevance (or conditions of ontological and cultural validity) and practical challenges in their fields (see Faʻavae *et al.* 2016; Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea 2014; Tunufaʻi 2016). To move our thinking forward as to talanoa's possibilities, Wanda Ieremia-Allan's paper provides us with a glimpse into talanoa's role and function in engagements with written text, particularly in how talanoa captures her family's transgenerational feau (messages) and conversations across time and space. By positioning the talanoa method in archival research, Ieremia-Allan provides concepts and contexts that can be employed as points and moments of analysis.

At this point in time, across universities mainly, there are research centres that focus on the development of research tools—frameworks, methodologies and methods—centred on Indigenous Pacific philosophies, epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, former head of state of Samoa, states:

> With the migration of Samoan and other Pacific peoples to the metropolitan centres of the world, the methodologies for preserving and enhancing our indigenous knowledges and histories in these centres must similarly migrate. Hence working alongside indigenous institutes and initiatives at home and abroad is critical to restoring culture, bridging knowledge gaps and enhancing ethnic identity, security and health. (Efi 2005: 68)

Pacific-centric or Indigenous research centres have the capacity to bring forth Indigenous/traditional customs and rituals, and by doing so ethically, provide a tūrangawaewae, tuʻufonua or tulagāvae—a place, a residence— whereby our sense of Tonganness or Samoanness and residencies as settlers can appropriately stand and affirm its grounding. It is within such research centres that analytical approaches can be developed to refine existing Indigenous Pacific research tools.

Utilitarian Value of Indigenous Pacific Research Tools: Practical and Decorative

> The task of living in modern New Zealand—and especially in modern Auckland—is not just to understand how to live with different peoples, but how to adapt to the future that has already happened. (Salesa 2017: 28)

The utilitarian value of Pacific research tools can be found in the ways Indigenous concepts, methodologies, methods and frameworks find relevance and usefulness beyond just being decorative, and this can be seen in engagements with the digital world. Digital technology and tools have aided Pacific peoples' cultural practices, modes of communication and engagement. Beyond engagement, Salesa (2017) encourages Pacific innovation, calling forth Pacific people to become generators of innovative initiatives within the digital world in Aotearoa New Zealand and across the globe. Within research contexts, Pacific/Pasifika are urged to go beyond just being consumers to being critical producers of knowledge. Interrogating the future-focused drivers and directions contributes to decluttering the utility or practicalities of Pacific research tools in the academy (Sisifā and Fifita 2021). E-talanoa, as an example, has been named as such to highlight the integration of our Indigenous Pacific methods into online spaces because of the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Faʻavae *et al*. 2022). In this special issue, Ruth Faleolo encourages us to revise and revision the ways we engage and connect with our research informants/participants, while ensuring that cultural protocols and value systems are at the heart of our meaningful and respectful communication. She indicates the significance of vā in mediating Samoan and Tongan peoples' understanding of meaningful and respectful connections online. The relevance of digital tools when conducting research is a significant shift in how Pacific research acknowledges the post-covid context and its impacts on our ways of learning, communicating and expressing our understanding online (Faʻavae *et al*. 2022).

The ethical considerations required when implementing Indigenous Pacific research tools, both online and face to face, can be best understood in their practicalities within research practice/conduct across diverse contexts. Being mindful of the utilitarian value of Indigenous Pacific research tools, our responsibility is to carefully consider how such apparatuses carry struggles of power between "the researcher" and the "communities researched" (Mafileʻo *et al*. 2022). Research approaches underpinned by positivism, based on a reliance on "what is to be counted, measured, and tested—what can be 'known'" (p. 547), often do not always bring out the most useful outcomes for Pacific peoples in their diverse settings. The practicalities linked to such challenges need to be shared and articulated clearly for others to talatalanoa and sense-make.

Indigenous Oceanian concepts, frameworks, methodologies and methods are deep in meaning. Building strong communities for critical research inspired by Indigenous Pacific philosophising and scholarly interrogations, rooted in the values of generosity, care, safety and intergenerational sense-making between the more experienced and early-career scholars, is useful for us moving ahead. Even though many of us are born and raised outside of our ancestral homelands and are encouraged to learn the language and culture because within such practices are the deep-rooted meanings that can only be understood well when we are present in and part of our communities, the reality is that those collective spaces may not always feel safe. For current Pacific-heritage researchers who are second-to-third-generation-born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and the USA, their experiences reflect the marginalised within the already marginalised in the diaspora. Caleb Panapa Edward Marsters highlights the need to enable Pacific research methods that empower rather than alienate Pacific young people living abroad whose realities do not reflect the traditional Indigenous ways back in their parents' and grandparents' homelands. He affirms that Indigenous Pacific knowledge and research methods are useful platforms for the revisioning of Pacific research practices that directly reflect the lived realities of today's Pacific young people. He provokes thinking as to whether our existing research tools and approaches accurately capture Pacific young peoples' realities, whether such methods enable our young to recognise themselves and their ways.

ONGOING TALATALANOA

As ongoing talatalanoa, my research-related reflections were not intended to end in the traditional way of concluding an academic paper. Instead, my objectives were to engage with the insights of the early-career Pacific-heritage scholars in this *Waka Kuaka* special issue and the key themes identified by the guest editors. Pacific research vibes refer to the creatively critical ways in which our Indigenous Pacific knowledges continue to challenge, confront, inspire, empower and transform our communities' lived realities in the diaspora. To move us forward, the authors have articulated key learnings of research moments and experiences within the post-covid context that require further unpacking. My reflections within this talatalanoa highlight the vibes and rhythms that provoke and sustain my own academic research thinking and theorising (Fa'avae *et al*. 2022; Ng Shiu *et al*. 2023).

NOTES

1. The length of a ngatu is measured in langanga, with 1 langanga measuring 45–60 cm. Fifty langanga equals 1 launima, or 25–30 m. This ngatu measured 1 launima. Its length suggests it was made for an important occasion. See the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa website for a description of the ngatu launima: https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/95519

2. Pacific-heritage peoples is a notion Samoan educator and researcher Tanya Wendt Samu (2020) uses when making reference to people whose ethnicities/ancestral ties are rooted in small Pacific Island states and who now reside in the diaspora.

3. Although the term Pacific is often used to refer to the region, I have opted to use Oceania at times in this reflection because it feels more inclusive and conducive to theorising possibilities, though not ignoring the colonial struggles and histories associated with the name "Pacific".

4. Pacific and Pasifika do not mean the same thing in this paper. Siʻilata *et al*. (2017) note that both terms are significant because they show the evolution of how Pacific peoples are referred to in Aotearoa New Zealand whenua. The Ministry of Education in the past used "Pasifika peoples". This has now evolved into "Pacific peoples", a common name also used today by the Ministry of Pacific Peoples. I utilise Pasifika as a term to acknowledge New Zealand-born and -raised researchers and community members of Pacific heritages who continue to struggle with their affiliation to their ancestral homelands. I utilise Pacific as well in this paper as a way to include communities from Melanesia and Micronesia who do not identify with the term Pasifika.

5. The use of motu here is a reference to Aotearoa: Te Ika-a-Māui (North Island), Te Waipounamu (South Island) and Rakiura (Stewart Island).

6. The dawn raids of the 1970s were government-sanctioned and racially driven raids on Pacific peoples by police in the early hours of the morning to search for people they believed had overstayed their immigration permits.

7. RPEIPP was initiated by local Indigenous Pacific education leaders in 2001. The movement was a deliberate intention to not only recognise but also prioritise local Pacific people and their knowledge systems in donor-funded education research decisions. Māori were also involved in the deliberations (Penetito 2002). Kabini Sanga, Konai Helu Thaman and ʻAna Maui Taufeʻulungaki were key leaders in bringing together well-respected local educators who were also educated and trained in universities outside of their small island states (Pene *et al*. 2002). A key component of Sanga's, Thaman's and Taufeʻulungaki's stories told to the few who prioritised the genealogical tracing and history of RPEIPP was the role a Papālangi (person of European heritage) woman, Trisha Nelly, played in supporting these leaders' desires and intentions to take matters into their own hands rather than rely solely on donor funding agencies to dictate how their education systems would operate (Taufeʻulungaki 2014).

GLOSSARY

'enua	land (Cook Islands Māori)
fa'ē	mother earth (Tongan)
fala	traditional mat (Tongan)
fanua	land (Samoan)
feau	messages (Samoan)
fonua	land; placenta (Niuean, Tongan)
fonua loto	gravesite; family burial site (Tongan)
gafa	lineage; genealogy (Samoan)
ha'a	descendants; tribe (Tongan)
hapū	subtribe (Māori)
iwi	tribe (Māori)
kaitiakitanga	guardianship (Māori)
koloa	articles of material wealth (Tongan)
langanga	distance between two consecutive transverse stripes on a piece of tapa cloth, usually 45–60 cm (Tongan)
launima	a lengthy piece of ngatu measuring 50 langanga (25–30 m) (Tongan)
māfana	heart-warming (Tongan)
mālie	inspiring (Tongan)
manaakitanga	respect; generosity; care (Māori)
moana	ocean (wide usage across the Pacific)
motu	island; country (Māori)
ngatu	tapa cloth, made from the bark of the mulberry tree (Tongan)
Papālangi	person of European heritage (Tongan)
talanoa	conversation (Tongan)
talatalanoa	ongoing conversation (Tongan)
tangata tiriti	people of the treaty (of Waitangi) (Māori)
tangata whenua	lit. people of the land; Māori, the Indigenous people of Aotearoa (Māori)
tauhi vā	nurturing respectful relations (Tongan)
tauiwi	anyone not of Māori descent (Māori)
te akau roa	the long reef (Cook Islands Māori)
teu le va	maintaining reciprocal relationships (Samoan)
tino rangatiratanga	self-determination; sovereignty (Māori)
tu'ufonua	lit. to stand on land; one's sense of affinity or belonging; Tonganness (Tongan)
tulagāvae	Samoanness; connections; belonging (Samoan)
tūrangawaewae	sense of affinity or belonging; Māoriness (Māori)

vā	relational space (Tongan, Samoan)
vakarokoroko	respect (Fijian)
vanua	place; land (Fijian)
veitokoni	reciprocity; sharing (Fijian)
whakapapa	genealogy (Māori)
whenua	land (Māori)

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED *

January to June 2023

BAIN, Attwood: *"A Bloody Difficult Subject" L. Ruth Ross, te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Making of History*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2023. 320 pp., abbr., ack., app., biblio., illus., index, notes. NZ$59.99 (hardcover).

* The inclusion of a publication in this list neither assumes nor precludes its subsequent review.