Exploring, celebrating, and deepening Oceanic relationalities

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The theme of the 2018 Oceania Comparative and International Society (OCIES) conference held at Victoria University of Wellington, in Wellington, New Zealand aimed to explore, celebrate, and deepen Oceanic relationalities. This special issue of the International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives *responds to this call for scholarship to examine how Comparative and International Education (CIE) can be repositioned around the notion of relationality to contribute theoretically, practically, and spiritually to education at global, regional, national, and community levels. In this Special Edition, we celebrate the work of seven new and emerging researchers from OCIES. This paper introduces us as a community of scholars, connected geographically by sea, yet it is our shared commitment to relationality that has enabled us to further the scholarship of CIE within our region.*

Keywords: relationalities; new and emerging researchers; vā; comparative and international education

INTRODUCTION

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 . . .

(Hau'ofa, 1993, p. 16)

Hau'ofa's Oceania describes a "world of people connected to each other" (Hau'ofa, 1998, pp. 401–402). By personifying the ocean as a geographical and relational space, Hau'ofa encourages us to place humanity and relationality at the centre of our work. This moral imperative to explore "people-enablement, post-coloniality, demineralisation, the recognition of Indigenous rights, social justice and various forms of sustainability" (OCIES, 2018) shaped the theme for the 2018 Oceania Comparative and International Society (OCIES) conference held at Victoria University of Wellington, in Wellington, New Zealand. The conference theme *Exploring, celebrating and deepening Oceanic relationalities*, put forth a call for scholarship to examine how Comparative and International Education (CIE) can be repositioned around the notion of relationality to

contribute theoretically, practically, and spiritually to education at global, regional, national, and community levels. This special issue of the *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives* responds to this call by celebrating the work of seven new and emerging researchers from the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES). As a community of scholars, we are connected geographically by sea, yet it is our shared commitment to relationality that has enabled us to further the scholarship of CIE within our region. In this special issue, we continue the strong tradition of OCIES scholars based at institutions *within* Oceania, who engage critically with contexts within and *beyond* Oceania. Indeed, bringing scholarship from around the globe into dialogue through our regional CIE society sets OCIES apart from other education-based societies, and offers a unique opportunity for academic rigour and productive scholarship for our region.

Each of the articles in this special issue cohere around the notion of relationality within and beyond Oceania. This editorial sets the foundation for this important work by *exploring* relationality through three interrelated themes: relationality through socio-spatial positionality; relationality through identity and citizenship; and, relationality as a response to structural tensions and barriers. Each of these themes explores relationality from a theoretical, methodological, and conceptual position emerging from the work of the authors in this special issue. We then lay the framework to *deepen* our understanding of relationality as a collective publication process by sharing our collaborative publication journey. We demonstrate how our intent to strengthen "the educational interconnectedness within the relational space of Oceania" (Coxon & McLaughlin, 2017) led to a relational journey towards publication, despite our vast geographical separation. We conclude by *celebrating* the critical scholarship published in this special issue by new and emerging OCIES researchers.

EXPLORING RELATIONALITY IN COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Origins of conceptual work on relationality are often attributed to the discipline of human geography, and takes a particular emphasis on notions of relational space (Allen, 2012; Jones, 2009). Human geographers employ relationality as a conceptual tool to explore the multiple connections and relationships between/amongst/within/through/beyond various spaces, thus opening up possibilities to engage with both the complexity of lived experience, and the complexity of the nature of reality (Jones, 2009). Within Oceania, a particular conceptualization of relationality is presented through an understanding of *vā*. *Vā,* or the space where relationships or interactions occur, is a viewpoint found in many Pacific countries including Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji. As the relational space, *vā* recognizes the "socio-spatial" connection and the importance of balance in relationships (Airini et al., 2010). Unlike Western conceptualizations that consider space as something to be filled, the *vā* is never an empty space. Instead, the *vā* is filled with the relationship that exists between two people, groups, or entities; there is always some kind of relationship, whether it is positive or negative, supportive or derogatory, and those involved have responsibility for how the relationship works (Fa'avae, 2019; Ka'ili, 2005; Thaman, 2008). Considering *vā*, particularly the expectations, ethics, and responsibilities of *tauhi vā* (a Tongan phrase that refers to caring for socio-spatial relations), "leads to an examination of our interaction with others; a focus on our intentions and conscious actions that influences the nature of our relationships with others" (Mila-Schaaf, 2006, p.

11), including non-living entities. In this special issue, Fasavalu and Reynolds draw on *vā* to explore positionality within research spaces. Through a conference *tok stori* session, they demonstrate how storying can be used to negotiate their own relational positionality within their field of educational research field.

A second way that relationality is conceptualized by authors in this special issue is through identity and citizenship. Research suggests that identity development is a complex and socially constructed phenomenon that is reconstructed over time through engagement within socio-cultural contexts (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Schutz, Cross Francis, & Hong, 2018). Relationality is central to this identity work. As Kennedy, in this special issue points out, Oceanic cultural identity is relational and embraces the multiplicity of connections and relationships between people, place, spirituality, and space. Kennedy's article invites us to bring relationality into our conceptualization of language education and, in doing so, reveals how this relational space deepens our understanding of Oceanic cultural identity, and creates opportunities for teachers/educators to be inclusive of Pacific values and knowledge (Fonua, 2018). Similarly, Romero demonstrates how relationality can be used as a lens to examine identity construction in the Pilipinx diaspora. Romero uses diffraction to explore Pilipinx "becoming" through punk rock lyrics and, in doing so, demonstrates the transformative nature of public/punk rock pedagogies and alternative forms of education to contest deficit identities and oppression. Through both of these articles, Kennedy and Romero demonstrate how relationality brings new insight to our understanding of identity construction and reconstruction in transformative and nuanced ways.

Articles by Fitoo and by Choo in this special issue extend on conceptualizations of identity to examine relationality through a citizenship lens. Research shows us that citizenship is a politically and socially contested space (Martiniello, 2002). Globalization has both challenged and, in some cases, eroded Indigenous conceptualizations of citizenship (Levi, Durham, & Porter, 2015; Schattle, 2005). This has prompted calls for the development of citizenship frameworks that reflect Indigenous governance systems, values and beliefs. Fitoo responds to this call by exploring notions of citizenship within the highly diverse context of the Solomon Islands. He considers citizenship through a focus on a shared language—*Wantok*—and he proposes a *Wantok-centric framework* to conceptualize and unify citizenships within the broad diversity found throughout the Solomon Islands. Choo looks to examine relationality *beyond* Oceania by considering the construction of citizenship amongst young urban Buddhists in Myanmar. Her study contends that citizenship within that context is constructed through participants' religious (Buddhist) and political identities, developing a form of democracy which shuns the rigid separation of the public and private self within Western conceptions of democratic citizenship. Each of these authors explore competing notions of citizenship through a lens of relationality, bringing fresh insight and transformative potential to the development of citizenship frameworks and identity construction within each context.

A final way that relationality is conceptualized by authors in this special issue is as a response to social, political and economic barriers. Research has addressed the cultural, social, political, and economic tensions associated with the implementation of global reforms in local contexts (Appadurai, 2002; Chan, Zhang, & Teasdale, 2018; Cobb & Couch, 2018; Coxon & Munce, 2008). This global-local dialect has been the subject of intense debate, particularly in the Pacific where donor funding and global policy reforms, such as outcomes-based curriculum, open education, and leadership programmes, have

often negated local ownership and lacked cultural and contextual relevance (Cobb, 2018; Fa'avae, 2018; Sanga & Reynolds, 2018; Tuia, 2018). For this reason, Riddle (2019) encourages us to question education's response to the complexities of these global-local tensions. This issue responds to this call by positioning relationality at the heart of these local responses. Joskin's article demonstrates how the *Kibung Framework* provides a relational professional development framework to implement outcomes-based curriculum reform within the Papua New Guinean context. Joskin present relationality as a culturally and contextually relevant response to these global reform agendas.

As well as relationality being central to this global-local policy nexus, Yenas' article draws our attention to the transformative potential for relationality to provide a more inclusive future for women living with disabilities. A growing body of research suggests that women and children living with disabilities are often marginalized within their own communities, particularly in the Pacific (Spratt, 2013; Stubbs & Tawake, 2009). While global awareness of the need for inclusive education policies is beginning to address this disjuncture (UNESCO, 2018), such policies have frequently fallen short of addressing and challenging societal beliefs and practices that stigmatize, marginalize, and discriminate against the educational inclusion of women and children living with disabilities (Sharma, Forlinb, Deppelera, & Guang-Xue, 2013; UNESCO, 2018). As Yenas suggests, empowering the voices of those living with disabilities has the potential to enhance awareness and build understanding. In this way, giving voice to those living with disabilities can strengthen relationality within communities and challenge exclusionary stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

DEEPENING OCEANIC RELATIONALITIES:
A PUBLICATION JOURNEY

As a Society, we recognized the need to create a relational space to provide ongoing advice, guidance, and mentorship for our new and emerging researcher community. The geographic and academic isolation of many new and emerging researchers in our Society heightened the need to establish an active community of emerging scholars. Our intent in doing so was to extend the production of local knowledge and scholarship from a place of shared commitment and relationality. To address this need, we launched a New and Emerging Researcher Fono (NERF) at the 2018 OCIES conference. We were grateful to receive an OCIES Fellowship and Networks Grant which provided seed funding to host this introductory *fono*, and delighted to have close to 50 new and emerging researchers attend. One aim of this *fono* was to support new and emerging researchers in OCIES to publish their conference paper in this 2019 special issue of the *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*. A call for proposals was extended to OCIES emerging scholars at the conclusion of the conference and we were thrilled to receive a strong response from emerging scholars throughout the region.

What set our NERF apart from more traditional publication projects was our intent to create a relational space for ongoing discussions and conversations. Despite geographic separation, we were deliberate in our intent to create a "third space" (Edward, 1980) for new and emerging researchers to engage in intellectual conversation and knowledge-sharing throughout the publication process. An online *fono* was created to build, nurture and maintain relationships with authors throughout the Pacific. Authors and editors met through an online Zoom conversation to discuss key concepts about relationality, share literature, and consider how relationality was operationalized in their articles. In addition,

each author was assigned a mentor who provided feedback on four writing milestones during the manuscript development stage. Milestone guidelines and writing tips were shared by the editorial team and an author self-review checklist (adapted from Rath & Mutch, 2014) was provided to give greater clarity to authors as they prepared their final manuscript. As editors, we were also mentored into the editorial role by an experienced academic and editor. We met as an editorial team prior to each writing milestone and online f*ono* to discuss the development of manuscripts and to further scaffold our online *fono* gatherings. In this sense, authors and editors were all actively part of an academic learning community.

The final phase involved the support of a large number of senior OCIES academics who played a vital role in reviewing each manuscript. As guest editors, we have been humbled by the hard work and intellectual generosity of those who reviewed draft submissions and supported authors towards their final manuscript. Each manuscript underwent at least two rounds of blind peer reviews by two experienced academics who offered specific feedback and extended comments on each article. This process provided clear feedback to allow authors an opportunity to further develop and enhance their manuscripts. In addition, each article was anonymously reviewed by an author, giving authors the additional experience of being a reviewer. The publication of this special issue signals the conclusion of our new and emerging researcher publication project, yet the beginning of our efforts to deepen Oceanic relationalities through a collaborative academic learning community. We hope that by doing so, we offer possibilities for the development of future emerging research communities, both in Oceania and beyond.

With this in mind, our publication journey was not without obstacles. On occasion, technological access, infrastructure, and connectivity proved to be challenging for some of our authors located in more remote regions of the Pacific. At times, some authors could not attend our online *fono* due to access and connectivity issues. This required flexibility with milestone submission dates and a willingness for editors to connect with authors at alternative times to maintain momentum throughout the process. Connectivity issues also occasionally impacted the quality of our online discussions. Some authors communicated via the online chat function because of sound issues, while others could be heard, but not seen. Despite this, the online *fono* still proved to be an important way to maintain connections throughout the writing process.

Another significant challenge was supporting emerging scholars through their competing and often demanding schedules. Some scholars were in the final submission stage of their Masters or PhD theses. Others relocated to the Pacific at the conclusion of their studies, during data collection phases of their research, or because of external aid contracts. This required a time of resettling for each scholar and both flexibility and encouragement from the editorial team. In addition, we were working within a tight timeframe for the development and submission of the articles. While this condensed time frame helped to maintain the momentum of the project, it also left little room for unexpected delays. It required authors to respond quickly to feedback, which was not always easy for many first-time authors with their own busy schedules. Developing an understanding of how to structure an article and respond to the theme of the special issue took time to establish. Ideally, spending time in a "reading circle" prior to writing would help to deepen our collective understanding of relationality and build a stronger awareness of the multiplicity of interrelated spaces through which our own research connects. Nevertheless, authors

worked solidly over an eight-month period to write, review, and publish the articles in this special issue.

CELEBRATING OCEANIC RELATIONALITIES: AN OVERVIEW OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

Each of the seven papers in this special issue celebrates the contribution of OCIES new and emerging researchers. These articles cohere around the notion of relationality, each advancing research in a wide range of educational contexts. Relationality is celebrated through three interrelated themes: relationality through socio-spatial positionality; relationality through identity and citizenship; and relationality as a response to structural tensions and barriers. Each of these themes aims to achieve the broader goal of exploring, deepening, and celebrating relationalities within Oceania and beyond.

The first paper by Fasavalu and Reynolds examines relationality through the lens of socio-spatial positionality. Fasavalu and Reynolds examine researcher positionality as relationally constructed. Drawing on *tok stori*, and informed by *vā*, the authors employ autoethnography to examine their own stories as they pursue a deeper understanding of their positionality-as-researchers. The paper is set on their contention that "ethical cultural references from Oceania extend the demands of positionality beyond flows of power in research" (p. 17). Examining their own narratives, and the intersections of others participating in the *tok stori*, the authors construct a deeper engagement with their own journeys as a research "edgewalk". The authors demand careful and explicit attention to the implications of relational care, love, reciprocity, and responsibility which accompany a continuous process of re-positioning in pursuit of authentic researcher relationality. Fasavalu and Reynolds offer important parallels for thinking "positionality-as-teacher" within the classroom, and provoke a deeper consideration of the importance of *tok stori* within academic conferences.

The following three articles examine relationality through the identity and citizenship. Kennedy's article explores how Pacific language programmes in secondary schools can deepen understandings of *vā* and contribute to cultural identity construction for Pacific students. By embracing relationality through *vā,* she offers a perspective that is not usually applied to language education. This approach brings to light how language education can support Pacific cultural identity construction and the importance of exploring the *vā* between a person and their language, and the interconnection between language, relationality, and identity. Although very few schools in Aotearoa New Zealand support Pacific language development, Kennedy's study highlights the value of supporting the learning of heritage languages by sharing students' stories of how their language, their culture, and their cultural identity are enhanced by doing so.

Romero examines identity expression in the Pilipinx diaspora through punk rock lyrics. This work challenges the way in which Pilipinx is traditionally presented, by offering a representation that "complicates dominant understandings of the contexts, conditions and capacities of Pilipinx bodies" (Romero, 2019). Relationality is intersected with diasporic history and punk rock pedagogy to explore how Pilipinx becoming can inform current Oceanic relations.

Fitoo's examination of citizenship in the Solomon Islands highlights the challenge that a highly diverse context can create for education systems concerned with developing

relevant and meaningful citizenship education programmes. Drawing on focus groups and semi-structured interviews with students and school principals from urban and rural secondary schools, Fitoo advocates an approach to citizenship education framed around elements of *wantok*—a term indicating the use of variants of Pijn, and used to signify unity. As Fitoo argues, a *wantok-centric* framework for citizenship education offers an opportunity to centre notions of citizenship upon elements which can bring together and connect a diverse population.

Choo focuses on the case of young urban Buddhists in Myanmar. Her work draws on photo-elicitation and semi-structured interviews as a way of examining her participants' construction of democratic citizenship. Choo's work highlights the manner in which participants draw on their religious understanding of Buddhism as they perform civic responsibilities. Choo demonstrates a need for a broader understanding of democracy: her participants rejected Westo-centric understandings of democracy because it requires a separation of the private (religious) self from the public (civic duty) self. Rather, her participants consider the relations between these forms of self as they perform active civic participation within Myanmar's Buddhist democracy.

The final two articles within this special issue draw on relationality to form a response to social, political, and economic barriers. Joskin demonstrates how relationality can provide a culturally and contextually relevant response to the complexities of implementing global outcomes-based education reform agendas into local contexts. Using Papua New Guinea (PNG) as a case study, Joskin examines PNGs engagement with external donors and aid agencies to shed light on how a series of global policy and curricular reforms have impacted local education systems and practices. Her work invites us to consider how relationality can be central to the contextualization of local policy responses through the *Kibung Framework,* a relationality-centred professional development model. The *Kibung Framework* presents an Indigenous approach to teachers' professional learning by valuing connectedness through discussion and dialogue. In doing so, the *Kibung Framework* offers a point of departure from top-down programmes and frameworks that are often evidenced in global educational reform.

Finally, Yenas' article presents relationality as a response to societal barriers by giving voice to women living with visible, physical disabilities in PNG. Yenas uses interpretative phenomenological analysis to investigate the lived experiences of five women living with physical disabilities. Through the voices of her participants, her article demonstrates the discrimination, social stigmatization and educational exclusion experienced by these women. Yenas suggests that a relationality of understanding can be established through inclusive policies and practices, thus challenging and transforming current social stereotypes and exclusionary practices.

To conclude, Hau'ofa's (1998) described Oceania as "us": "a world of people connected to each other" (p. 401–402). We hope our relational journey towards publication has gone some way towards strengthening "the relational space of Oceania" (Coxon & McLaughlin, 2017.) while also contributing theoretically, practically, and spiritually to our educational interconnectedness at global, regional, national, and community levels. Together, these papers offer a critical insight into how our research, both within and beyond Oceania, places humanity and relationality at the centre of our work. We invite you to join with us by centring your own scholarship within the educational interconnectedness of this relational space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Donella Cobb is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Waikato. Donella teaches postgraduate and undergraduate courses in global studies in education, pedagogy, and professional learning and development. Donella's research explores the intersection between the political economy of education, critical pedagogy and international education policy.

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Sonia Fonua is Pāpālangi (New Zealand European) and was born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. Married to her Tongan husband, they have two young sons who inspire her to improve the education system for all Pasifika. She has been working for 20 years in academic positions focused on equity, access and social justice for indigenous Māori and Pasifika students. Building on previous study in Anthropology, her doctoral studies are in Critical Studies in Education within the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland. Her research interests focus on ethnic disparities in education, and ways to embed indigenous (science) knowledge and develop effective teaching and learning methods for indigenous and minority students).

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Relational positionality and a learning disposition:
Shifting the conversation

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In the complex and diverse region of Oceania, researchers often work across more than one cultural understanding. Thus, a researcher's position with regard to their research requires careful ongoing negotiation because position, when understood through relationality, is fluid. Negotiating position requires acute reflexivity of the researcher but also offers opportunities for ongoing development and agency. In this article, we use the literature of relational positionality and autoethnographic methodology to discuss two researchers' deliberate re-positioning in relation to their field of education, focusing on deliberate self-change and the application of new conceptual learning. The context is Pasifika education, a space which sits between different knowledge systems as the education of Pacific-origin people in Aotearoa New Zealand. The article demonstrates how storying can support new understandings which, in turn, can help negotiate positionality. The argument draws on data from a conference tok stori *session that illustrates the potential of storying to expose, re-value and then reweave positionality through relational activity.*

Keywords: Relationality; Pacific education; researcher positionality; tok stori; vā

INTRODUCTION

In research, positionality generally involves "the stance or positioning of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the study" (Rowe, 2014, p. 628). Thus, by definition, positionality is concerned with relationships. One's position may be understood in a range of ways including by reference to concepts such as insider/outsider. It can also be understood through a wider range of complex intersectional categories such as ethnic and class background, and gender (Vanner, 2015). Like all relational matters, positionality can be fluid and shifting.

We borrow from Emirbayer and Mische (1998), a temporal focus to understand agency as a process of active social engagement that is embedded in the past but which aims to imagine and, therefore, produce a deliberately shaped future. This article seeks to re-value agency in the context of positionality by examining the experiences of two practitioners engaged in education as teachers, learners, and researchers in the inter-cultural space of Pasifika education, the education of students of Pacific origin in Aotearoa New Zealand (Airini, Mila-Schaaf, Coxon, Mara, & Sanga, 2010). We suggest that relational positionality can be negotiated through deliberate strategies such as interpersonal

relational activity and deliberate self-change or self-actualization (Fletcher, 1998). This is especially true when positional closeness is valued in the research/teaching context. While not synonyms, research and teaching are related in terms of positionality since both involve the relational construction of knowledge. Thus, while the article pays attention to research, a wider application to educational contexts is possible, particularly for researcher practitioners.

The term relational positionality has been used to refer to the relational shaping of a researcher's identity (Crossa, 2012). That is, how the researcher is positioned by others. Relational positionality, when understood in this way, is focussed on matters of which the researcher must be aware but over which they have little control. Any reflexive process which a researcher undertakes to imagine their position is likely to be individual, retrospective, category-based, and performed as an ethical background prior to research as a way of accounting for power.

However, ethical cultural references from Oceania extend the demands of positionality beyond flows of power in research. An ongoing ethical obligation to care for research relationships (Airini et al., 2010) is also deemed significant. In this view, an element of researcher positioning is the contribution researchers offer research participants and their communities. This is a product of what the researcher brings to relationships in the research rather than just who they appear to be or the categories they seem to occupy. This ethical approach offers researchers the opportunity to change the way they are received in research through deliberate cultivation of interpersonal relationships, exposure to contexts, ideas, and so on. In many situations in Oceania, research sites are located in the space between elements of two knowledge systems (Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009), for example in Pasifika education. In these circumstances, researchers travel from one world of ideas to another (Mason & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2014) as a research edgewalk (Krebs, 1999). Developing one's ability to edgewalk is a further way a researcher can take steps to satisfy research obligations of relational care.

Positionality is included as an aspect in most accounts of research, sometimes in terms of disposition (a person's inherent characteristics). However, little has been written about acts of deliberate learning to increase a researcher's potential to serve communities by shifting their relational position. This article examines the relationship between position and disposition by taking account of learning. New knowledge, practices, and perspectives that can promote relational closeness between researcher and participants are particularly important to research theorized through a relational lens. Exploring this area contributes to an understanding of relationality by accounting for positionality through the management of the categories a person seems to fit. This article values relationships as sites of learning, and draws attention to relational obligations and expectations as opportunities for researchers to seek agency, particularly over their own development and research contribution.

PARAMETERS OF RELATIONAL POSITIONALITY

In this section, we review literature which discusses positionality in relational terms in the context of inter-cultural spaces. Merriam et al. (2001) discuss the dynamics of research in multi-cultural societies using the category of insider-outsider. This refers to the way a researcher may or may not be seen to "belong". In their view, positionality is multileveled, unstable over time, and relational. They see a balance between various

categorical markers, such as sex and age, as that which constructs a researcher's position in their participants' minds. They suggest that because power in research is negotiated, researchers have an element of agency over positionality, exercised during research by performing actions that are valued in the research context, such as visiting key community locations.

A discussion of positionality as a reciprocal relational status is staged in Carling, Erdal, and Ezzati (2014). They describe three intersecting elements. Firstly, there is an "infinite number of social categories" (p. 6) held in the minds of those involved. Second is the perceived position of the research itself: who is seen to fund it and why. Finally, the researcher's personal characteristics or disposition is significant. Disposition is important when evident during research if the researcher shows they know and understand aspects of the relevant community. Although often used for describing a researcher's position in research, categorical ideas of positionality can become simplistic and may tend towards essentialisation. Whereas concepts such as superdiversity and intersectionality provide less disturbance to simplicity than understanding that positionality is relational and reciprocal (Carling et al., 2014).

Crossa (2012) says that relational positionality can also "consider how researchers' identities are shaped by multiple mobile and flexible relations and how that makes a difference to the research process" (p. 110) . Interrelations between categories that inform a researcher's multiple identities can affect a researcher's position. However, fluid positionality can also be produced by changes in contextual and interpersonal relationships during research. Crossa points out that writers have depicted relationships between researcher and collaborators variously as a gap (Moss, 1995) or as a state of betweenness (Nast, 1994). The latter implies a fluid negotiation in which changes in researcher position are made through researcher actions but can also be made by other people in the context. When a researcher's position changes during research, a researchers' theoretical framework might also shift, suggesting a circular (Carling et al., 2014) reciprocal relationship between positionality and other research elements.

Relational positionality can be understood through Oceanic ideas. In the Tongan relational concept of *vā*, a spatial metaphor, relationships are a "sociospatial connection" (Ka'ili, 2005, p. 89) which "relates and connects individuals and groups to one another" (p. 90). The Samoan writer, Wendt (1999) says, "Va[1] is the space between . . . the space that is context, giving meaning to things. The meanings change as the relationships/the contexts change" (p. 402). Airini et al. (2010) offer ethical guidance in the inter-cultural space of Pasifika education through the Samoan reference *teu le va*. This "focuses on secular and sacred commitments, guiding reciprocal 'acting in' and respect for relational spaces" (Anae, 2016, p. 117) such as the *va* of research relationships. Relational elements of research such as positionality involve an obligation "to 'tidy up' the physical, spiritual, cultural, social, psychological and tapu 'spaces' of human relationships" (Airini et al., 2010, pp. 11,12). In this way, *teu le va* in Pasifika education "gives recognition to the centrality of context as a holistic environment" (p. 17). This involves understanding position in relation to complex multi-level culturally fluid and diverse communities. In turn, nuanced obligations of relational care are placed on researchers.

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[1] Editor's note: The authors use 'Va' with, and sometimes without, a macro over the 'a' to specify its Samoan use (without macron) and Tongan (with macron). The authors have varied its use according to the reference under discussion.

This section has illustrated a variety of ways in which positionality has been relationally understood; as a balance of categorical items; as reciprocal and shifting; as subject to agency during research; and made intelligible in Pacific thinking through *vā* or *va*, appropriate in the field of Pasifika education. Because we seek to pay attention to our own experiences of agency in positionality, we now turn to a consideration of autoethnography as methodology.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY

In the autoethnographic process "authors scrutinize, publicize, and reflexively rework their own self-understandings as a way to shape understandings of and in the wider world" (Butz & Besio, 2009, p. 1660). In autoethnography, the concept of position is often present. For example, summarizing Goffman (1998), Meo-Sewabu (2014) describes ethnographic research as being "about getting into place and making yourself (and your culture) vulnerable" (p. 353). Hamilton, Smith, and Worthington (2008) say ethnography includes "cultural elements of personal experience" in which the researcher may "situate themselves, contesting and resisting what they see" (p. 22).

An essential tool is an autoethnographic sensibility. This means "recognizing that clear-cut distinctions among researchers, research subjects and the objects of research are illusory, and that what we call the research field occupies a space between these overlapping categories" (Butz & Besio, 2009, p. 1664). The apparent boundaries of the positioned self and concepts of relational positionality are questioned by an autoethnographic sensibility. This questioning is a consequence of embracing a holistic relational view of the world. Autoethnography can be collaborative (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2016; MacDonald & Reynolds, 2017) as in this study.

Autoethnography is primarily a textual interrogation (Jones, 2007). As an exercise in self-reflexivity (Crossa, 2012), it takes into account how "text" is shaped by ideological and epistemological assumptions as well as subjective and normative claims (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). Although text is generally written, oral performance is text. *Tok stori,* as a relationally-focussed forum, can produce an interactive text focussed on the relational aspects of experience and learning.

TOK STORI AS METHOD

Tok stori is a practice of Melanesian origins (Sanga, Reynolds, Paulsen, Spratt, & Maneipuri, 2018). It involves people meeting and storying their experiences as experts in their own lives. *Tok stori* in the academy offers "opportunities for researchers and others to follow a relational path in their investigations, one which recognises the connectedness of humanity" (p. 5). It challenges lecture-style conference presentations that deliberately divide presenter and listeners through space and power.

Tok stori can be understood as a relational ontology (Sanga & Reynolds, 2019). The act of storying contributes to relational closeness (Sanga & Reynolds, 2019) because, through story, a shared reality is constructed. As a method within that ontology, *tok stori* affects the kinds of data produced and is helpful in developing data which values the whole person. The *tok stori* space values vulnerability, emotionality, personal experiences, relational encounters, and narrative intersections.

A conference call to *tok stori* or *talanoa* invites participates to a trust-based relational space in which to listen well, contribute deeply and expect to be changed through joint knowledge creation. Although some writers have contextually used *tok stori* and *talanoa* as synonyms (Houma, 2011; Nanau, 2011) to acknowledge this research as edgewalking and despite one of the authors of this paper, Tali's, familiarity with *talanoa*, we retain the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES) conference term *tok stori* to draw attention to the relational space as one to which we both intentionally step.

CONTEXT

The data in this study was primarily drawn from an OCIES conference *tok stori* focussed on a number of *tok stori* previously shared by us (the authors, Tali and Martyn). *Tok stori* in the conference space offers an opportunity to decolonize proceedings despite the constraints of time and space. Here the lecture room required re-formatting into a circle at the start and back into rows at the end of the session, a symbolic reminder of the dominance of conference approaches which shape relationality through distance at the expense of connection. The session aim was to engage with a wider circle of people regarding our stories, including how one researcher's storying had affected the other. We hoped that other people's experiences and understandings would intersect with ours, helping us to re-understand our stories with enhanced depth and resonance. The session was facilitated by an expert practitioner. Ethical clearance was given by participants for their contributions to be used as research data. The session of around 60 minutes, timed to fit a double conference time allocation, involved approximately 20 participants. A mobile phone recorded the session which was subsequently transcribed.

INFORMED GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS

A grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) analytical approach (GT) is inductive and prioritizes understandings developed from data over those embedded in pre-existing frameworks. GT advocates coding through interaction between researcher(s) and data using a process of questioning without presumption (Charmaz, 1999). Concrete open codes (Charmaz, 1999) are established early by line-by-line coding, followed by axial codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) of more abstract patterns. This dual process is useful in autoethnographic endeavour for understanding relationships between individual experiences and global patterns

Despite seeking to avoid pre-supposition, GT recognizes everyone comes to data with assumptions. Thornberg (2012), who developed informed grounded theory (IGT), extends this recognition, claiming it is unwise not to take "advantage of the literature when collecting and analysing data" (p. 243). Thornberg suggests that adding sensitising concepts derived from literature to coding provides a tentative but viable way to navigate through data. An IGT approach is particularly valuable in research which seeks to understand relationality because it allows a literature-driven relational lens to inform coding as a way of understanding the relational configuration of apparently individual experiences. We conducted an IGT analysis of the data from the *tok stori* using sensitising concepts including agency, positionality, and relationship.

An iterative line-by-line IGT analysis produces insight by creating distance between researcher and data, valuable in supporting an autoethnography sensibility. However,

here we opt to reconstitute the data post-analysis as story in order to honour its origin and nature. Analysis is threaded through the data of the stories as told. We deal first with Tali's and then Martyn's story, linked as an edgewalk started on "different sides" of Pasifika education. Then we present contributions within the *tok stori* session from others to widen the focus to the potential of *tok stori* before discussing implications.

THE TOK STORI: DATA AND ANALYSIS

Tali's story

Initial position. Tali's story accounts for his initial position in Pasifika education by reference to the stereotype of Pacific Islanders as sport stars (Hokowhitu, 2004; Schaaf, 2006). In this, Pacific Islanders seek success in education through physical rather than other ways. Accepting this imposed category-derived position was not devoid of agency on Tali's part. As his context changed through migration, Tali valued prior Island experience.

> Being a Samoan born as well, sports was always gonna be the ticket out, ticket to success, as any Polynesian you would talk to, I guess it's the easier option, because we are so conformed into the hard labour and so this is just the way it is for me.

Tali's positioning within the sporting stereotype involved limits, perhaps a consequence of exclusionary choices constructed for Pasifika (and other) students in education (Hokowhitu, 2004). He recounted that, as a result of positioning himself in education through sport,

> I never paid attention to my [academic] education in the younger years.

A critical incident. At this point, a critical incident, an injury, made Tali's stereotypically informed position untenable. The cost of his distant relationship with academic education became visible. As a consequence, he deliberately re-imagined himself through a process of inquiry.

> [S]ports was no longer the main focus. And so for me I guess for me I had to re-orientate the thinking, and asked, what is next for me? So I turned to education . . . I used all the learning that I put into sports; for example, I persevered through hard trainings through sports, and decided that I was gonna apply it to my education.

This description provides a further example of the agentic recycling of strengths in a new context; perseverance in sport became the ground for persistence in education. Realizing he was poorly equipped for further education, Tali deliberately turned to learning.

Deliberate learning. Tali's account of learning strategies suggests a developed level of self-knowledge that prompted remedial strategies in the face of educational inadequacy

> [I]n University, while everyone else is out partying and enjoying life, I was stuck in front of the mirror trying to learn how to pronounce words.

This strategy combined with a cultural strength: conversational spaces as an expression of Pacific relationality. Storying offered Tali an alternative, comfortable opportunity to learn how to benefit from education.

> None of the lectures I went to, I would understand what they are talking about . . . Pasifika people . . . love to talk and half of the time we are discussing just things that are not important. [H]ow I could change that conversation to become more meaningful? . . . the environment was less formal like there's no one telling you what to do in the front . . . I was able to ask questions.

By deliberate action, Tali sought to transform storying beyond a phatic and into a pedagogic activity as a step towards self-actualization in education, seeking fulfilment and the development of his potential. Tali's story also recalls the catalytic effect of his curiosity on others in the familiar storying environment.

> So I asked the questions and I was curious about the answers . . . while they are answering the questions they were debating issues as well . . . Therefore for me, not only learning from them but they were also learning from each other and the conversation as well.

Re-positioning. The narrative indicates than when Tali returned to Pasifika education as a teacher, he had re-positioned himself. Initially, he had failed to engage in education. Recognizing himself in his students, Tali's story became that of a leader-as-servant, continuing to be deliberate in his engagement with education for the sake of others:

> [T]here were a lot of me in the schools I taught at, students who are in there and not knowing what to do . . . So I asked the question to myself, how can I be of service to these kids, I decided to come back [to tertiary education] . . . and through this Masters journeys I have learnt more than what I have experienced with the hope to help.

Tali's continued learning journey produced an iterative sense of inadequacy which required him to develop himself further. It was at this point in his storying that Tali told of meeting Martyn.

Martyn's story

Initial positioning. Martyn's initial position in relation to Pasifika education was of ignorance a result of geographical movement, first from the UK to New Zealand. On coming to Wellington, this ignorance became significant.

> When I got to Wellington, I had no real experience of Pacific people in education and then I walked into my classroom and there were a lot of Pasifika students . . . that presented me with a bit of a problem because my knowledge was zero.

This was compounded by Martyn's consciousness of stereotypical narratives told about Pasifika education of boys who were:

> [E]ssentially polite and respectful . . . there to play rugby because they might get a professional contract.

However, Martyn tells of a second, contradictory narrative of educational success for Pasifika students, paradoxically constructed around a unique student. One year,

> [A] [Pasifika] student . . . was top in Physics, and the common narrative [was] . . . there you can see Pasifika success [for all] is possible.

Although these conflicting narratives were inadequate to explain the situation, Martyn's story reveals his inability to construct a more viable narrative at that time:

> [T]he narrative I was living in did not explain what I was seeing . . . it wasn't one that enabled me to make a contribution to the lives of the students . . . I thought what is the narrative here?

Martyn's family's subsequent move to a Pacific Island nation is explained as an attempt to overcome ignorance. However, as well as learning about the lifeways of others, Martyn suggests he learned about himself:

> We were seeing things around us that if we read them in our way it didn't make much sense . . . I tried to go [to a Pacific Island nation] . . . to upskill but I also learnt how much upskilling I had to do.

A critical incident and re-positioning. Martyn's story recalls that he started a PhD because of a challenge from a Pasifika parent but his understanding was initially confined by his position in relation to Pasifika education.

> I was looking at the word relationships and it seemed . . . what we got asked to do [in Pasifika education was] the same thing but just to do it better.

A critical moment came in Martyn's account when he encountered *vā* in the work of Māhina (2004), a concept capable of shifting his experiential learning to a new paradigm.

> When I started looking at this word *vā* I realised that it was actually another whole conversation out there about how we should be together, how our relationships should run and so that gave me a really new point in my conversation with education and with myself.

Learning about relationships through *va* began to open up the possibility of adopting the position of an edgewalker in Pasifika education.

Within the conference *tok stori*, Tali and Martyn undertook a second round of storying focussed on the effect of their relationship on their positions in regard to Pasifika education and research. Thus, this section is also an analysis of a *tok stori* about other prior *tok stori* sessions.

Tali's relational story

Fluid positionality. Tali's story reiterates the significance of fixed, categorical aspects of positionality on encountering Martyn at a lecture.

> He was a guest speaker talking about his research class . . . you have questions, why is this white person talking about the things that are dear to me?

However, other aspects of positioning were also in play, which Tali describes shifting the way he contextually understood Martyn.

> What connected me to Martyn and his research was the fact that he came in as a learner, not as the one who wants to sort of change our ways of doing things but someone who wants to understand the way we do things.

Here, Tali indicates how positional separation based on ethnicity can be undercut by the deliberately adopted position of another.

Catalytic relevance. Tali's story cites a moment to explain the significance of learning as a relational connection in this context. He had been unable to explain to school management his effectiveness in Pasifika education.

> [T]hey were trying to get out of me, what are you doing with this class? . . . the students in this class . . . have said that I am the only one they listen to. And so the question was put out there and I didn't know what to say to it or how to answer it.

Tali explains his inability to provide a reply centres on his position in Pasifika education as a family member. In the *tok stori*, recalling this produced a very emotional moment, attesting to the depth of love required to undertake teaching as family care in line with cultural norms.

> Teaching was no different than looking after my own sibling, little nieces and nephew, and the reason why I couldn't answer or explain . . . was because for me it was a normal practice . . . I didn't change the way I see whoever was sitting in front of me, I saw them as my own brothers and sisters.

Faced with his inability to explain, Martyn's learning became valuable to Tali.

> I couldn't explain that for myself, but he was able to explain that because for me it was just normal practice and habits but for him it was new learning.

In addition, Tali's experienced validation of his Samoan culture in Pasifika education and realized the price he had paid to succeed:

> [W]hat had happened is that I had neglected that side of me, my Samoaness, in order to learn in this environment, had to become a Palagi to learn like how they learn .. . . I couldn't pin point the ideas until I came to study and heard Martyn talking about these things, I said . . . that's it!

Martyn's relational story

Catalytic relevance. In Martyn's narrative, the effect of the storying encounter with Tali was a re-understanding of the significance of his learning. Tali's tears challenged Martyn to respond.

> I realised at that point what he had given me. What people had taught me, I knew it was of significance to other palagi teachers but I did not really appreciate it until I heard his reaction, the quality of the gift . . . the importance of what I have tried to learn . . . the responsibility

This explanation suggests that a person's response to emotion in storying can have a powerful catalytic effect, such as the rethinking of one's relational position and potential contribution to a field.

Fluid positionality. Storying as pedagogy capable of shifting a person's position in relation to a shared field is a theme in Martyn's account of his and Tali's interactions.

> [P]assing the story backwards and forwards, I have really come to understand much more on the seriousness and power . . . of the Pacific wisdom and the importance of absorbing that myself . . . validated by my brother in his comments.

The validation of an "outsider" by their contribution to "insiders" has two-way consequences. The validated outsider may experience increased confidence and a consciousness of increased closeness to their field; insiders may re-address their relationship to the field as a result of the approach and re-languaging of outsiders. In this way, relational positioning developed through the flux of learning can be creative for all involved.

Tok stori as a relational space

In this section, we briefly analyse the contributions of others to the conference *tok stori*, focussing on the potential of *tok stori* as a way of exploring positionality and relationality in a conference setting. Participants are indicated as P1, P2, and so on.

Validation of emotion as connection. One participant in the *tok stori* intersected her experience as a parent with that of Tali as a teacher through the emotion Tali had shown when thinking of teaching as a family activity.

> I have a child . . . his teacher . . . said to me, I am paid to teach I am not paid to like him and I don't like him . . . how lucky those students are to have a teacher that brings that kind of love to the classroom. (P1)

This contribution suggests the way emotion in *tok stori* can enhance relational connection, lead to the validation of one person by another, and support ideas such as the importance to Pasifika education of love.

A second participant connected to the story as a teacher. He recounted a prior conversation in his home (Asian) country:

> She told me . . . "this means that you love bringing something to your students, that you want to connect with your students" . . . But for me when you ignore students that means you lose your heart. (P2)

This exemplifies the idea that *tok stori* encourages emotional connections which mediate ethnic or other categorical differences.

Validation of relationships as potential pedagogic spaces. Because a *tok stori* session, unlike a traditional conference presentation, opens a space which values relationality, pedagogical connections can readily be developed and/or acknowledged. These contributions speak of prior experiences but offer validation to involved listeners in the tok stori moment:

> [W]hat helped me was having [my] husband's perspective and other people's perspectives but hearing your take on it [vā] helped me connect with it too. (P3)

> [I remember] having a conversation . . . a few years ago [about Pasifika education] and since then it has shifted my thinking . . . I have just been on this journey . . . one that is striving for relationships . . . where we might be sharing our journeys, where it [our learning] can hit home. (P4)

Validation of re-positioning. A *tok stori* space is one in which people's understanding of the world and their place in it is discursively created. The conference *tok stori* from which this data has been drawn refers to prior *tok stori* in an iterative, dialogic, and circular fashion. "Flattened" relationships and consequent opportunities afforded by *tok stori* can act to facilitate new understandings which can challenge and shift a person's world view.

> We are not here to compete but we are here to complete each-other and I think just seeing the relationship . . . highlights there is a movement in terms of the thinking and mind in terms of retraining and reframing challenging and overcoming a lot of things. (P5)

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

In the literature of relational positionality, researcher agency is generally confined to the period of research. This is because relationality is understood as an interpersonal matter, often to do with a balance perceived between multiple categories of identity. However, a *va*-based understanding of relationality can include people's relationships with entities such as the field of Pasifika education, relationships over which they may have ongoing agency. Understanding the ethics of Pasifika education through *teu le va* means that where researchers do have agency over their positionality, they also have responsibility to nurture this in order to enhance their contribution to communities.

Understanding positionality through a longer time base makes sense through this lens. The data suggests that, in the field of Pasifika education, long-term relationships which strategically support researchers as edgewalkers are particularly valuable. The *tok stori* reported on here suggests that valuing agency in positionality can be powerful when this is enacted through learning and the development of appropriate relationships at a deep level. Emotional connection is an expectation in *tok stori*; the tears and laughter shared through *tok stori* in the OCIES conference promoted storied intersections that demonstrate this kind of depth.

However, the data suggests that processes which have agentic potential to render positionality fluid are neither simple nor straightforward, but structured by a tension between fixed and less stable items. Fixed items include categorical positional markers that support stereotypes. However, the data indicates that it is possible to erode the effect of such markers through relational activity. Critical events are another fixed category. Researchers can respond to these in a variety of ways, including deliberate learning and self-actualization in order to achieve a degree of re-positioning.

Recognizing existing strengths and identifying areas of need are also strategies capable of supporting positional fluidity. This is particularly true where relational positionality is understood to go beyond how researchers are regarded by others and to encompass who the researcher is as person, how they regard themselves, and their contribution to community research. This does not deny the relevance of power as an aspect of positionality but sees all those involved in research as having positional agency to mediate flows of power through the ethics and understandings they bring.

The data raises the question of the relationship between position and disposition. Disposition is a concept focussed on the individual; positionality is relational. Perhaps a researcher's disposition is implicated in the way tensions between fixed and fluid items which affect positionality are resolved. The data suggests that where resources such as prior experience, cultural practices such as storying, and conceptual information exist, these are recognized and valued if a disposition to learn is also present. Where this is true, a responsibility is placed on researchers and practitioners in education to position themselves as learners from the plethora of resources available.

The researcher-as-learner and teacher-as-servant have the potential to build enhanced relational bridges with the communities they serve. However, since everyone has the ability to learn, perhaps the activation of this aspect of disposition is itself a result of environmental factors such as the extent to which stereotypes constrain the optimum conditions for learning.

In this article, autoethnography has proved a valuable methodology for creating a platform from which to discuss positionality as a relational matter. The individual narratives shared in the *tok story* continually reference storytellers to a field of relationships. The vulnerability associated with autoethnography is also helpful since the relational accounts given in the data of positionality both fixed and fluid are steeped in emotion. Admissions of ignorance, conformity to stereotype and so on are deeply personal matters.

Given the partial understanding we have of people's experiences, attributing such things to others is judgemental, not honouring. The potential of an autoethnographic sensibility to expose the illusionary distinctions between elements of research such as researcher and field is also helpful when seeking to expand the boundaries of discussion around relational positionality.

As has become clear, both time and the range of relationships which are acknowledged can be usefully expanded when a more holistic and relationally focussed lens is applied to research. By creating space between ourselves and our stories, the IGT analysis of autoethnographic text has taught much to us as storytellers. Our learning about the kinds of processes which have affected us, permits increased deliberateness as we continue our research and teaching journeys.

Finally, this article has demonstrated that where edgewalking is a way of caring for research relationships with community, interpersonal relational activities in the space between "sides" of the edge can enhance close relational positionality with individuals, community, and field. We appreciate the responsibility and feel the joy that this realization brings. In our case, we have realized with Crocombe (1976) that a "person who behaves towards you as a brother deserves to be addressed as one" (p. 4).

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

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Dr Martyn Reynolds has been an educator in schools for over 35 years. He is currently working as a freelance researcher, writer, and provider of professional learning and development, and holds a post as a Research Assistant at Victoria University of Wellington. Martyn has lived and worked in the UK, his birthplace, Tonga, Papua New Guinea and Aotearoa New Zealand. He is passionate about the place of learning as a way of improving the relational activity of education. His research interests include education in the Pacific, tok stori, vā/va and transformational pedagogies.

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Relational cultural identity and Pacific Language education

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This article investigates how two Pacific language programmes in secondary schools outside of the broader region of Auckland, New Zealand, enabled an exploration, celebration, and deepening of vā *(relational space) through language, and contributed to identity construction of students of Samoan and Tongan heritage. As the relational lens is rarely applied to language education, this study contributes to a new perspective of language education and identity research. It does so by looking at the complexity of* vā *in relation to language education and demonstrates how examining language education through the perspective of* vā *helps us to understand the relationship between language development and our physical, spiritual, cultural, and intellectual being. Findings show how Pacific language education can provide opportunities for students to develop relational Oceanic identities by strengthening connections in the* vā *between community, one's own language and other Oceanic peoples. In supporting construction of cultural identity, this small-scale study emphasizes benefits of providing heritage language programmes in secondary schools to promote culturally sustaining pedagogies which value and develop knowledges of home and school.*

Keywords: Pacific language education, vā*, cultural identity construction, relationality, culturally sustaining pedagogy*

INTRODUCTION

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Pacific educational research and policy each advocate for teachers and school programs to draw on students' languages, cultures, and identities in supporting optimal student outcomes (Ministry of Education (MoE), 2019; Si'ilata, Samu, & Siteine, 2018). Recent research has introduced Pacific relational concepts such as *teu le va* (looking after and restoring the relational space) into discussions about developing positive teacher student relationships (Reynolds, 2017, D. Ostler-Malaulau, personal communication, 26 August 2019). However, the concept of relationality in Pacific language education and its contribution to identity construction has not been considered extensively in research. In this article, I report on a small-scale study based in a New Zealand city outside of Auckland, researching with teachers and students from two school communities. I argue that applying a relational lens to Pacific language education opens up opportunities for development, exploration, and construction of positive relational Oceanic cultural identities.

To begin, I outline my own positionality to provide the context of my research. I am connected with Pacific peoples through friendships, colleagues, students, and shared values. This research grew from my experience as a secondary school language teacher. New Zealand-born Pacific students I taught frequently expressed the desire to learn and

speak their heritage languages. However, they were not able to learn these languages at school. The unfairness of a system which encourages learning status languages yet neglects Indigenous Pacific languages and cultures that students bring to school, frustrates me and resonates personally. My Welsh ancestors lost their Indigenous language through colonization. However, my mother reclaimed her Welsh language through immersion study in her 50s, an experience that greatly added to her sense of identity which she shared with her family. As a linguist, I speak multiple languages but not my own Welsh language. I acknowledge that, as a female Palangi teacher, I am part of the "white space". I do not claim to be an expert on Pacific culture or speak for Pacific peoples. Rather, I am a teacher and linguist looking for solutions together with communities in order to see young people benefit from maintaining and learning their heritage languages.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the current study, it is useful to first define the term Pacific. I use the decolonized term *Pacific* (Vaai & Nabobo-Baba, 2017) to refer to all Pacific Island nations. In this understanding, Pacific people come from Oceania, the great "Sea of Islands" (Hau'ofa, 1993) interconnected and without boundaries and includes the global diaspora of Pacific peoples, acknowledging cultural and spiritual interconnections of the diverse extended Pacific family (Vaai & Nabobo-Baba, 2017, p. 8). I include Māori, the Indigenous people of New Zealand in this definition, *te reo Māori*, *te Ao Māori*, and *Matauranga Māori* (Māori language, worldview and knowledge of the universe) are integral to wider research implications beyond the scope of this article. However, as the Indigenous language of New Zealand, *te reo Māori* has a different status and treatment within the New Zealand education system. Therefore, I focus on other Pacific languages in New Zealand which do not have the same status within the curriculum as *te reo Māori*. In addition, Tongan spelling of Pacific terms, such as *Palangi* (people of European heritage), and *vā* (relational space) is used throughout because most participants are of Tongan heritage. I refer to the Samoan spelling of *va* when referring specifically to the Samoan concept of *teu le va* (looking after the relational space).

Language, cultural identity and *vā*

Indigenous Pacific scholars describe formation of Oceanic cultural identity as relational rather than individualistic (Vaai & Nabobo-Baba, 2017). Cultural identity is constructed around relationships and spaces between people, and their spiritual and physical environment (Anae, 2016). Though Pacific languages have their own nuanced understanding of this relational concept of space, or *vā*, there is a shared pan-Pacific understanding that living in harmony with these *vā* requires reciprocity and respect (Airini et al., 2010). *Vā* is a "space that relates", provides context, and holds "separate entities … together in unity" (Mila-Schaaf, 2006, p. 8; Wendt, cited in Refiti, 2002, p. 209). Language and communication are essential tools which enable *vā* between people and their environment to be nurtured, strengthened, and restored. *Vā* also exists between a person and their language. A respectful and reciprocal relationship within this sacred *vā* between a person and their Indigenous or heritage language, enriches the linguistic experience and deepens one's sense of cultural identity (V. Lui, personal communication, 28 February 2019). For Pacific peoples connected by Oceanic genealogies, histories, and knowledges (Hau'ofa, 1993; Lopesi, 2018), the ability to understand and communicate

using Indigenous Pacific languages enables exploration, celebration, and deepening of *vā* through which cultural identity is constructed strengthening connections both within the home community and the large, diverse Pacific extended family (Vaai & Nabobo-Baba, 2017).

Relational connection to community and cultural identity through language, provides a crucial foundation for overall wellbeing by increasing self-confidence and sense of belonging (Mila-Schaaf, 2006; Milne, 2017). Disconnection from community and cultural identity has the opposite effect and "increases the risk for every kind of stress-related disease, from depression to heart attack" (Fullilove, 2004, p. 14). Mila-Schaaf (2011) highlights challenges young New Zealand-born Pacific people encounter in negotiating their identity without Pacific language proficiency, whereby not speaking a Pacific language was linked with "in-authenticity . . . and a basis for exclusion" (p. 26). Given achieved, positive cultural identities are key to wellbeing, education is an important platform for linguistic and cultural identities to be valued and developed. The need to search and develop one's identity intensifies during adolescence. Adolescents gauge how they are perceived and valued by others as well as how or if they can see themselves represented culturally at school and in the world they live (Paris, 2012; Seals & Kreeft-Peyton, 2016). Secondary schools are highly influential places for adolescents as they negotiate their cultural identity (Milne, 2017).

Language, culture, and identity in New Zealand education

Valuing languages, cultures, and identities of all students is recognized as part of the core values and principles guiding implementation of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC), (MoE, 2007, pp. 9–10). *The code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession* (Education Council, 2017) requires teachers "to promote and protect principles of . . . sustainability . . . social justice" (p. 12) and respect all students' heritage, language, identity and culture (p. 10). With respect to Pacific education, *Tapasā* (MoE, 2019), a framework for teachers and schools to effectively support Pacific learners and communities, makes teacher awareness of Pacific students' identities, languages and cultures the focus of its first *Turu* (Competency) (MoE, 2019, p. 8). Professional development and teacher education promote in-service and pre-service teachers' understanding and use of culturally sustaining pedagogies that connect home and school worldviews and knowledges including language and culture (Berryman & Bishop, 2016; Chu, Glasgow, Rimoni, Hodis, & Meyer, 2013; Si'ilata et al., 2018). Recent discussion of enacting culturally sustaining pedagogies now includes understanding and embracing Pacific relational concepts such as *teu le va* (looking after the *vā*) and *tauhi vā* (nurturing and maintaining relational connections) in supporting development of positive and strong relationships with Pacific students and families (Reynolds, 2017; Fa'avae, 2017).

Policy documents such as the NZC (MoE, 2007), *The code of professional responsibility standards for the teaching profession* (Education Council, 2017), and *Tapasā* (MoE, 2019) and Pacific educational research (Chu et al., 2013) outline the benefits of nurturing Pacific languages, cultures, and identities. Yet, Indigenous Pacific scholars argue that, in many New Zealand schools, Pacific potential remains unrealized as Pacific students are unable to see themselves reflected in school (Salesa, 2017). This is particularly true for Pacific language education in secondary schools. Within the NZC, Pacific languages fit into the learning languages curriculum area where the focus is learning a new language rather than heritage language maintenance. Though the NZC states Pacific languages

have a "special place" because of "New Zealand's close relationship with" Pacific Peoples (MoE, 2007, p. 24), the reality is that most schools prioritize the learning of status languages such as French or Mandarin (Si'ilata et al., 2018). Considering New Zealand's location in the Pacific; the emphasis on valuing heritage language, culture, and identity in research and policy; and that Pacific peoples have the highest proportion of school-aged children, it is surprising that, in 2018, of over 2,500 secondary schools nationwide, only ten offered some form of Pacific medium education and 38 schools offered a Pacific language as a separate subject (Education Counts, 2018; MoE, 2019). Perhaps because there are so few schools supporting Pacific language maintenance, focus on how school programs can specifically support the development of language proficiency and positive cultural identities has received little attention from research–with some important exceptions (see McCaffery & McFall, 2010; Milne, 2017; Si'ilata et al., 2018).

Si'ilata et al. (2018) and Milne (2017) build on an international body of Indigenous and heritage language education research, which provides empirical evidence that the development of simultaneous bi- or multi-lingualism and literacy strengthens student metacognitive abilities, academic confidence, and cultural identity enabling students to move comfortably between languages and cultures (Seals & Kreeft-Peyton, 2016). Si'ilata et al. (2018) show how mainstream English-medium primary school teachers effectively integrate meaningful use of Pacific languages throughout the school day, bilingual texts, and linguistic sharing and comparison to celebrate, normalize, and develop bilingualism and biliteracy. In secondary education, Milne's (2017) *Colouring in the white spaces*, emphasizes the power of placing development of secure, conscientized, cultural identity at the heart of schools in positively determining overall educational success. Milne (2017), for example, shows how three South Auckland schools increase overall community, cultural, and academic outcomes by enabling Māori and Pacific students to be immersed in Māori and Pacific languages and cultures to live, learn, and develop as Māori or as Tongan throughout the school day.

Though Pacific language education research draws on language, culture, and identity in supporting student success (McCaffery & McFall, 2010; Milne, 2017; Si'ilata et al, 2018), Oceanic relationality - an integral part of Pacific identity construction - has not yet been explicitly explored in research. Pacific language-related research has tended to focus on Pacific language maintenance in connection with English literacy development in early childhood education and primary schools. At secondary school level, with the exception of Milne (2017), opportunities for Pacific identity construction through language education are not well understood. Furthermore, research thus far is generally based in the Auckland region where the largest Pacific population in the world resides. The large number of Pacific peoples living in Auckland allow young Pacific peoples more exposure to Pacific languages and culture as they construct cultural identity. Opportunities for young Pacific people to construct identity through language and culture are unexplored in schools outside of Auckland where there are smaller but not insignificant Pacific populations.

This study builds on the cross-disciplinary understanding that inclusion of students' languages, cultures, and identities in schools is paramount to overall equitable outcomes. It also draws on the understanding that, for Pacific peoples, positive achieved cultural identities are relational. Therefore, the study asks:

How do secondary school Pacific language-focused programmes contribute to Oceanic cultural identity construction?

By focusing on how Pacific language education can contribute to construction of relational Oceanic cultural identity, this article explores connections between language, identity, and relationality, and the role of this interconnection in educational programmes. This article further builds on prior research by working with school communities outside of the Auckland region, thus focusing on a previously underexplored geographic region.

METHODOLOGY

Social justice framework

Tuhiwai Smith (2012) recommends a social justice framework for research with Indigenous peoples and minority groups in order to render the research more "respectful, ethical, sympathetic, and useful" (p. 9). Research within a social justice framework seeks to decolonize traditional Western research methodologies which have harmed in the past and requires "a radical compassion . . . that seeks collaboration" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. xii) and redistributes and equalizes knowledge hierarchies (Keane, Khupe, & Seehawer, 2017). From a social justice perspective on quality education, institutions need to focus on increasing the inter-related dimensions of inclusivity, equity, relevance, and democracy (Tikly & Barret, 2011). Inclusive and relevant education systems allow all students to develop "key capabilities that individuals, communities, and society . . . have reason to value" (Tikly & Barret, 2011, p. 3). This includes Indigenous knowledges conveyed through language and culture. A social justice framework includes communities in decision-making processes throughout. Researchers should be accountable to all involved. Knowledge generated in the research "should relate back to the lives of those who contributed to the research" (Keane et al., 2017, p. 22).

Teu le va

As the relational concept of *vā* is central to this study and a social justice framework places the worldview and needs of the relevant communities at the centre of the research (Ponton, 2018), I use *teu le va* methodology (Airini et al., 2010). *Teu le va* is a Pacific-designed approach, advocated for use in Pacific educational research (Chu et al., 2013). Using the Samoan word *teu* (to look after) and encompassing the concept of *vā*, *teu le va* aims to identify, cultivate, and nurture the *vā* or spaces and relationships between stakeholders in Pacific educational research. *Teu le va,* as a methodology, draws on traditional Samoan relational ethic, *teu le va* (Anae, 2016). Traditionally, *teu le va* demonstrates how to care for sacred relational arrangements (Anae, 2016). If a problem occurs within the *va*, *teu le va* insists that "direct action" must be taken to "correct the relationship" (Anae, 2016, p. 121). Correcting and reconciling a break in the *va* will improve outcomes for all involved. When relational and ethical space is nurtured and respected, each person involved has "power that is fundamental to human development" (Anae, 2016, p. 127). Applying Indigenous understanding to this research methodology, means researchers must continuously expose, understand, and reconcile *vā* between different communities involved. In looking after relationships, collectively and collaboratively generated new knowledge is more likely to be transferred across these *vā* to achieve optimal outcomes and action for Pacific education (Airini et al., 2010, p. 10). Furthermore, *teu le va* methodology explicitly demands constructive outcomes for learners from the research, and the positionality of the researcher must be transparent (Ponton, 2018).

In applying *teu le va* methodology to this research, I regularly communicate with, and seek advice from, Pacific leaders, colleagues, and friends from the communities involved. My involvement with schools and community leaders on language-related projects is ongoing. I attend community meetings and celebrations, and engage with relevant government agencies regarding language-related matters.

Methods

This research received ethical approval from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. This study was conducted in two secondary school communities outside of Auckland, New Zealand. The first school has around 50 students of a total school roll of 1,000 who identify as having Pacific heritage. In this school, Pasifika studies is a cross-curricular, cross-year level option subject available for students in Years 10 to 13 (ages 14 to 18). With the support of community language teachers and one facilitating teacher, Pasifika Studies enables students to develop home language and Indigenous Pacific knowledge as part of their national qualifications in languages, social sciences, and performing arts. The second school community is the Tongan language cluster, which included local educators and Tongan students from different schools. It meets after school on Fridays in Terms 2 and 3 of the New Zealand school year in a centrally located host school. Participation in the cluster enables Tongan language development to be included as part of national qualifications.

The facilitating teachers of the two different Pacific language programmes (Pasifika studies and the Tongan language cluster) were invited to participate in this study. These teachers then invited interested students and community language teachers to participate in an interview or focus group discussion. The four participating teachers were interviewed individually. Six students from each school community participated in a focus group discussion held during their respective class times. The focus group discussions lasted between 40 to 45 minutes. Tables 1 and 2 provide further information about these participants:

Table 1: Overview of participants from Pasifika Studies

Student participants	Teacher participants
4 Tongan students (1 Tongan-born, 3 NZ-born), aged 16–18, varying degrees of language proficiency	1 Samoan teacher, Samoan-born
2 Samoan students (1 Samoan-born, 1 NZ-born), aged 16–8, varying degrees of language proficiency	1 NZ European teacher who facilitates NCEA assessment in different Pacific languages, Pacific studies research, Pacific performing arts and community tutors

Table 2: Overview of participants from the Tongan language cluster

Student participants	Teacher participants
6 NZ-born Tongan students, aged 16 - 18, varying degrees of language proficiency	1 Tongan teacher, Tongan-born

	1 NZ European teacher who facilitates Tongan Language NCEA assessment, community tutors and relationships between the Tongan language cluster and secondary schools of students attending the cluster

The methods that were selected for data collection considered the needs of the school communities, my positionality as a Palangi teacher-researcher, and the logistics of classroom-based research. Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with participating teachers. In addition, two student focus groups (one in each school community) were conducted with 12 students in total. I was a participant observer of one class in each school setting, enabling me to talk and work with students and support the teacher if required. All methods were chosen as interactive, relationship-focused data collection methods to suit best the schedules of the participants. Funding restricted me to one classroom visit with students and prevented me from easily returning the focus group transcripts to students for further comments. Audio recordings of the semi-structured interviews and focus groups were transcribed and transcripts were made available to the participating teachers for comment and review. Pseudonyms were used for all participants' names and data from the interviews, focus groups and participant observations were analysed using grounded theory described by Charmaz (2014). By sorting, reviewing, and further refining patterns and connections emerging in the data, events of significance were identified and analysed, using interactional sociolinguistics and critical discourse analysis approaches to discourse analysis.

FINDINGS

Findings suggest that Pacific language education provides an effective platform for construction of multiple relational identities in numerous ways: by building bridges, providing opportunities for students to discover and nurture *vā* among themselves and their language, and by exploring relational Oceanic identity through language. The examples provided below focus on three participants with supporting evidence from other participating students and teachers. These examples are illustrative of a much larger pattern occurring within an extensive data set.

Bridge building

Data indicate that Pacific language education within the mainstream secondary school curriculum helps build bridges between and within the home, school, and community.

Below, Isileli, a Year 13 New Zealand-born Tongan student in Pasifika Studies, discusses why he enjoys this class in an interview:

> What I enjoy it is . . . you get to express yourself in your own language so . . . you can . . . ask Grandma and ask Mum and Dad to help because they would understand more of your language . . . it is . . . something that you can bring forward instead of than hiding it away . . . instead of making it background . . . it is . . . a way to learn more of your language than learning English, so you have that as well which will help a lot in your future jobs, and stuff where you have to understand other people where you can understand because you can understand languages and stuff like that.

Isileli discussed how in Pasifika Studies he can "bring forward" his identity rather than "hiding it" as language connected and related his home and school worlds. As his parents

and grandparents are fluent Tongan speakers, they can support his learning of Tongan at school. Value placed on home language development by home and school enables a bridge to be built, thus strengthening the home-school *vā*. Isileli saw further value in how his ability to use Tongan interweaves relationally with different aspects of his life. Language connected him with his own family but he also saw that being bilingual has cultural capital, possibly helping with "future jobs" as it facilitates understanding "other people" and languages. Through language, his family, school, and future career formed part of his relational identity rather than being compartmentalised.

For Kapo, 16, and Sione, 18, two New Zealand-born students studying with the Tongan language cluster, learning Tongan enables them to more deeply understand and appreciate their Tongan heritage and perspectives of elders within their own communities.

> I think sometimes the things we learn here will sometimes surprise us . . . because . . . we haven't been brought up in Tonga . . . our teacher is Tongan, so he . . . understands a lot more about the way THEY live in Tonga than we do . . . So, to have . . . a first-hand experience from him provides us with insight to how their lives were compared to how our lives are here. (Kapo)

> I like listening, to stories, especially around culture . . . I like the history and stuff . . . There are some things that we have never heard of before . . . the economy . . . as a Tongan person growing up in NZ, you'd think that the economy doesn't affect Tonga, and . . . that Tongan people are real freelance . . . go with the flow but actually Tonga is really structured! (Sione)

Kapo emphasizes two distinct groups within his community "we . . . us . . . our lives . . . here", meaning New Zealand-born Tongan students, and "they . . . their lives", Tongan-born parents and teachers. Sione makes similar distinctions between groups in mentioning "things that we have never heard of before". Though not explicitly stated here, this separation of Island-born and New Zealand-born groups within communities highlights a disconnect between the two groups. The broader data set from this research and academic literature provide convincing evidence that this disconnect is reality for many Pacific communities. Language education provides a different platform whereby students can gain "first-hand experience" and "insight", listen to "stories . . . around history and culture" of Tongan culture. This allows New Zealand and Tongan-born Tongans to compare, discuss, and reflect together. In the reflection process, students unpack how they make sense of traditional Indigenous values in relation to Western values they experience going to school in New Zealand, which then allows them to comprehend, negotiate, and appreciate this *vā*. This is illustrated in Sione's reflection on the economy, how Tonga is much more "structured" and less "freelance" than he previously assumed. Later Sione discusses how initially Tongan traditional knowledge "doesn't make any sense . . . in terms of what we grew up with" but with an open mind "everything . . . clicks in . . . makes sense". The sense making of two different worldviews happening in the language class provides a way of nurturing the *vā*, developing relational identity between the community elders or those born in Tonga and the younger New Zealand-born Tongans. A bridge has been built between "they" and "us" within communities.

Vā between language and self

In analysing why Isileli enjoys taking Pasifika studies and what helps him to learn, we can explore how nurturing *vā* between a person and their heritage language can deepen one's sense of cultural identity.

> In class we get assigned work . . . we have a Tongan teacher . . . which helps tells me that my words are too basic. So, I go home and start talking to grandma . . . Grandma is like "these are the type of words . . . they are not informal", because the main Tongan language is . . . informal sometimes. But if you learn more about your Tongan language, you can see the words, how to make it much more formal than normal talking, so that is what I have been working on in my formal writing in Tongan . . . I ask my grandma for help and she gives me some words. I write it down, I got . . . a little list of Tongan words and I write the meaning of each word . . . Pasifika studies is . . . a good place to really talk your language and just improve on it, more than just learning but improve . . . I don't wanna just know the basics I wanna know MORE than just the basics. (Isileli)

Being able to learn Tongan in Pasifika studies at school is a positive experience for Isileli. He wants to "improve . . . know MORE than just the basics". He recognizes that deepening his knowledge of Tongan requires effort and investment of his time and himself. However, he appreciates that this effort is rewarding as it provides deeper insight. The "assigned work" in Pasifika Studies requires him to speak, read, write, and listen in Tongan, providing Isileli with a platform to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of his language. The Tongan teacher shows Isileli where his vocabulary is "too basic" prompting him to ask his Grandma about different levels of formal registers in Tongan. When discussing language, Grandma is able to instil Tongan cultural and family values expressed through formal and informal language registers that are less familiar to young Tongans growing up in New Zealand.

Through Isileli's investment of time, interest, and study, he is showing respect to his language, which enables him to experience reciprocity within this *vā*. In nurturing this *vā* between self and language, Isileli can "see more" of his language strengthening his sense of Tongan identity. Further student discourse strengthens evidence of how Pacific language education at school might support students to develop respectful and reciprocal *vā* with their languages. Isileli's classmates recognize that improving language ability means "we have to . . . challenge ourselves" (Samoan student), but that in investing in their languages they see benefits such as "good grades", being bilingual, having "good communication with your family" and being able to help your family with translation (Samoan and Tongan students, Pasifika Studies).

This reciprocal experience of *vā* with one's language supports construction of a relational identity and may also strengthen multiple *vā* within one's life. Isileli's investment in improving his Tongan shows respect for and can be tied to his family's input because they help him to develop and understand *vā* with his language, culture, family, community, and environment. This relationality extends to his relational Oceanic identity.

Relational Oceanic identity through language

Pasifika Studies enables students from different Pacific language backgrounds to study both their own and each other's languages together. Interviews and observations indicate that this multilingual approach enables students with opportunities to connect relationally through language and strengthen a connected Oceanic identity. Isileli describes class language learning and language use: *"Usually we are all together as a class trying to speak each other's languages"*. Each lesson begins with "do now" activities involving translation of an English sentence into the different languages spoken by students. Students help each other to translate correctly, then the class compares linguistic similarities and differences. The regular, on-going nature of this activity now sees students enjoy trying to predict, translate, and speak other languages in the class. Students

do not sit in language-based groups in class rather "all together", though community language experts employed by the school are able to support the language learning process of individual language groups at set times during the week. Below, the Pasifika Studies teacher discusses how this comparative multilingual approach supports student awareness of their own relationality and connectedness through language.

> [M]y job is actually to make them aware of . . . similarities between the languages but also raise their consciousness of where it relates to English as well . . . what . . . often happens now is that the Tongan student will say "oh Miss, can I read the Fijian?" or the Fijian student "Oh can I read the Samoan" so they . . . are very aware of the Pacific realm . . . that they are part of something bigger, and that is where their strength is.

Student and teacher perspectives from Pasifika Studies show an educational context which can teach and reinforce the need for New Zealand-born students to understand themselves as having an Indigenous Oceanic identity (Vaai & Nabobo-Baba, 2017) and benefits this brings. For New Zealand-born Pacific students, experiencing linguistic connections with different languages is a powerful tool in establishing an understanding of the Pacific as an interrelated great "sea of islands" (Hau'ofa, 1993) interconnecting "land, sea, skies, and people" (Vaai & Nabobo-Baba, 2017, p. 7). In Pasifika Studies, the cross-curricular approach of multilingual education social science-focused research projects, and Pacific performing arts further contributes to student and teacher understanding of being "part of something bigger" (Pasifika studies teacher).

DISCUSSION

This article argued that Pacific language education in secondary schools can enable Pacific students to explore and construct relational Oceanic cultural identities. Discourse analysis provided a rich, multilayered description of students and teachers constructing cultural identity through linguistic discussion and comparison enabling exploration of multiple *vā* between languages, cultures and worldviews. Though the study is set in the New Zealand context, the findings and following considerations may have implications for other national education systems seeking to support the languages, cultures, and identities of multicultural student populations.

Relationality is not commonly applied to language education. Yet, language education can support students to understand the existence and reciprocal nature of *vā* between people, their language(s) and their construction of identity is essential to achieve positive cultural identities. As young Pacific peoples in New Zealand increasingly identify with multiple cultural heritages (Salesa, 2017; Si'ilata et al, 2018) negotiating cultural identity and navigating multiple cultural *vā* becomes complex (Mila-Schaaf, 2011). Tongan scholar, Taumoefolau (2017), reiterates the complexities of cultural tensions for bilingual Tongan-English women negotiating traditional and Western identities around multiple *vā*. Tensions described by Tongan students in this study mirror how identity construction is viewed in applied linguistics as "multiple, changing, and a site of struggle" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 36) but discussion and reflection enable movement beyond the struggle to see how identities hold possibilities for the future. Mila-Schaaf (2011, p. 44) suggests the need to "renegotiate the va" (p. 44) or to seek a "new kind of va . . . mak[ing] relations from tensions . . . in a shared space" (Refiti, 2010, p. 1). Pacific language education, as found in Pasifika studies and the Tongan language cluster provides a platform for renegotiating the multiple *vā*. Isileli, Kapo, and Sione were able to explore and resolve

tensions existing between traditional and Western values expressed through culture and language such as formal structures and language registers.

Additionally, a relational lens applied to languages and language education is a useful tool for language teachers, students, and communities. Nurturing *vā* between self and language embodies the investment and care required in learning and maintaining all languages but also the educational and emotional benefits from nurturing heritage or additional language competence. Enabling students such as those in Pasifika studies to see that investing time in improving heritage languages can help better "understand cultural identity", communicate well with family or "get good grades" can increase student confidence and wellbeing: educational goals of the NZC. Teachers and communities (as seen in the Tongan language cluster) who are aware of, understand, and support the nurturing of *vā* between language and self by encouraging young people to "have a go" at using the language rather than expecting native-like proficiency, may also help to break down linguistic and cultural barriers between Island and New Zealand-born peoples (Mila-Schaaf, 2011). Though the scope of this article is not able to examine language maintenance and revitalization within these programmes, it is possible that the concept of *vā* between language and self also carries implications for Pacific language maintenance and revitalization.

Furthermore, the study shows that in learning multiple languages together students and teachers find joy in discovering relational interconnection of different Pacific languages providing students with tangible evidence of how Oceanic identities are "part of something bigger", strengthening cultural identity and sense of belonging to the "great sea of Islands" (Hau'ofa, 1993). A relational approach to language education in general would help students of all heritages to more deeply understand their own identities and those of others. Thus, understanding how we are all connected (Hereniko, 2018).

Programmes discussed in this article show enactment of valuing and developing relational, cultural identities through language. This meant students could see and be themselves in the classrooms. However, in the picture of New Zealand secondary education, such programmes are limited (McCafferey & McFall, 2010; Salesa, 2017). In addition, the concept of relationality and its role in positive identity construction is not well understood within mainstream education. The two programmes discussed here function at the margins of mainstream education and rely on individual teacher agency rather than whole school systems. Mainstream secondary schools genuinely seeking to enact culturally sustaining pedagogies can learn from and build on the model of both programmes, factoring in the time and resourcing required within school budgets and programming.

CONCLUSION

This article argued that Pacific language education can contribute to positive construction of relational Oceanic cultural identities. Though I actively sought advice from Pacific advisors, this research would benefit from having an Indigenous co-researcher perspective to counterbalance unintentional Western bias I bring to the research, for example by using Pacific data collection and analysis methods. In spite of its limitations, the study shows the importance of relationality and of how language supports navigation of identity construction. The study provides practical examples for teachers and schools wishing to apply a relational lens to genuinely embed culturally sustaining programmes

and examples of the resourcing required to implement current educational policies such as *Tapasā* (MoE, 2019). Further research could consider a wider number of school programmes and languages and how such programmes might contribute to language maintenance and revitalization. Language education through the perspective of *vā* has huge potential to further interconnect Oceania the great "Sea of Islands" (Hau'ofa, 1993) in our modern world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIOGRAPHY

Juliet Kennedy is a secondary school French, German, and Mandarin teacher with a keen interest in community language education. She is interested in how educational research can contribute to furthering social justice and social change with a focus on understanding the role language(s) plays in education in reproducing or improving social inequities.

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Pilipinx becoming, punk rock pedagogy, and the new materialism

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This paper employs the new materialist methodology of diffraction to probe the entanglements of matter and discourse that comprise the assemblage of Pilipinx becoming, or the ways by which people are racialized as Pilipinx. By methodologically diffracting Pilipinx becoming through the public pedagogy of punk rock, this research complicates standard stories of Pilipinx identity to provoke more generative encounters with the Pilipinx diaspora in Oceania. As new materialist theory holds that social life is produced by aggregations of related events, it rejects the notion that ontological becoming is dictated by immutable systemic or structural realities. This application of new materialist ontology contributes to understandings of relationality by demonstrating how Pilipinx identity emerges out of processes of relational becoming comprised of co-constitutive discourses, movements, and materialities of human and nonhuman origin. This approach troubles conceptions of Pilipinx becoming which propose that Pilipinx bodies are racialized through the imposition of colonial mentalities and broadens these theorizations by approaching Pilipinx becoming as a relational process in which coloniality plays a part. This relational conceptualization of Pilipinx becoming is informed by how punk rock, when framed as a form of education, complicates dominant understandings of the contexts, conditions, and capacities of Pilipinx bodies. In so doing, it demonstrates how public pedagogies and alternative approaches to education transform affect economies which produce the material conditions of gendered and racialized oppression.

Keywords: Philippine diaspora; relationality new materialism; punk; decolonization

OCEANIC RELATIONALITIES, AGENTIAL REALISM, AND PUNK ROCK PEDAGOGY

With populations of over 300,000 in Australia and over 40,000 in New Zealand, the Pilipinx[1] community is becoming increasingly visible in a multicultural Oceania. The Pilipinx diaspora, however, is not adequately theorized by frameworks predicated upon assumptions of tensions between settler/indigene, Western/non-Western, or English

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[1] Pilipinx, Filipina/o, or Pin@y are interchangeable terms used to represent people of Philippine origin. Writers use these terms per their own contexts (Nievera-Lozano, 2018). I have chosen to use *Pilipinx* because the letter *F* is not used in *baybayin*, the native script upon which the Philippine alphabet is based. The sound of the letter *F*, however, is present in other indigenous Philippine languages, such as Ifugao and Kalinga (Almario, 2013). Nievera-Lozano (2018) also calls "for the use of the *x . . .* to be inclusive of people who identify as transgender, genderqueer, or non-binary" (p. 1).

speaking/non-English speaking. The history of colonialism in the Philippines, in particular, distinguishes the contemporary and historical contexts of diasporic Pilipinxs from other Asian migrant groups, as they have greater familiarity with Western culture and the English language. Seventy-six percent of Pilipinxs, for example, understand spoken English (Social Weather Systems, 2008) while Hong Kong, a former British colony, has an English speaking population of 53% (Census and Statistics Department, 2016). Still, the treatment of Pilipinxs as outsiders in other countries often correlates to social ostracization and racial abuse, including in Australia and New Zealand (Bonifacio, 2009; Eisen, 2011; 2018; Espinosa, 2017). Relational frameworks therefore offer more generative means of theorizing Pilipinx becoming in Oceania as they allow for the consideration of material, discursive, and educative subjectivities as constitutive elements of identity formation.

Such frameworks allow for the complication of standard stories, or stereotypes that affect how nondominant groups are treated and perceived. As the standard story goes, Pilipinxs are *alipin ng mundo*—a Tagalog phrase meaning "servants of the world" or "servants of globalization" (Bonifacio, 2009). The framing of Pilipinxs as servants is a racialized construction for, as bell hooks (2003) writes, "the very notion that we are here to *serve them* is itself an expression of white supremacist thinking. Embedded in this notion of service is that no matter what the status of the person of colour, that position must be reconfigured to the greater good of whiteness" (p. 33, emphasis added). The conception of Pilipinxs as *alipin ng mundo* should, therefore, be confronted as a consequence of colonialism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, misogyny, and economic exploitation as opposed to a genetic trait. In spite of this, Pilipinx becoming is rife with resistance, solidarity-building, activism, consciousness-raising, and joy (Bonifacio, 2009). Becoming Pilipinx, as such, is not a product of dialectical tension but a lifelong process of embodying "the material multiplicity of self, the way it is diffracted across spaces, times, realities, imaginaries" (Barad, 2014, p. 175). This paper analyses and assembles the material-discursive constituency of Pilipinx becoming before *diffracting* this assemblage through the public pedagogy of punk rock.

Punk rock is herein conceptualized as an alternative and self-directed educative context in which participants teach, learn, and produce knowledge pertaining to the historical contexts and contemporary experiences of marginalized people (Cordova, 2017; Romero, 2016; 2018). As practised by diasporic Pilipinxs, punk rock pedagogy, or the educative processes that mediate one's eventual self-identification as a *punk*, demonstrates the capacity of education to disrupt the proliferation of discriminatory material, discursive, and social relations. As such, the public pedagogy of punk is conceptualized herein as an exertion of power that unsettles aggregations of events that produce the assembled relations of racism, sexism, and coloniality. By exploring how punk rock pedagogy broadens conceptions of what it means to inhabit a Pilipinx body, this paper demonstrates how alternative approaches to teaching and learning are central to processes of relational becoming. Diffracting Pilipinx identity formation through punk rock pedagogy, moreover, demonstrates how relationality (rather than essentialism, absolutism, or determinism) is the organizing principle of identity formation and, by extension, of social change.

PUNK CULTURE AS AN EDUCATIVE MEANS OF RESISTIVE BECOMING

This paper's use of punk rock pedagogy to diffract the assemblage of Pilipinx becoming is rooted in my own educative becoming as a Pilipinx punk. My *conscientizacao*, Freire's (2018) term for the development of a critical consciousness, began not in the classroom but in dilapidated concert halls and during late nights spent listening to songs like Anti-Flag's "Red White & Brainwashed" and Bikini Kill's "George Bush is a Pig". As an undergraduate, the work of Pilipinx-American punk bands like Signal 3, Eskapo, and Digma provided vital and visceral context for concepts I encountered in Philippine Studies courses, such as colonial mentality, anti-miscegenation laws, and the Bataan death march. Most importantly, I learned, through punk rock, that opposition does not end with critique. Instead, punk identity requires a lived commitment to egalitarian ways of knowing, being, and becoming "part of the world" (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017, p. 123).

This experience is not unique to me: the theorization of punk as a public, community-responsive, and decolonizing pedagogy is established in educational literature. While popularly identified with loud music and outlandish fashion, punk culture is more appropriately understood as the social practice of developing oppositional orientations towards dominant culture (Dunn, 2016). Through art, music, and community engagement, punks often learn iteratively about injustice and inequality and then shift the onus of transforming oppressive conditions away from the state and onto themselves. As Dunn (2016) writes:

> Instead of passively accepting the world as it is, punk inspires people to do something about it on a *personal* level. Don't wait for someone else to fix what bothers you—do it yourself. Or, as the oft-quoted punk slogan goes *do it yourself or do it with friends*". (p. 38)

I have, elsewhere, conceptualized punk rock pedagogy (PRP) by theorizing that becoming *punk* is an educative process that consists of three pillars: 1) historically and community-responsive analyses of the material conditions of oppression, 2) the use of punk music as a historical and theoretical framework for contextualizing this historical inquiry, and 3) actions undertaken in solidarity with marginalized people, with particular emphasis on black, indigenous, and person-of-colour (BIPOC) communities, the LGBTQ community, and the working class (Romero, 2016).

Despite the presence of white supremacist and heteronormative discourses in punk rock, punk culture's foundational commitment to opposition allows punks from non-dominant groups to openly challenge these hegemonic agencies and build autonomous networks that better reflect their ontological and educative goals (Duncombe & Tremblay, 2011). Douglas (2017) notes that, for indigenous punks in Aotearoa New Zealand, "punk is a cultural forum housing abilities to include politicized emphases that can encourage indigenous expression and identity" (p. 87). Participation in the public pedagogy of punk rock, moreover, engenders what Cordova (2017) terms "educative healing", in which the process of knowledge creation allows learners to resist, interrogate, and ultimately unlearn oppressive discourses and behaviours. Diffracting the assemblages of the Pilipinx diaspora through the PRP, therefore, portends the insurrection of subjugated knowledge pertaining to the affective relational capacities of being and becoming Pilipinx.

ON DIFFRACTION: NEW MATERIALIST SOCIAL INQUIRY AS A DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGY

In order to engage the seemingly disparate discourses of the Pilipinx diaspora, PRP, and Oceanic relationality, this paper operationalizes Barad's (2007) conception of agential realism. As a methodological endeavour, agential realism proffers "a causal explanation of how discursive practices are related to material phenomena" (Barad, 2007, p. 45). Agential realism holds that *agencies* (such as people, things, and ideas) "form through relation" (Chang, 2018, p. 854) and can only be differentiated by the nature of their relationships to other materialities and discourses. The relational dynamics out of which agencies emerge are, therefore, *intra-active* as opposed to interactive, which suggests contact without transfiguration (Barad, 2007). New materialist social inquiry then draws from Deleuzo-Guattarian ontology to refer to the totality of an agency's entangled intra-actions as its *assemblage* (Bennett, 2010; Fox and Alldred, 2015). In the flat ontology of new materialism, change occurs simply when new agencies or intra-actions are introduced to assemblages and the exercise of *power* is simply "a momentary exercise of affectivity by one relation over another" (Fox & Alldred, 2017, p. 180).

Analyses of assemblages occur by *diffraction*, or by introducing material or philosophical obstructions that reveal how an agency works and why. Diffractive methodology "is not setting up one approach/text/discipline against another but rather a detailed, attentive and careful reading of the ideas of one through another, leading to more generative and inventive provocations" (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017, p. 115). Barad's (2007) own use of diffraction, for example, enables her to disrupt accepted orthodoxies in quantum physics by reading them through queer and feminist theories.

Like all things, Pilipinx becoming is an assemblage of entangled material and discursive agencies. These include cultural subjectivities like cuisine, sport, art, history, and kinship ties. But an agential realist account of the assemblage Pilipinx becoming might also include the physical movements of gendered and racialized bodies traversing national borders and the legal, social, cultural, and historical frameworks that shape how diasporic Pilipinxs are treated and racialized abroad.

Theorizing Pilipinx becoming might, therefore, begin with analyses of the Philippines' role in global capitalism, given the influence that economic concerns exert upon Pilipinx bodies. Per world systems analysis, the Philippines is a *peripheral* nation whose role in the global economy is to provide raw materials to postindustrial, or *core*, nations (Navarro, 1982). This conscription of the Philippines and its people as servants to Western development can, moreover, be interpreted as a contemporary manifestation of the Philippines' history of colonial subjugation. Philippine colonization began 1521, when the islands first fell under Spanish rule and continued in various forms until 1942, when the Philippines gained independence from the US (Nadeau, 2008). The vestiges of colonization in the Philippines include the ongoing influence of the Roman Catholic Church, national systems of government and education that are organizationally identical to those of the US, and the concentration of power and capital among an elite group of families of European descent (Iglesias, 2003).

The most enduring psychological legacy of colonialism in the Philippines, however, is the prevalence of a colonial mentality, which:

[C]onsists of the following components: (a) characterizing Filipino culture as inferior to Western culture, (b) emulating Western culture to distance oneself from being Filipino, and (c) believing that colonization was imperative for the Philippines to become a civilized nation. (Eisen, 2018, p. 4)

Per David and Okazaki (2010), colonial mentality is the central agency that defines what it means to be from and of the Philippines. By measuring Pilipinxs' implicit negative attitudes towards their own race, David and Okazaki (2010) provide evidence in support of the automaticity of colonial mentality among Pilipinx-Americans, or the "automatic association of pleasantness, superiority, and desirability to American culture, and an automatic association of unpleasantness, inferiority, and undesirability to Filipino culture" (p. 855). David and Okazaki (2010) go on to implicate both historical colonialism and ongoing discrimination against Pilipinxs as integral to the perpetuation and automaticity of colonial mentality. Because the duration and severity of colonialism in the Philippines has affected Pilipinx becoming in ways that do not apply to most other Asian groups, scholars have noted the importance of understanding the uniqueness of the Pilipinx experience and of disaggregating Pilipinx contexts from pan-Asian generalisations (Ong & Viernes, 2013).

But in order for deepened relationalities to emerge out of theorizing Pilipinx becoming, it is necessary to "think about differences that matter" (Barad, 2007, p. 72) and to complicate the assemblage even further. The labour of deepening Oceanic relationalities by diffracting Pilipinx experiences might include mutually beneficial ends, such as: more harmonious interpersonal relations between Pilipinxs and other communities in Oceania; heightened awareness among Pilipinxs of the cultures and histories of Oceanic states; and combating the "intergenerational downward mobility" with regard to the economic attainment of Pilipinx immigrants (Ong & Viernes, 2013, p. 22). Momentous indeed are the implications of theorizing how Pilipinx identity emerges and the ways by which these emergences can be made to work differently.

A NOTE ON DATA COLLECTION: TEXT AS SENSE-EVENTS

This paper's attempt at reading and diffracting new materialist ontology, Pilipinx becoming, and PRP through one another is anchored by the cultural production of three diasporic Pilipinx punk bands: Dispossessed, Material Support, and AninoKo. In order to compile a data set that attests to the PRP of these bands, I first collected the lyrics of every song from each band's two most current releases into a digital reference document. I then transcribed the lyrics of songs that were not published online or in the liner notes of the bands' physical releases (solely for research purposes). This focus on lyrics is informed by Kranke, Brown, Danesh, and Watson's (2016) conceptualization of song lyrics as a source of data that allows researchers "to engage in learning material that is relevant, up-to-date, and reflective of contemporary events and issues" (p. 234). Next, I augmented the reference document with interview transcriptions and texts attesting to each band's goals and objectives (i.e. the "About" sections on their respective websites).

This data was then sorted into analytical codes grouped along the primary themes of assimilation, feminism, diaspora, solidarity, immigration, indigeneity, and resistance. I then "read" literature which documented and theorized the Pilipinx experience in Australia, New Zealand, and each band's local context "through" these coded texts to consider how they might "close down any capacities or open them up" (Fox & Alldred, 2017, p. 183). I defined "capacities" as *sense-events*, or material-discursive possibilities

which emerge out of the "never-ending enfolding of non-human, human, practices, objects, affect, motility, discourse, nature, smells, sound, and other earthly elements" (Allen, 2018, p. 45). The purpose of reading data, affects, and affective capacities as sense-events was to make explicit that the objective of this inquiry was to discern the composition of assembled relations (such as "Pilipinx becoming" or "Oceanic relationality") which consist of both human and nonhuman agencies. Because new materialist ontology holds that "power has continuity only as long as it is replicated in the next event" (Fox & Alldred, 2017, p. 180), this mode of post-human ontology offers a comprehensive means of theorizing how oppressive practices can be disrupted, as it recognizes that the affects that ultimately alter a given assemblage may not be products of human activity. As such, the decentring of human beings and their concerns is integral to the ability of education research to theorize disruptions of assembled relations whose repeated aggregations result in human suffering. The analyses presented below, therefore, demonstrate how PRP—as a diffractive apparatus—"make[s] evident the entangled structure of the changing and contingent ontology" (Barad, 2007, p. 73) of the Pilipinx diaspora in Oceania.

"THEY DO NOT ASSIMILATE": PILIPINX RESISTANCE TO STANDARD STORIES IN OCEANIA

Examples in both popular and scholarly Oceanic discourse suggest a belief that, while Pilipinxs do often assimilate to the dominant cultures of Australia and New Zealand, they can only do so by subjugating their own cultural identities. The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS), for example, concludes that Pilipinxs in Australia "are making an effort to forge compromises between their values and the prevailing Australian mores" (Soriano, 1995, p. 118). While the AIFS report is over two decades old, its framing of Pilipinx and Australian values as intrinsically at-odds continues to inform race relations in Australia, where "despite the high rates of English language skill, labour participation rates and higher qualifications, Filipinos register much lower rates in skilled managerial, professional or trade occupations, only 39% compared to the Australian average at 48%" (Espinosa, 2017, p. 68).

The assumed perfidiousness of Asian and, by extension, Pilipinx values is more explicitly reflected in Queensland Senator Pauline Hanson's lament that "I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians. They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate" (quoted in Martino, 2016). Allegations of racism (Remeikis, 2019) have done little to curb Hanson's power, as her One Nation party garners support by espousing the view that "unabated multiculturalism could only be successful at the expense of silencing the voices of long-time (white) Australians" (Espinosa, 2017, p. 23). However, Montayre, Neville and Holroyd's (2017) quantitative study on the narratives of older Pilipinx migrants adjusting to life in New Zealand troubles Hanson's fears by noting that "Filipino migrants adjust to living in Western society by a complex process of learning to speak and understand English, as well as assimilating their religious beliefs and practices into their host countries" (p. 6). This finding should be of little surprise given that 94% of religious Pilipinxs identify as Christian (Miller, n.d.) and English is one of two official languages of the Philippines (*Philipine Constitution*, art. XIV § 7.). But as long as orientalist characterizations inform how Pilipinxs are racialized and treated in Australia and New Zealand, no amount of assimilative effort will afford diasporic Pilipinxs a sense of belonging in those countries (Siar, 2014).

Diffracting tensions between the Pilipinx diaspora and the dominant cultures of Oceania through PRP, however, reveals more productive agencies, linkages, provocations, and possibilities within the assemblage of Pilipinx-Oceanic social relations. In particular, the Sydney hardcore punk band Dispossessed complicates the discourses of Pilipinx migration and becoming in Australia by asserting that Pilipinxs themselves are capable of deciding what constitutes "belonging". Dispossessed's music, lyrics, and actions demonstrate this alternative conception of what it means to be a diasporic Pilipinx in Australia by asserting that the assimilative responsibility of diasporic Pilipinxs is not to the dominant culture at all. Instead, Dispossessed's work maintains that migrant communities should be accountable to the rightful and traditional owners of their adopted land.

Comprised of Aboriginal and immigrant Australians whose vocalist, Harry Bonifacio Baughan, is a first-generation Australian-Filipino, Dispossessed questions the notions that a) Pilipinxs cannot be truly home in Australia and that b) white Australians get to decide who does. Dispossessed demarcate their allegiances in the "About" section on their official website, which asks the following questions of media members:

> *Do I acknowledge that this publication exists on stolen land?*
> *Do I give a voice to indigenous writers and artists?*
> *Is Dispossessed the first and only indigenous band I will ever support?*
> *Is my idea for a piece giving them space to help their cause or do I just want a*
> *slice of them to satisfy my capitalistic, colonial and egocentric agenda?*
> *Thank you.*
> (Dispossessed, 2018)

In a 2018 interview with the news outlet SBS Filipino, Baughan describes how learning to write and play music with Dispossessed made him realise that "white Australia isn't going to serve our needs... they're never going to hand over any liberation. They're never going to willingly dismantle the structures that make them beneficiaries. It's our moral duty to be closer to the people whose land it actually is" (Violata, 2018). Later in the interview, Baughan renders his commitment to indigenous and immigrant solidarity through the lyrics of an unreleased and untitled Dispossessed song:

> *Awakening from the deepest sleep*
> *What we see is not a dream*
> *From the concrete, from the street*
> *A new world blossoming*
> (Violata, 2018)

If the automaticity of colonial mentality represents "the deepest sleep," consciously deciding to exercise influence over one's racialized becoming represents an "awakening." By explicitly cantering their art around the needs and historical contexts of Aboriginal Australians, Baughan suggests that immigrants need not be concerned with assimilation, pleasing those in power, or proving the likes of Pauline Hanson wrong. What diasporic Pilipinxs are truly responsible for is the "new world blossoming", by casting aside the colonized thought patterns of the old world and complicating conceptions of the ultimate purpose of the Pilipinx diaspora.

But music alone cannot lead to a new world blossoming. Dispossessed's music, therefore, informs and inspires direct actions undertaken in solidarity with Aboriginal communities. In early 2019, for example, the band used their platform to raise funds to purchase water filters in response to a drought in Collaranebri, New South Wales, which forced the

region's Indigenous communities to drink water from contaminated bores (Allam, 2019). Per punk's do-it-yourself ethos, the members of Dispossessed also travelled to Collarancbri to install the water filters themselves. As a diasporic Pilipinx, Baughan's work with Dispossessed suggests that his participation in the pedagogy and praxis of punk complicated the colonial assemblage of his Pilipinx-Australian becoming. The Pilipinx identity that emerged from Baughan's encounters with art, history, migration, and discourse was not that of a servant of the world, but a servant of the people.

RESISTIVE PILIPINX (P)EMINISMS

Women in the Pilipinx diaspora face intersecting risk factors, which expose them to multifarious forms of violence and exploitation (Bonifacio, 2009; Espinosa, 2017; Parreñas, 2015). Following gendered flows of migration, the majority of diasporic Pilipinas relocate to countries with demand for low-wage work in the healthcare sector and as domestic helpers (Parreñas, 2005; Bonifacio, 2009, Parreñas, 2015). But due to the high number of women who migrate to Australia and New Zealand to marry white men (Bonifacio, 2009; Espinosa, 2017), the predominant characterization of Pilipinas in Oceania is through the sexualized pejorative "mail-order bride":

> Embodied as racialized, sexualized, and submissive wives, Filipino marriage migrants are susceptible to abuse and violence... All too often, they have been portrayed as if they were trapped in time, hapless victims without agency to negotiate their marginality and subordination, let alone exercise citizenship. (Bonifacio, 2009, p. 1)

Bonifacio (2009) notes that Pilipinas in Oceania bear the overlapping burdens of racism, misogyny, the devaluation of women's labour, and the widespread perception that they are helpless to change or even fathom their circumstances. These discursive entanglements coalesce into material realities defined by physical, mental, sexual, and economic abuse (Espinosa, 2017; Marsh, 2019).

Music, however, has long been a medium through which women in vulnerable social positionalities have confronted misconceptions of their agency while unpacking the reality of their circumstances, as Angela Y. Davis (1998) explored in *Blues legacies, and black feminism*. Bessie Smith's "Yes, Indeed He Do", for example, contrasts it's narrator's violent home life with sardonic vocals, playful instrumentation, and absurd imagery:

> *And when I ask him where he's been, he grabs a rocking chair*
> *Then he knocks me down and says, "It's just a little love lick, dear"*
> *I don't have to do no work except to wash his clothes*
> *And darn his socks and press his pants and scrub the kitchen floor*
> *I wouldn't take a million for sweet, sweet daddy Jim*
> *And I wouldn't give a quarter for another man like him*
> *Gee, ain't it great to have a man that's crazy over you?*
> *Oh, do my sweet, sweet daddy love me? Yes, indeed he do*
> (Davis, 1998, p. 255)

Smith's performance demonstrates "that the victim does not cower before the batterer but rather challenges his right to assault her with impunity" (Davis, 1998, p. 29). The tradition of feminist musicking pioneered by early blues singers continues in punk rock, a community understood to be dominated by white men but in which women of colour have been highly influential for four decades (Bag, 2015). Like the complex black women of

Bessie Smith's blues, Pilipina punks refuse to let stereotypes essentialize them. They are the complex protagonists of their own stories, fully capable of dictating their fates without trivializing their circumstances.

Material Support, a "Filipina-fronted agit punk band from NYC, agitated by state repression, government corruption, and patriarchy" (Material Support, 2018) exercise PRP as a means of asserting Pilipina agency. Material Support's lyrics, penned by Pilipina songwriter Jackie Mariano, are explicitly antiauthoritarian and represent a Pilipinx psychology in which colonial mentality is replaced with a Freirean (2018) sense of community-responsive critical consciousness. Mariano demonstrates her conscientization in the song "Manarchist Brocialist," which calls for the violent destruction of the very agencies that exploit diasporic Pilipinas. For Material Support, learning and creating in the educative healing space of punk culture allows for the cultivation of a Pilipina psychology that is anything but helpless:

> *Manarchist, Brocialist*
> *Fuck your autonomy*
> *When it's an excuse*
> *To manhandle me*
> *Smash the patriarchy, transmisogyny*
> *Hetero- and homo-normativity*
> *Smash it now*
> (Material Support, 2016)

Like "Yes, Indeed He Do", "Manarchist Brocialist" challenges men's feelings of entitlement towards the bodies of women, even when those men espouse progressive values. "Know Your Rights" demonstrates an even more fully formed feminist conscientization by serving as a polemical against police brutality and a guide for persons-of-colour interacting with police:

> *You don't gotta talk to no fucking cop*
> *But if you have to talk to the cops*
> *Be firm and assertive*
> *Why did you stop me?*
> *Do you have reasonable suspicion?*
> *Officer, please give me your badge number*
> (Material Support, 2018)

Here, Mariano directly challenges the patriarchy alluded to in "Manarchist Brocialist" by making it *matter*, or by giving patriarchal power a body (and even a badge number). For Mariano, smashing the patriarchy begins with refusing to cower before its capacity for violence. Instead, she insists the police officer be held accountable to *her*. Mariano's discursive unsettling of power relations between Pilipinas and patriarchal authority contradicts perceptions of Pilipinxs as servants and Pilipinas as even less than that (Bonifacio, 2009; Espinosa, 2017). Pilipina punks, like Mariano, are, instead, agitators, activists, and themselves authority figures in their communities.

Like Dispossessed, Material Support are more concerned with community-responsiveness than assimilation and their social practice is not limited to music. All of the band's members are community organizers who coordinate protest actions against human rights abuses in the Philippines. Mariano and guitarist Miles Ashton also founded their own civil rights and immigration law firm, through which they conduct pro-bono work on behalf of the National Lawyers Guild (Mariano Ashton PPLC, 2019). Material Support are members of the Pilipinx diaspora, but instead of striving to serve and

assimilate, the community-responsive pedagogies and praxes of punk allow them to embody divergent Pilipina futures and feminisms.

DO IT YOURSELF OR DO IT WITH FRIENDS:
PUNK CULTURE AS A RACIAL COUNTERSPACE

As a peripheral economic nation, the Philippines' chief export is *people* (Dudwick, 2011; Parreñas, 2015). Perceptions of Pilipinxs abroad are, in turn, moulded by stereotypes of Pilipinxs as a desperate lot whose families are sustained by comparatively meagre wages from industrialized nations (Espinosa, 2017, pp. 101-102). This discourse then inflames perceptions that Pilipinxs are happy to be exploited abroad because staying home would mean starvation or death (Parreñas, 2015).

Though organizations such as Migrante Aotearoa advocate for Pilipinx workers in the New Zealand, belief in the innate otherness of Pilipinxs has fuelled incidences of racial abuse (Kireby, 2019; Small, 2018). In the face of racist violence, punk culture provides punks-of-colour the opportunity to transform their lives into "racial counterspaces, which can provide individuals with avenues to critically examine their racial experiences and identities" (Eisen, 2018, p. 12). Educative racial counterspaces informed by punk culture include workshops convened to discuss global and local politics, the composition of art and music, community organizing, volunteer work, protest actions, and direct advocacy work on behalf of the unhoused and economically disadvantaged, such as the free lunch programs provided by Food Not Bombs (Romero, 2016). The work of AninoKo, "a fast hardcore punk band composed of four Filipino immigrants" whose songs are "about the immigrant experience and the issues facing the Filipino community" (AninoKo, 2018), demonstrates how the educative healing of Pilipinx punk provides Pilipinxs onto-epistemological armour against interpersonal, institutional, and self-inflicted denigrations of their racial identity.

AninoKo's lyrics are sung exclusively in Pilipino and contain explicit critiques of power, white supremacy, and global capitalism. "Anak Diaspora," for example, implicates the corruption of Philippine politicians and moneyed elites as the root of Pilipinx suffering (translations, provided by AninoKo, in brackets):

> *Ang mga tao [All the people]*
> *at mga trapo [and all the corrupt politicians]*
> *na nagnanakaw ng pera [that rob the people of money]*
> *Sila'y kalaban [They are the enemy]*
> *na yumayaman [getting rich]*
> *mula sa ating dugo [off the blood we shed]*
> (AninoKo, 2016)

Like the police officer in Material Support's "Know Your Rights", AninoKo relates discursive phenomena to corporal forms—"the people" who shed blood but are still robbed of money by "the corrupt politicians" —to demonstrate the material consequences of economic exploitation.

"Tangina Mo Trump" similarly makes discourses of power and privilege *matter*, by giving these discourses a body; that of US President Donald Trump. When vocalist Ruperto Estanislao screams "*Tang ina* white power *mo*!" (Motherfuck your white power!), he conveys a perception that Trump's rise to power emerged from entanglements inverse to his own becoming as working class Pilipinx immigrant. To Estanislao, Trump

possesses generational wealth instead of generational trauma and "white power" instead of automaticized colonial mentality. Estanislao himself posits that the ruinous influence of white power in the Philippines is a foundational agency in the assemblage of the Pilipinx diaspora:

> I think it's important to understand why we're leaving the Philippines in such mass numbers. I went back [to the Philippines] in 2009 and since 2009, I can't count how many people are now in Dubai, Canada, the UK, Istanbul, everywhere, man. Americans will be like "well, your economy can't sustain you, blah blah blah". But centuries upon centuries of intervention from the West, not only military-wise, but psychologically, education-wise, it really does force you to leave. (Estanislao, personal communication, 2014)

To Estanislao, Donald Trump is not just a politician but an inevitability of imperialism and white supremacy. These same ideologies inform affect economies whose aggregate effects are the continued exploitation the Philippines, its land, and its people. It is for this reason that AninoKo ends "Tangina Mo Trump" with a vulgar release of contempt (translation in brackets):

> *Tang ina mo! [motherfuck you!]*
> *Trump!*
> (AninoKo, 2016)

AninoKo's screeds against corruption in the Philippines and white supremacy in the US reflect the resistive psychology Estanislao developed through his participation in punk culture, demonstrating the pedagogies of educative healing intrinsic to punk's countercultural production. Where global capitalism and world systems relegate Pilipinxs to "racialized social systems that denigrate Filipino culture and identity and encourage one to disassociate from being Filipino" (Eisen, 2018, p. 4), AninoKo use PRP to derive resistive and resilient ontologies from Pilipinx culture and history.

Like Dispossessed and Material Support, AninoKo's art informs the practice and activism of its members, who have dedicated their lives outside of music to organizations such as the Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines, Migrante, and Bayan US. AninoKo's members also expand the possibilities of Pilipinx becoming themselves by operating a record label exclusively for Pilipinx punk bands, Aklasan Records, and the only annual Pilipinx punk festival in the US, Aklasan Fest. Through the label and festival, the members of AninoKo create spaces for Pilipinx punks to share knowledge, create shared meaning, and redefine the affective capacities of Pilipinx becoming.

CONCLUSION

In her keynote presentation at OCIES 2018, Prof. Joanna Kidman calls upon Oceanic scholars to embody *docta spes*: the "educated hope" that decolonizing international and comparative education will "deny the power of the colonizer – that relentless, hectoring voice- passed on through settler-colonial generation after generation" (Kidman, 2018, p. 7). One way to deny the power of the coloniser is to refuse to engage with the world in colonial terms and by refuting colonial taxonomies that shunt people and ideas into binary, oppositional, and fixed categories (Hoskins, 2017). Colonial hierarchies have defined Pilipinx becoming for long enough, as the Spanish-Filipino caste system separated Pilipinxs into categories—*peninsulares*, *insulares*, *mestizos*, and *indios*—that institutionalized access to power as a function of Spanish ancestry (Nadeau, 1992). Instead of reforming these binaries to be more inclusive, new materialist social inquiry

and PRP alike dare us to engage with material-discursive phenomena in ways that not only theorize change but demand it.

If nothing else, diffracting the Pilipinx diaspora through PRP proves that Pilipinxs can be punks and punks can be Pilipinxs. If one can be Pilipinx *and* punk, Pilipinxs cannot *only* be feckless servants of globalization or destitute victims of circumstance in need of (more) salvation. The conceit that Pilipinxs can be punks, entrepreneurs, change agents, or scholars is too complex for theorizations in which Pilipinxs can only be *the oppressed*, forever indebted to *the oppressor* for our very existence. In this manner, diffractive and agential theorizations of Pilipinx becoming echo Hoskins' (2017) provocation for critical theory to avoid essentializing Māori as victims and instead account for the multiplicity of self and the relationality of becoming:

> We theorise about the struggle against oppression and about victimisation, dominating power structures, colonising western knowledge, deficit thinking - but we don't *behave* that way. Most often we don't act like victims but are courageous, relational, and engaging. We step up and face others rather than disengage or throw things from behind colonial lines.s (p. 104)

Yet the automaticity of colonial mentality shows that Pilipinx becoming has been transfigured by five centuries of violent subjugation and that the ongoing traumas of colonialism require immediate reckoning. Still, this mission is underserved by theoretical essentialisations of Pilipinx victimhood or otherness, which offer little space for nuanced characterizations, resistive psychologies, emergent feminisms, narratives of collective and individual resilience, or acts of joyful rebellion. Unlike "colonizing logic whereby the 'self' maintains and stabilizes itself by eliminating or dominating what it takes to be the other" (Barad, 2014, p. 169), diffracting the Pilipinx diaspora through the educative healing of PRP illuminates the complex situatedness of Pilipinxs in Oceania. Instead of drawing colonial battle lines anew, let us instead "figure difference differently" (Barad, 2014, p. 170) and silence what Kidman (2018) calls "the colonizer's hectoring voice", which continues to squeal and beckon wherever Pilipinxs hazard to tread.

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Wantok-Centred framework for developing citizenship

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This paper presents a framework for developing citizenship education in the Solomon Islands. By drawing on a qualitative study conducted with 24 students, 20 teachers, and four principals in four rural and urban schools in the Solomon Islands, this study reveals that wantok*-centred relationships are a unifying symbol that holds the family unit, clan, tribe, church members, and people with the state. In order to strengthen* wantok *relationships that create a peaceful coexistence in the Solomon Islands, this article proposes a* wantok *framework to underpin the development of citizenship education in the Solomon Islands. It introduces three domains: democratic, spiritual, and cultural, which are all centred on the notion of relationality. It demonstrates how relationality is central to the* wantok *framework by connecting people through the pijin language, and cultural, spiritual, and democratic values. This article concludes by demonstrating how this framework can promote* wantok*-centric identities, values, and relationships in both the formal and non-formal education sectors in the Solomon Islands.*

Keywords: Wantok*-centred; citizenship; citizenship education; democracy; Indigenous culture; Christianity; Pijin*

INTRODUCTION

The Solomon Islands is a very small but diverse country. The only unifying symbol is Pijin language. Historically, in the late nineteenth century during the formalization of the Solomon Islands British Protectorate, Pijin English emerged. Those who used it were referred to as "Wantoks". The term derived from two English words "one" and "talk" meaning speaking the same language. The term originated from the merging of modern democratic systems, Christianity, and Indigenous culture and is a combination of Indigenous language words and English words; it is used in formal, informal, and non-formal occasions nationally.

Language identity is a significant tool, with the potential to unify a nation as diverse as the Solomon Islands. According to May (2018) "common language can unify but a separate language can fracture and fragment a society" (p. 236). The commonly used term, *wantok,* is the only unifying symbol that reflects the identity of people and signifies people who use variants of the same language. The language has emerged with new identities and national consciousness among people of the Solomon Islands. This has seemingly redirected a discussion on relationship and identity, rights, and responsibilities, ownership and sense of belonging in the Solomon Islands. *Wantok* is now a commonly use term to connect people of diverse ethnicity in the Solomon Islands and other Melanesian countries (Briggs, 2009). The *wantok* tradition has, therefore, played an important social support function in the absence of a functioning state welfare system.

The Solomon Islands has suffered the consequences of the political challenges of citizenship (Mellor & Prior, 2004). There is increasing voter apathy, resurgence of national movements, the impact of global forces on local traditions, the stress created by increasingly multicultural societies, and a decline of volunteerism in community activities (Mellor & Prior, 2004)**.** This has impacted on the principles of democracy, which concerns the rights, freedom, duties, and responsibilities of citizens. Such varying perspectives shows that the term citizenship is problematic and contestable (Mellor & Prior, 2004). Indeed, citizenship is a complex discourse that can be influenced by a wide range of variables relating to the extent of social settings, political systems and structures, and economic status of each nation state and community (IEA), 2010). In this regard, education systems that focus on implementing citizenship education, particularly in developing countries such as Solomon Islands, should be seriously considered.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the perspective and understanding of citizenship by teachers and students in the Solomon Islands. It focuses on students, teachers, and principals' perspectives of citizenship and it draws on their understandings to develop a *wantok*-centred framework that captures the domains of citizenship within the Solomon Island national education system. As the paper develops, I argue that a *wantok*-centred framework for understanding citizenship is significant for the stability of the Solomon Islands; it draws from Indigenous cultures, modern democracy, and Christianity as guiding principles. This framework places relationality at its core and has considerable potential to inform education and curriculum at the national level.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CITIZENSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Euro-centric and Anglo-centric citizenship frameworks are dominant in many democratic developed and developing nations-states (Mellor & Prior 2004). These frameworks consider the position or status of being a citizen within a universal status that accords individuals human, civic, political, and welfare rights (Marshall, 1950); legal status that grants social, political, and economic rights (Dominelli & Moosa-Mitha, 2014); and a set of rights, duties, and identities linking the citizen to the nation state (Banks, 2008). Such links are organized around relationships between the state and the society (Figueroa, 2004). Under such frameworks, citizenship refers to the legal rights and obligations within a nation state and, more specifically, to civil, political, and social duties (Marshall, 1950). These rights include "the right to liberty, justice, political participation, economic welfare, security and to sharing in social heritage" (Figueroa, 2004, p. 223). The integration of people to form a community is what modern Western thought has closely tied to the nation-state (Marshall, 1964). Within a nation-state, "citizenry functions to guide the distribution of values of rights and duties that constitutes the citizens' will to live peacefully together in the democracy" (Ghasempoor, Yarmohammadzadeh, & Pishkarmofrad, 2012, p. 111). All who possess citizenship status are "equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (Figueroa, 2004, p. 223).

However, in non-Western contexts, citizenship is associated with morality and spirituality (Aldridge 2013). These values transcend non-Western societies towards tolerance and peaceful co-existence among people and are, therefore, intrinsically important to determining the direction of young people's development (Lee, 2004). In similar claims, Green (2014) argues that Indigenous people do not separate religion from the state. Therefore, citizenship is not separated from religion and culture; thus, spirituality is part of the state and not considered a separate entity (Green, 2014). In other words, "religion implies cultural identity, so religion and culture are inseparable" (Aldridge, 2013 p. 2).

Likewise, Green (2014) points out that "Indigenous expression of spirituality is an intricate part of our everyday experience, seeped within our laws, governance, models, relationship to our environment, practice and philosophical outlook" (p. 34). Spirituality is linked to Indigenous sovereignty and national autonomy that connects to clan, place, history, language, ancestral teaching, and ceremonial places (Green, 2014).

According to the Kwaraae people of the Solomon Islands, citizenship is referred to as *Ngwae ni fuli,* (person of place) (Gegeo, 2001). The *ngwae ni fuli* symbolises *babato'o'anga* (stability), *aroaro'anga* (peace), and *tuafiku'anga* (living in unity) (p. 69). That is, a person who relates to the social, physical environment, cosmos, and spiritual world. Gegeo (2001) uses the term *Ngwae ni fuli* "strictly to explore the way in which people conceptualize and discuss their identity in the rapidly changing world" (p. 3). The *ngwai ni fuli* is referred to from other literature as personhood (Ikuenobe 2006 in Naisilisili, 2017). The recognition of a personhood is earned in society through assuming responsibilities that defines a person (Naisilisili, 2017). This covers one's existential foundation that links to geographical and physical location, genealogy (one's location in a kin group both in the present and reaching backward and forward in time). This includes having land through the unquestioned position of genealogy and marriage, being knowledgeable about culture, history, ontology, cosmology, and being accompanied by certain kin obligations and responsibilities that cannot go unfulfilled until one is freed by death. This is different from political and legal recognition and the legitimacy of citizen's rights and freedom under state laws as held by the Eurocentric and Anglo-centric citizenship. It associates more with cultural values, lingual identity and the recognition of traditional ownership of land and the relationship of citizens with Indigenous tribal groupings.

Similarly, in the case of Fiji, Nabobo-Baba (2009) explains that citizenship is concerned with the responsibilities of speaking the truth, being hard-working, attending to customary and community obligations, recognizing people for their local wisdom, living well, and working hard. In this regard, Indigenous people of Pacific Island countries differ in the way they educate children for citizenship from the content, pedagogies, and strategies of Western education philosophies. Children are, therefore, given special education in order to acquire such important knowledge, values, and skills. However, Koya, (2010) claimed that while Fijians are proud of their nationality, the development of national pride in Fiji has been limited and fragmented by their consciousness of their racial and ethnic background. Thaman (2004) referred to this as being incompatible to the values of Pacific peoples and their education. Therefore, there is still work to be done in Pacific Island countries to ensure that citizenship frameworks include values that are relevant to their context, that are centred around the notion of relationality, and that unite and empower citizens. Relationality in Indigenous societies is central to citizenship and is defined by the acceptance and recognition citizens have in society and the demonstrated values from culture and religion (Naisilisili, 2017).

Anglo–Eurocentric education, however, focuses more on citizenship frameworks that are related to the historical relevance of local identities. It is developed through the mutual understanding between the state and the individual (Iyamu & Otote, 2003). Such education focuses on the preparation, through teaching knowledge and understanding, to assist young people to engage in their roles and responsibilities as citizens in both civic and civil society, and to shape their communities, schools, and societies (White & Openshaw, 2005). Citizenship education prepares individuals to participate as active and

responsible citizens in a democracy (Herbert & Sears, n.d). It is a conscious process of developing certain values, habits, skills, and attitudes that the society considers desirable and essential for its survival as a unit and its development. This is achieved through the forms of education and training that each nation-state adopts (Iyamu & Otote, 2003).

However, citizenship education programs cannot be successful if they fail to consider the unique historical, cultural, and social traditions of the context (Ichilove 1998). Citizenship education programs cannot be readily transported from one country to another, neither can a country simply adopt a citizenship education program and expect that it will work. Citizenship education programs need to be carefully adapted rather than adopted (Kerr, 2006). In a small island state like the Solomon Islands, any wholesale adoption is likely to be problematic, particularly in such a socially, linguistically, culturally, and religiously diverse context. Importantly, social inequality within the Solomon Islands has created unequal class, status, and wealth between people. This disparity prevents citizens from participating effectively and actively in state institutions. This implies the difficulty of translating the Euro-Anglo centric citizenship education framework into meaningful approaches to developing countries. This article responds to this concern by developing a framework for citizenship education that is based on the values, beliefs, and aspirations of Solomon Islanders. It achieves this by introducing a *wantok* framework for citizenship education in the Solomon Islands that places relationality at the centre of this program.

METHODOLOGY

To find a citizenship education framework that is suitable for Melanesian countries like Solomon Islands, careful consideration has to be made so that information gathered is true and robust. This study was qualitative in nature and was conducted with four principals, 20 teachers, and 24 students using in-depth interviews, group discussions, and content analysis (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). A case study was used as a strategic design to inform data gathering for this study (Yin, 2003). It was regarded as the best approach for this study to obtain as much information as possible about the experiences of teachers and students as citizens of Solomon Islands. The aim of this design was to uncover the significant factors of how people relate to each other and live together as one people. In this study, the researcher was the key person who generated and analyzed the research. Four schools were chosen as case studies to represent the urban and rural setting from two provinces in the Solomon Islands: Malaita and Guadalcanal, with two schools from urban centres and two from the rural schools.

Semi-structured interviews were used in the study and were conducted with principals, teachers, and students drawn from urban and rural schools. The purpose of using the interview method was to get firsthand information from the participants' own words so that the researcher could develop insights on how the participants perceive or interpret their world (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). An interview was considered the best option for this study as in-depth, detail, and rich data was gained from the conversations (Geertz cited in Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interviews were conducted with 12 teachers, four principals and 12 students. One-on-one interviews were conducted with principals while group discussions were held separately with a group of teachers and a group of students.

The researcher transcribed the recording from Pijin to English. First, there was a preliminary analysis of the data to highlight and identify emerging issues important for the study as well as a process of a clear and systematic coding of data under relevant themes. After the preliminary analyses, a post-data analysis was conducted to reduce the

data (Grbich, 2007). The data were coded by identifying themes and concepts through comparisons, categorizations, interpretations, descriptions, and syntheses (Ezzy, 2002).

FINDINGS

This paper reports on students' and teachers' voices in selected rural and urban schools in the Solomon Islands The findings that follow covers the conceptualization and understanding of citizenship, citizenship education, and values that were significant for the four principals, 20 teachers and 24 students interviewed in this study.

How teachers and students conceptualize citizenship

At the outset, the term citizenship was found to be unfamiliar to teachers and principals because it had no traditional equivalent. According to teachers and principals, the term has no resemblance to any traditional or cultural word in the Solomon Islands. A principal made this remark:

> I see the term citizenship as irrelevant to Solomon Island context. It does not have an equivalent word with Solomon Island and, in this regard, my society. In my society, we do not judge and recognize people according to how outsiders or the West recognize and judge citizens. We judge people according to cultural norms, values, and ownership – the way we see people in our society is through the upholding and demonstration of values acceptable in society and the traditional ownership of resources as land, that only has connection through Indigenous tribes and the values that guide action (custom). I myself cannot emulate others. (Rural School Principal)

The term citizenship does not have an equivalent word in local dialects in the Solomon Islands, particularly in Malaita, the site of the study. This resonates with concerns raised by Helu Thaman (2004) who also claimed that definitions of a citizen is different from that in Western liberal democratic countries. She claims that democratic values are not contextually relevant and are incompatible to Pacific people. She further asserts that people of Pacific Island countries do not really know the meaning of citizenship as they do in a liberal democracy so it is not a straightforward term in Pacific island countries such as the Solomon Islands. The diversity of perspectives held by people, the sense of place and space and the limited exposure to the idea of Western citizenship and democratic ideals and practice reflects the complexity of the term citizenship. This study also revealed that relationships based on blood ties, ethnicity, land ownership and leadership were recognized by students as key to citizenship in the Solomon Islands.

> My recognition can only be validated by my family, my community and leaders in society. We are recognized among society as "people of the place" through blood ties and who have lived and demonstrated the ethical values of leadership among people (Rural School Student).

Teachers and students related citizenship with values that reflects an individual's position within the local context and, therefore, influences their ability to participate freely among kin groups or community. According to participants, a person that is recognized for his or her active and free participation in society is someone that is identified as a citizen within a tribe and land. They relate citizens with people's active engagement in community activities such as caregiving, sharing, hardworking, security, and ethical leadership. This suggests that they are citizens or people of place. Such recognition and active participation is different from a set of democratic rights, responsibilities and identities that link citizens to the nation state (Banks, 2008). This perspective differs from

the legal and political status of the rights and freedoms of individuals (Gilbert, 2005). One teacher in this study explain this by saying:

> [C]itizen[s] are those that were born in the land with parents that are of the land as well. They are seen as the heritage of people of the place by birth, whose parents are people of the place as well. People of place are those who have land attachments, genealogy, and attachments to Indigenous kinship and tribal groups. Such relationality denotes the responsibility and care that is obligated by people to the land, environment and people. (Urban School Student)

According to teachers and students, communities in the Solomon Islands only recognize citizenship through rightful ownership of land and membership with Indigenous tribes, land and *kastom* (custom) and not by recognition of the law. This was noted by students who perceived citizens as:

> [P]eople who care for things in the environment and their own society. They are people who respect those in their kin group, tribe, and other people they are associated with. (Urban School Students)

According to this student, a citizen is a person who is born and recognized as a rightful person of that locality through land, tribes, culture, and custom. Another student sees citizens as those who relate well with everybody in the community or someone who is a peacemaker.

> Citizens (person of place) are people who show kindness and have demonstrated the value of sharing in material things including, labour, money, food, and clothes. (Urban School Student)

This suggests that students hold a different perspective of citizenship from a Eurocentric understanding. Participants repeatedly related citizenship to birthright, status, identity, participation, character, values, and disposition. According to the participants in this study, democratic rights are only limited to ownership of land and blood tie attachment. This has affected the way they recognize citizens under modern laws. For instances, in the Solomon Islands, foreigners who are citizens do not have their rights recognized because they do not have blood ties with people, land ownership, and tribal attachment. A clear example of this was the burning down of foreign Chinese properties in Honiara (Kabutaulaka, 2005) and the eviction of people from Guadalcanal island from the period of 1998–2003 despite these individuals gaining access to land through a legal process from Guadalcanal (Aqorau, 2008). Thus, while these citizenry relationships are recognized and sanctioned by law (Dagger, 1997), the findings in this study reveal that land and blood ties are seen by principals, teachers, and students as a more important marker of citizenship. This confirmed the argument that citizenship varies in many ways and in varying degrees (Banks, 2008; Nelson, & Kerr, 2006).

As demonstrated, the participants in this study viewed the legal definition of citizenship as shallow compared to recognition based on church, cultural affiliations, and land ownership. Those studied only recognized citizenship through cultural norms, values, land, and resource ownership. Furthermore, the recognition of citizenship through land ownership and resources transferred down through genealogical lines comes with an obligation to adhere to the standards expected from culture and religion. The responsibility also involves protection of tribal land, resources, and genealogy from outside influence or interference, equal sharing of resources, protection of customary land rights, and mandatory participation in communities by way of providing support to people in the community. As participants observed, in traditional Solomon Island society, the

rights of a person are recognized through fulfilling certain Indigenous obligatory processes; particularly with respect to rightful ownership and participation under cultural guardianship. This also included the right to claim land and share in obligations and the right to lead people according to custom and Christian standards. This is consistent with the finding of earlier studies by Gegeo (2001) on Indigenous rights of ownership of land as the guaranteed license to act without question. This is different from individualism, which holds rights and freedom in a secular state that reflects democratic principles (Daggar, 1997). Evan (2006) claimed that the conception of citizenship is based on individualism and collectivism, political rights, and local and global social rights. This argument also has links to the mainstream conceptualization of Western democratic countries that citizenship is based on rights and privileges of citizens and their allegiance to the government (Lagese, 2000). In this study, individual rights and responsibilities or duties, tolerance, and national identities have no resemblance to any traditionally or culturally used word.

Perception of values of citizenship by teachers and students

Teachers identified important relational values that they considered Solomon Islanders should demonstrate:

> The values I think are important are values from culture and church . . . the dress code or how people dress, participation, demonstration of skills, thinking, attitudes, behaviours, certain foods to eat, and observation of cultural and church ethics and dispositions that show you are from the place and the community of people. (Rural School Teacher)

The above quote differentiates the relationships people have with the state, neighbours, and the environment, which is promoted by modern democracies. In Western democracy, relationships are grounded on the identity of individuals through the state providing legal identification which guarantees the status of being citizens (Banks 2008; Engle & Ochoa, 1988). In this study, participants claimed that the absence of cultural and Christian values resulted in instability and chaos in the Solomon Islands rather than the absence of democratic value. Teachers and students openly articulated the significance of creating a Solomon Islander that promotes values from the local cultures (participation, respect, unity) and Christian values (love, respect, relationship).

> I think the values that are considered important are those that we practice from our culture and values that are relevant to Solomon Islands . . . the values currently promoted in the curriculum are not relevant to Solomon Islands. What Solomon Islands needs is a citizenship programme that promotes the missing values from society. (Rural School Students)

Students perceive this to be important because of the failure to formalize values of culture and Christianity in school curriculums and programmes. Participants in this study predicted that if nothing is done to address this in the curriculum, the country may experience a repeat of ethnic tensions and a rise in violence and corruption that is much bigger than what has been experienced. Further, teachers highlighted the importance of relationship through culture and Christian values. Teachers claimed that peaceful co-existence emerges only when the values of democracy (rights, responsibility, freedom, equality under the law), culture (respect, ownership, security, sharing), and Christian (love, hospitality, compassion, respect) are promoted together. According to the teachers, "these values appear to be missing from Solomon Islands' society and they assume that this has led to a rise in individualistic behaviours and the avoidance of communal

obligations" (Rural Teacher). They claim that citizens of the Solomon Island may become disintegrated and dysfunctional to nuclear and extended family and communal activities because they are concerned only about themselves. This is explained by the following student:

> I think building relationship with people is important. The reason is that we can support each other when we have needs. If we have good relationship with our families and communities and people, we will solve our challenges together easily. (Rural School Student)

According to participants, the way people dress and think, as well their attitudes and behaviours reflect their values. A teacher also highlighted this by saying:

> [P]eople who demonstrate responsibility in the country in regard to public life, private life, having values of the society that embrace cultural, church, and modern laws are citizens of the country. (Rural School Teacher)

However, as reiterated by this teacher, citizens have to appreciate societal values as well as values embodied in modern laws, the constitution, civil laws, and the good governance agenda. The teacher further emphasized that values of the local culture, church, and the modern rule of law are equally important. Therefore, participants suggested that individuals have to recognize and observe the values and norms of society to show the calibre of their membership in the community. This study reveals that people do not judge citizens as Westerners do. Instead, participants in this study judged citizens according to relationality on cultural and Christian ties based on values that are practiced and demonstrated, that are acceptable in society, and as judged based on ownership of land that only has connection from Indigenous tribes.

Towards a *wantok*-centred framework

In response to the concerns raised by teachers, students, and principals regarding the notion of citizenship in the Solomon Islands, I propose a *wantok*-centred framework to support the teaching of citizenship education in Solomon Island schools. Since the only unifying symbol in the Solomon Islands is the Pijin language, this study considers using Pijin as a frame to unify people, reflecting a common identity, the Christian religion and democratic institutions. This framework places relationality at its core as a way to strengthen citizenship based on local values, beliefs, and aspirations. The *wantok*-centric citizenship framework recognizes the culture, spirituality, and modern institutions as complementary and none should be promoted at the expense of the others. These three domains are inter-related and affect people in varying ways; therefore, equal promotion and practice of each domain in Solomon Islands societies would likely create unity and stability in society. All have to be simultaneously promoted and developed. Therefore, the *wantok*-centred framework provides a way for these three domains to be institutionalized, taught, and learned.

As Figure 1 shows, this framework is based on three domains: democratic values, which are political and legal in nature; cultural values, which are relational in nature; and spiritual values that are relational and emotional in nature. The *democratic domain* suggests that citizenship education should include teaching on rights, freedom, and responsibilities under the law. I suggest that this content needs to be formalized and promoted through the curriculum because, as the participants in this study showed, people do not know or understand their rights and responsibilities, which has led to discrimination against others. The *cultural domain* suggests that citizenship education in the Solomon Islands should include teaching about the right to ownership of land and

resources, care for each other, security, relationship with people, clan tribe, and others. In addition, this domain aims to promote an understanding of developing freedom from the land through planting food and sharing of foods to neighbours. This domain also speaks about important tribal issues and leadership. Finally, the *spiritual domain* is largely relational in nature and includes teaching about people's right to membership within Christian families, showing love, mercy, compassion, and care towards others, and sharing, respect, compassion, and helpfulness towards those in need.

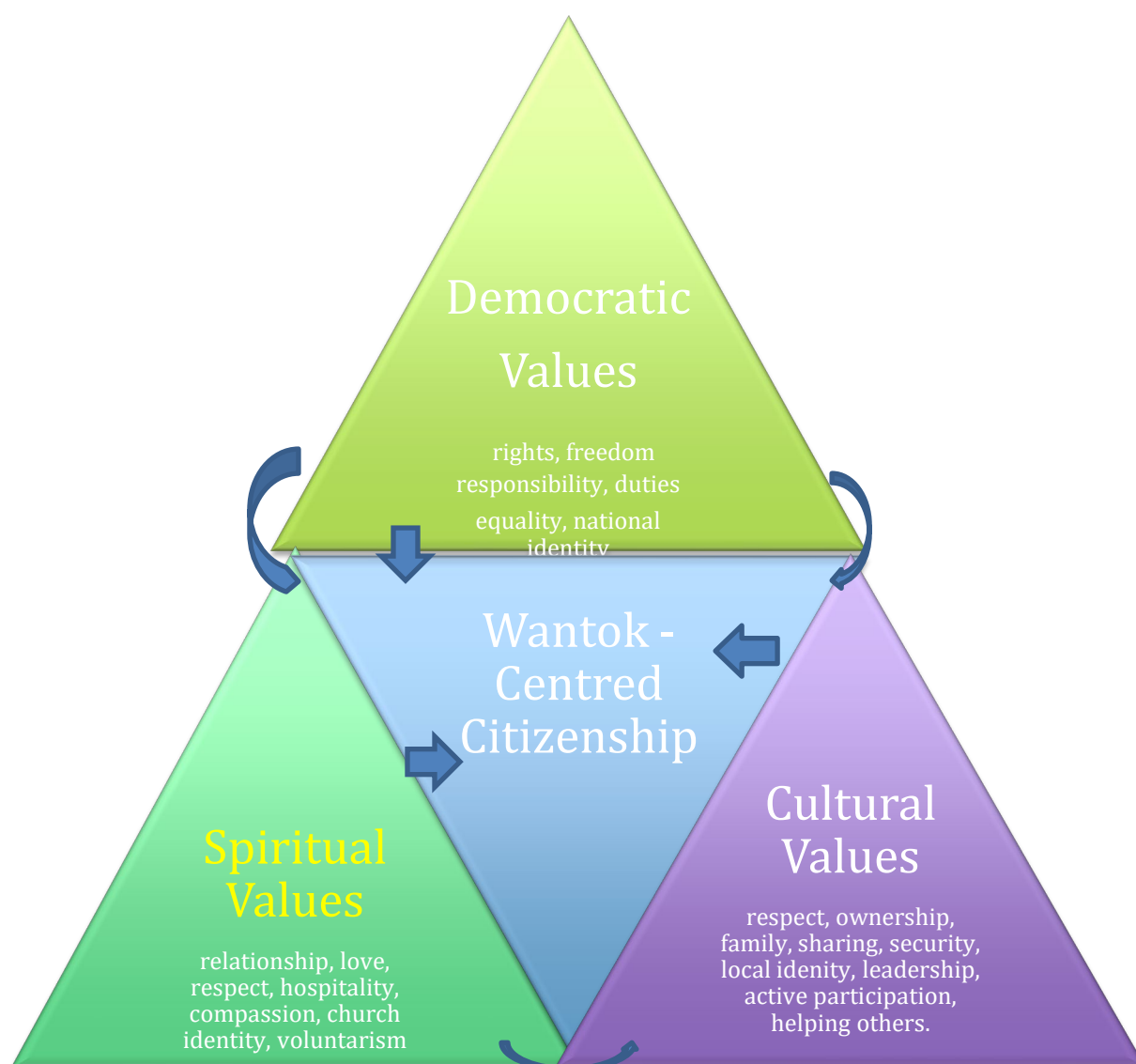Figure 1 outlines the key domains in this *wantok*-centred framework.

Figure 1: Three dimensional *wantok*-centred citizenship framework for Solomon Islands

Therefore, this *wantok*-centred framework provides a local response to citizenship education within the Solomon Islands. This framework has grown from within, based on the perceptions of principals, teachers, and students, rather than being a top down imported model. This *wantok*-centred framework is shaped by historical events and is intended to underpin the teaching of citizenship education in all sectors of education in the Solomon Islands, including formal, non-formal, and informal education.

CONCLUSION

This article has introduced a *wantok*-centred framework for citizenship education in the Solomon Islands based on the perceptions of principals', teachers', and students' conceptualization of citizenship. Participants identified the need to integrate and incorporate the values from Indigenous culture, spirituality, and democracy into a framework with the unifying term *wantok*. The three domains have been identified to support the teaching of citizenship education in the Solomon Islands: democratic values, cultural values and spiritual values. Each of these domains provides scope for the development of programmes and initiatives to strengthen the teaching of citizenship education in the Solomon Islands.

In light of these findings, the following recommendations are considered significant to strengthen the teaching of citizenship education in the Solomon Islands. Firstly, it is recommended that a national policy on citizenship education is developed to support programs that recognize democracy, spirituality, and cultural values. It is recommended that these values are included in informal, non-formal, and formal programmes. Secondly, it is recommended that the term *wantok* become an overarching framework for all three domains. It is also suggested that further research examines how to strengthen teaching programmes that promote cultural, spiritual, and democracy values in both non-formal and informal institutions, such as the family, clan, tribe, religious communities, and the wider society. Finally, in this paper, relationality sits at the centre of this *wantok*–centred framework for citizenship education in the Solomon Islands. Future research in this area may provide an opportunity to understand the important interrelationship between citizenship education in the Solomon Islands and this *wantok*-centred framework.

BIO

Dr Billy Fitoo sees himself as an educator and mentor. He was a qualified primary, secondary and tertiary school teacher. He has held substantive leadership positions in schools within the Solomon Islands Teaching Service for many years. Before joining the University of the South Pacific in 2013 as tutor and later as lecturer, he was the Deputy Director of the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM), Ministry of Public Service, Solomon's Solomon Islands Government. Currently he is the coordinator of the Educational Leadership programme and lectures of both undergraduate and post graduate education courses at the School of Education, University of the South Pacific.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Relationality and radical democracy: The possibilities of postcolonial citizenship in Myanmar

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Western liberal conceptions of democratic citizenship require the state to be "neutral" by separating the political from the social. However, this is often at odds with the realities of socio-political organization in many former colonized countries. In this paper, I draw on empirical data from photo-elicitation interviews with eight Buddhist youth in Yangon to illustrate the socio-political realities of everyday citizenship and citizenship education in Myanmar. Findings show that, for Buddhist participants, their political identity as Myanmar citizens and their religious identity as Buddhists are deeply enmeshed. Rather than force-fit postcolonial states into the Western democratic model, I propose that the notions of relationality and radical democracy offer a means of indigenizing democracy and draws on Myanmar's Buddhist democracy to illustrate the political potential of relationalism.

Keywords: Myanmar; postcolonial citizenship; radical democracy; relationality

INTRODUCTION

Western liberal political theorists seek to address the problem of establishing peaceful co-existence among people with different worldviews (Mouffe, 2009) though they have different conceptions of the tasks of government. A leading political liberal, John Rawls, (1990) contends that the classical conception of democracy, as a set of neutral procedures for public decision-making, is inadequate and advocates for a political conception of justice that can provide an adequate moral consensus on political. He conceives political liberalism as a neutral framework for the organization of a pluralistic society that can be accepted by all "reasonable" citizens despite their deep doctrinal differences. This political conception of justice may be part of or even derived from religion(s), but it cannot be presented as such if a consensus is to be reached by citizens (Rawls, 1990). This is because the separation between state and church, and between the public and the private, is central to the consensual politics of Western liberalism (Mouffe, 1993). Such a liberal conception of democratic citizenship is often at odds with the realities of socio-political organization in many former colonized countries where the political and the social are inseparable (Boege, Brown, & Clements, 2009).

Indeed, the political and the social are inseparable in Myanmar. Buddhism has been the cultural foundations and the framework for the state since pre-colonial times (Scott, 2009). British colonial occupation lasted from 1824 to 1948 and generated significant resistance, much of it formulated through Buddhist symbols and ideas (Walton, 2015).

These Buddhism-inspired nationalist struggles remain etched in the national psyche of Myanmar. Since 2010, Myanmar has been going through a period of transition, with a new multi-ethnic, multi-party political system offering its citizens some semblance of democracy. In their battle against the military junta that ruled Myanmar in an authoritarian manner for nearly 50 years, Myanmar's Bamar[1] Buddhist leaders have often invoked Buddhism to legitimate political freedoms and human rights, and frame democratic governance (Hayward, 2015; Schober, 2005; Walton, 2015). In other words, the Myanmar state endorses a Buddhist conception of the good life and thus challenges Western liberal conceptions of a neutral state.

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the socio-political realities of citizenship in Myanmar through the lived experiences and understandings of young urban Buddhists in Yangon, and to draw on relationality to imagine a workable form of democracy in such a postcolonial context. In doing so, this paper seeks to contribute to debates on postcolonial citizenship and indigenous democracy in former decolonized states, as well as the limited empirical literature on citizenship in Myanmar. First, I sketch my theoretical framework to highlight the broad notion of education that underpins this study. Then, I briefly outline the data collection and analysis process. My findings illustrate that participants' political identity as Myanmar citizens and religious identity as Buddhists are deeply enmeshed. Finally, I highlight the political potential of notions of relationalism and radical democracy in offering former decolonized countries a means of indigenizing democracy, by using the example of Myanmar's Buddhist democracy.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PUBLIC PEDAGOGY, CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND SUBJECT FORMATION

Although many educationalists maintain that public schools play and ought to play a critical role in nurturing citizens (Evans, 2008), recent work in citizenship studies points increasingly to the need to attend to the role of non-state actors in citizenship education (de Koning, Jaffe, & Koster, 2015). These authors argue that the meanings of citizenship are framed and negotiated differently in sites outside of schools, and such normative framings of citizenship are the outcomes of complex interplays between state and non-state actors (de Koning et al., 2015). However, few researchers have conducted empirical research on citizenship education outside of formal schooling. Lazar (2013) contends that an anthropological focus on the everyday lived experiences of citizens can reveal how both state and non-state actors are involved in the processes of subject construction. Indeed, a rare ethnographic study of everyday citizenship by Biesta, Lawy, and Kelly (2009) in England found that young people often learn about democracy and citizenship through participation in the communities and practices that make up their everyday life. They argue that citizenship learning is a situated process that is relational and uniquely linked to young people's life-trajectories. In other words, the wider social, cultural, political, and economic order within which young people live their lives is always implicated in citizenship learning.

"Public pedagogy" provides a useful theoretical concept for understanding everyday life as a pedagogical project for citizen-subject formation. Historically, the term "public pedagogy" referred to educational activities producing a public aligned in terms of values

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[1] Bamar refers to the dominant ethnic group in Myanmar who live primarily in the Irrawaddy River basin area and speaks the Burmese language.

and collective identity: the citizens (Sandlin, O'Malley, & Burdick, 2011). Later, public pedagogy scholarship shifted into an exploration of the different sites within which diverse subjectivities are constructed: from popular culture and everyday life, informal institutions and public spaces, dominant discourses, to public intellectualism and performative social activism (Sandlin et al., 2011). Regardless of the different domains of investigation, public pedagogy scholars are characterized by their multidimensional understanding of education and a common concern with democracy and social change. Drawing on the notion of public pedagogy, this study conceptualizes everyday life as a site of pedagogy and focuses on various "forms, processes and sites of education and learning occurring beyond formal schooling" (Sandlin et al., 2011, p. 338) for eight Buddhist youth in Yangon.

By focusing on the everyday citizenship of these Buddhist youth, this paper contributes to the limited empirical work on citizenship and citizenship education in Myanmar, most of which are large-scale nationwide quantitative surveys (The Asia Foundation, 2014; The International Republican Institute, 2017; Welsh & Huang, 2016). While helpful in highlighting some key tendencies in Myanmar citizenship, these extensive studies tell us little about how citizens in postcolonial Myanmar learn about citizenship or make sense of it in relation to their social experiences. Few qualitative studies on citizenship and citizenship education in Myanmar have looked at citizenship learning outside of formal schooling, even though the actual socio-political conditions of young people's everyday life are important for their learning of citizenship and democracy (Biesta et al., 2009). This paper contributes to research on democracy and citizenship in Myanmar, by employing the notion of citizenship education as public pedagogy to explore the role of everyday life in the construction of the young citizen-subject. In the next section, I briefly outline the ethnographic fieldwork undertaken to investigate participants' lived experiences and understandings of citizenship.

METHODS

This paper is based on data gathered in Yangon between November 2017 to April 2018 as part of a larger, ethnographic study on youth citizenship in Myanmar. Four foundational ethical principles—autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice—underpin the study. The study has ethical approval from The University of Auckland's Human Ethics Committee. Participants were recruited through a non-governmental organization and invited to join the study on a voluntary basis. Purposive sampling was employed, and care was taken to ensure that the sample comprised both Bamar and ethnic minority groups. Not all ethnic minority groups were represented because of the limited scope of this research project. Participants had to be Myanmar citizens between 16 and 30 years old. For this paper, I draw on data from the Buddhist participants to explore the intersection of Buddhism and citizenship in Myanmar. A summary of the participants' demographic characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Participants kept photo journals of their daily life for a week, which I reviewed with them individually over two photo-elicitation interview sessions. At the interview sessions, participants shared photographs that illustrated the meanings of good citizenship and being Myanmar, as well as their background and school experiences. Using the photographs as an "ice breaker" activity to create a comfortable space for discussion, and as a tool to invoke comments, memory, and discussion (Epstein, Stevens, McKeever, & Baruchel, 2006), I asked them further questions from my interview protocol. Each

interview session lasted around 1.5 hours. The interviews were conducted in English and/or Burmese, depending on the participants' preferences.

Table 1: Summary of participants' demographic characteristics

Alias	Ethnicity	Gender	Age
Kyaw Win	Bamar	Male	19
Yin Nandar	Pa-Oh	Female	21
Myint Myat	Bamar	Female	24
Le Khaing	Bamar	Female	17
Aung Zin	Bamar	Male	19
Htet Ei	Bamar	Female	17
Ye Khant	Bamar	Male	18
Myat Ye	Bamar	Male	20

I used thematic analysis to make sense of collective or shared meanings and the experiences of everyday citizenship (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The photo journals were analysed as part of the interview transcripts since participants elaborated upon them during the interview. I approached the data using inductive coding and theme development as the primary mode of engagement, working "bottom up" from the data, and developing codes (and ultimately themes) to summarize the interpretations of the persons involved and their way of describing the current situation using "everyday concepts" (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

BUDDHISM, CITIZENSHIP, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

In this section, I present three key themes from my Yangon participants that highlighted how they understood their everyday experiences with Buddhist ideas, practices, institutions, and communities as opportunities for acting and being citizens. These are: 1) Buddhism and the traits of Myanmar citizens; 2) Buddhism and national identity; and 3) Buddhism and the duties and rights of citizenship.

Buddhism and the traits of Myanmar citizens

Most participants perceived Buddhism as providing the underlying values that make Myanmar citizens "friendly", "hospitable", "helpful", "generous", and "kind" to others. Le Khaing noted that "[m]any people think donation is following the Burmese way" and offerings and donations are regarded as a "core concept" within Burmese Buddhism. This idea is so ingrained amongst Buddhists in Myanmar that one participant claimed that even the poorest Buddhists would donate one-third of what little money they have to "monks, monastery, pagoda or this kind of thing" (Myint Myat). Kyaw Win and Myat Ye were more critical of the cultural traits that constitute Myanmar citizens. Kyaw Win felt that Buddhism made Myanmar "traditional" and conservative, especially for women, who "have to act according to tradition, stay covered and not provoke, like not wear stuff that is too provoking". Myat Ye lamented that the older generation of Myanmar's Buddhist citizens "believe in Buddhism, so it's like blind faith. They do not think and just pray. They just listen to whatever the Buddhist monks say."

Regardless of their attitudes towards Buddhism, all my Buddhist participants attributed what they perceived to be defining characteristics of Myanmar citizens to Buddhism. Their characterization of Myanmar citizens as Buddhist is in line with the significant role played by Buddhism in Myanmar's political history. During the colonial period, nationalists used Buddhism as an indigenous ideology to rally mass support, halt Western influence and to regain respect for Burmese culture and Buddhism, vis-à-vis the British colonizers (Aung-Thwin, 2012). In fact, the slogan of the nationalist organization Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) founded in 1906 was "to be Burmese is to be Buddhist". It is no wonder that participants saw members belonging to the political community of Burmese as necessarily encompassing culturally Buddhist characteristics.

Buddhism and national identity

Other than associating the traits of Myanmar citizens with Buddhism, such fusion of national identity and Buddhism in participants' understandings of citizenship is also reflected in their insistence on wearing national dress at Buddhist sites. Aung Zin saw *longyi* (a skirt-like garment worn by Burmese) as a "religious dress" and marker of his Myanmar identity. He insisted on abiding by "Myanmar" dress code when he visits the pagodas, even though *"almost everyone wears their trousers or jeans these days"*.

> I am very proud [to be from Myanmar] when I go to the pagoda. I think I am the only one who does as in Myanmar. Myanmar dress, Myanmar longyi. I am very proud. Whether others are judging me or not, I don't care. (Aung Zin)

Underlying his insistence on complying with customary dress code at Buddhist sites is the historical memory of colonization and British humiliation of the Burmese social order. During the colonial period, Burmese had resisted such humiliation through cultural means: the "no footwear in the pagodas" campaign, where nationalist monks and YMBA lobbied for British to strictly observe the ban on footwear in sacred Buddhist pagodas (Aung-Thwin, 2012). For nationalistic youth such as Aung Zin, the cultural and the political was indivisible: wearing the national dress at Buddhist sacred sites was an expression of his patriotism and commitment to the Burmese nation. Yet, in their current pursuit for modernity, many young people of his age have abandoned the customary dress code for Western jeans and trousers. Aung Zin felt indignant that he was now the odd one out.

Buddhism and the duties and rights of citizenship

Buddhism is not only constitutive of national identity in Myanmar, it is also constitutive of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. For example, Ye Khant saw religious piety as the very expression of his citizenship. He believed that it is a citizenry duty for Myanmar citizens to preserve the longevity of Buddhism, given the global minority status of Buddhists. A recurring theme in Myanmar political discourse in recent years has been the notion that Buddhism is under threat and it is widely believed that Buddhism will disappear five thousand years after the Buddha's passing (Walton, 2015).

> This is an alms-giving ceremony. The monks have to draw lots and these are the numbers. [This is good citizenship because] You know, this is a Buddhist country and it's something related to the religion, and the Burmese people. By doing this, Buddhism can last long and also, this is a kind of doing good deeds. (Ye Khant)

For Ye Khant, his political obligation to the Myanmar state and his religious commitment to Buddhism are inseparable. He envisioned Myanmar as the last line of defence

preventing the total disappearance of the religion and believed that supporting Buddhist practices was a critical citizenry duty (Walton, 2015). In other words, for Ye Khant, acting as a citizen meant living out his commitment to Buddhism. Similar to Aung Zin, Ye Khant's cultural and political identities are fused.

Such entanglement between the political and the cultural is not surprising, given how Buddhist institutions and practices have complemented if not substituted the state apparatus in realising the citizenship rights of Myanmar subjects. The fragile Myanmar state dedicates a very minute part of GDP, less than 3% in 2014–2015 on health, education and welfare. It was everyday Buddhist institutions, communities, and practices that provided the quotidian coping mechanisms that filled the social welfare gap (McCarthy, 2018). Many of my Yangon participants highlighted popular Buddhist practices of donation and offering as common phenomena in their neighbourhoods, especially during full moon days.[2] Myint Myat spoke of her family preparing food to donate to people in her neighbourhood. Le Khaing and Ye Khant highlighted the regular offering of free food in their communities during various Buddhist festivals.

> This is free food. We call it the Sai-Yi-Tan-May-Byah. It is a kind of donating to the monks and after donating to the monks, we treat the people and also if you want to, you can donate the food to the people. (Ye Khant)

More importantly, participants often emphasized that these Buddhist practices benefitted the destitute. Buddhist conceptions of the good require believers to provide assistance to those in need or suffering, thus many Buddhists often intentionally organize religious giving. Democracy activists have also advanced the idea that religious giving in the form of charitable giving and volunteering is key to national development. In fact, all of my Yangon participants were avid volunteers and saw their different volunteering experiences with Buddhist and non-religious organizations as part of their citizenry contribution to society. Htet Ei believed that a willingness to help those in need through donations is "the role of a citizen" and "the job of a good citizen". Ye Khant felt that "[t]his is good citizenship because you know, there are many poor people. It is a kind of helping each other". Le Khaing believed that

> [O]nly we can shape the future, I think. If we try to perfect ourselves, it's doing the job of a good citizen. Everybody should participate in improving society and government, because society is the place where they are living in. If they don't try to shape it, who will? If they don't try for their own society, nobody will try. (Le Khaing)

Many of these Buddhist participants participated in these non-state welfare provision through Buddhist social welfare groups and networks, which functioned as informal political institutions that constructed their notions of citizenship. Having come from a poor family who could not afford to pay for extra tuition and other classes when he was in high school, Aung Zin was thankful he had access to free education from monastic schools.

> We can learn everything from monastic schools, about techniques or skills, about traditional relationships, or something like mathematics. Even about matriculation exams, lectures or lessons, we can study there . . . We can volunteer [to teach there] too. (Aung Zin)

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[2] In Myanmar, Full Moon Days in the traditional lunar calendar are celebrated every month. Many major Buddhist holidays are linked to these full moon days.

Grateful that monastic schools have supported his right to education, Aung Zin volunteered as an English teacher in a monastic school after he completed high school to serve his community. In other words, for many of the participants, Buddhist institutions, practices, and communities provided the context for their acting and being citizens, as well as their learning about citizenship.

BUDDHIST DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AS A RADICAL DEMOCRATIC PROJECT

These data demonstrate that for Bamar Buddhist youth, political identity as Myanmar citizens and religious identity as Buddhists are deeply enmeshed. Participants conceptualized and understood their obligations as citizen-members of the Myanmar state from their subject-position as Buddhists. They not only defined their national identity and citizenship duties in relation to Buddhism, participants also perceived Buddhist practices and institutions as crucial to the realization of citizenship rights. Buddhism was clearly ubiquitous in Yangon, if not the entire Myanmar. Participants' everyday life in Yangon was permeated by Buddhist practices, communities, and institutions, which provided the contexts for their acting and being citizens. Participants learnt about the norms, values, and behaviour appropriate for those claiming membership of the Myanmar political community from monastic schools, neighbourhood Buddhist rituals, and festivals, even monasteries. In other words, everyday Buddhist practices, communities, and institutions are just as involved in the construction of the Myanmar youth citizen-subject as that of schools. Such is the socio-political reality of citizenship in Myanmar. Against Western liberal conceptions of democracy where religion is "the culture of the social, not of the political" (Rawls, 1990, p. 14) and thus has no place in the public sphere, there is no such separation in my participants' lived experiences and understandings of citizenship. In fact, the political and the social are intertwined. Participants viewed citizenship as more than a mere legal status: it was a realm where they recognized themselves as participants in a political community, albeit one that is indistinguishable from the cultural community of Buddhists.

Participants' understandings of citizenship related to the nature of political authority in Myanmar. Historically, there have been persistent efforts by Myanmar political leaders to link Buddhism with past political rule and to ground legitimate governance in Buddhist ideas of righteous rule (Hayward, 2015). Since 1988, democracy activists have also drawn on Buddhist philosophical, moral, and religious doctrine to inform the vision of a good life in Myanmar's democracy and to exhort Buddhist citizens to contribute to national development. It is no wonder, then, that participants viewed Myanmar as a Buddhist state, with Buddhism informing the traits of Myanmar citizens, national identity, as well as the duties and rights of citizenship. Taking the liberal stance that the state should be neutral and not privilege a particular conception of the good life, Hayward (2015) expressed concerns about the ways democracy has been indigenized by Buddhists in Myanmar and what it meant for religious minorities. Indeed, her concerns are not unfounded. Since the democratization and opening up of Myanmar in 2010, Buddhist nationalists and extremists have been stirring racial and religious hatred amongst Myanmar citizens (Walton & Hayward, 2014). Buddhist nationalism has facilitated military-led persecution of the stateless Rohingyas, described by UN human rights chief as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" (Kipgen, 2019, p. 69). Buddhist nationalist groups, such as the Organisation for the Protection of Race and Religion (MaBaTha), have also leveraged the

argument that democratic rule would support proper Buddhist practice, spiritual progress and liberation to compel the democratizing state to fulfil its religious obligation of protecting and propagating Buddhist teachings.

Similarly, the Western liberal state has never been neutral. Feminist and Marxist scholars, as well as advocates of multicultural citizenship have long challenged the claimed neutrality of the Western liberal state (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Jessop, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2001). They point out the hypocrisy and impracticalities of the liberal ideal of a politically and culturally neutral state (Yuval-Davis, 2001). Indeed, the separation of social relations and the private from the public in liberalism is an analytic and artificial one (Gandhi, 1998). It follows from the teleological narrative of Enlightenment, where rationalist secularism supposedly destroyed the "old systems of belief and sociality embedded in the chimeral mysteries of divine kingship, religious community, sacred languages and cosmological consciousness" (Gandhi, 1998, p. 105) to bring about the progression of humankind. However, instead of progress, during the period of colonialism, this rationality had sanctioned the colonial civilizing mission by setting up a "pedagogic and imperialist hierarchy between European adulthood and its childish, colonised Other" (Gandhi, 1998, p. 32). What this discussion means is that while Hayward's concerns are not unfounded, these problems have less to do with the ways in which democracy has been indigenized in Myanmar than the ways in which democracy can be understood because a neutral liberal democratic state has never existed.

THE POLITICAL POTENTIAL OF RELATIONALITY AND RADICAL DEMOCRACY FOR INDIGENIZING DEMOCRACY IN FORMER DECOLONIZED STATES: BUDDHIST DEMOCRACY IN MYANMAR

Postcolonial scholars advocate for other ways of being human, besides the Enlightenment ideal of a rational adult and argue that a space for dialogue between the two can open up spaces for other forms of democracies (Gandhi, 1998). In this section, I highlight the political potential of relationalism in indigenizing democracy for former decolonized countries by arguing that Myanmar's Buddhist democracy is a workable one when it is reconceptualized as a project of radical democracy.

In order to overcome the ontological de-relationality embedded in liberalism, I draw on relationalism, "a mode of thought within social theory that is both an ontology of the social and a related way of looking at it" (Go, 2016). Relationalism starts with interactions and sees those relations as constitutive. In other words, individuals' actions and behaviours do not only flow from innate qualities but also from the relations in which they are inseparably embedded (Donati, 2016). Donati's notion of the relational subject, where individual and social subjects are relationally constituted, is useful here. In the context of citizenship, we can understand the citizen as a relational subject who emerges from the relations between different agents in a structural context and acquires qualities and powers through different internal and external social relations (Donati, 2016).

In the context of a radical democratic project, the citizen—as a stable partnership between an individual and the state, and with other members of the political community—is a relational subject if and to the extent to which members act in reference to their relation (to its structure, needs and conditions). The basis for the common political identity as radical democratic citizens is their recognition of a set of ethico-political values—liberty and equality—and their willingness to submit to the prescribed rules of conduct when

struggling for an extension and radicalization of democracy (Mouffe, 1993). The radical democratic citizen, as such, is a relational social subject, if and to the extent to which the partnership relation emerges as a distinct reality from the individual, and in turn constitutes the personal identities of those involved in the partnership (Donati, 2016; Mouffe, 1993). For radical democratic citizens, every situation is an encounter between the private and the public because they interpret liberty and equality according to the relevant social relations and subject positions, whether gender, class, race, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation. Since the social agent is not a unitary subject, it is inevitable that there will be conflicting interpretations of those principles. Personal identities are defined and redefined reflexively in the process through relations with other fellow citizens engaged in the democratic struggle.

Rather than describe an end-state, a project of radical and plural democracy recognizes that the complete realization of democracy is impossible. Democracy is conceived as an ideal type political form of society that citizens constantly struggle for. The aim of politics, then, is to "use the symbolic resources of the liberal democratic tradition to struggle for the deepening of the democratic revolution, knowing that it is a never-ending process" (Mouffe, 1993, p. 72). What this means is that a Buddhist democracy can be a democratic one as long as citizens identify with the democratic principles of liberty and equality and are committed to defending its institutions (Mouffe, 2006). Religious groups can intervene in the political arena to argue in favour of or against certain causes, just as MaBaTha has done, as long as they abide by the rules of democratic institutions. This is not to say the consequences of religious participation in the public sphere are necessarily always positive. For example, Buddhist organisations such as the MaBaTha proposed legal initiatives in 2014 to "protect race and religion". Through the laws, they sought to control mixed marriages and "forced conversion" of Buddhist women who marry non-Buddhist men, criminalize polygamy and extra-marital affairs, and enforce family planning in certain regions of the country. Despite the controversy surrounding the race and religion laws, these interventions were at least made within constitutional limits and fought within the realm of democratic politics.

If we accept that conflicting interpretations of the ethics-political principles of equality and liberty will always exist, and that this is what democratic politics is truly about, then religion can be given a place in democratic politics. These constitutional limits will differ according to the different ways various societies interpret the ethico-political principles that are constitutive of modern democracy and the particular interpretations that have obtained a hegemonic status at that conjuncture (Mouffe, 2006). Problematic as it might be, a Buddhist democracy opens up a space for citizens to engage with the political, described by Cheesman (2016) as "concerned with rivalry among collectivities recognizing one another as substantive equals who communicate hostility dialogically through fundamentally nonviolent means" (p. 354). This space is important, not only because it provides an alternative to the non-political (i.e. violent conflict as the means of relating to differences), but also because it opens the space for constructing new political identities as radical democratic citizens. In sum, the notion of relationality, combined with a re-conceptualization of Myanmar's Buddhist democracy as a project of radical and pluralist democracy, have given rise to the plausibility of an indigenized democracy that can further the social justice agenda of citizenship.

As for the plight of the stateless Rohingya refugees, it is a problem that neither a "neutral state" in a liberal democracy nor a Buddhist state in a radical democracy can resolve

within the framework of national citizenship. National citizenship has both universalist and exclusionary commitments (Bosniak, 2006). The universalism of citizenship is only applicable *within* the national political community. While the problem for oppressed insiders, such as Myanmar's Muslim *citizens*, is the *substance* of citizenship (i.e. equality and liberty), the problem for the stateless Rohingya Muslims is more basic: it is the problem of entry into a national membership community, Myanmar or otherwise. Without this membership, they will always be excluded in the universe of those entitled to consideration in matters of distribution, recognition, and political representation (Fraser, 2005). Such is the nature of national citizenship, which takes the modern territorial state as the frame within which justice is sought and applied. If we accept that members of a political community have the right to shape their membership community according to their own criteria, then it is vital to work for the interests of Rohingya Muslims within limits acceptable to Myanmar citizens. Rights are "social relationships rooted in an alliance of public power, political membership, and social practices of equal moral recognition" (Somers & Roberts, 2008, p. 414). What Arendt (2013) calls "right to have rights" (p. 39) only make sense for people who already enjoy membership of a political community. Without the rights of citizenship, there is no political authority capable of protecting people as human beings (Isin & Turner, 2007). As inadequate as it might be, "associate" or "naturalized" citizenship under Myanmar's *1982 Citizenship Law* offers Rohingya Muslims more rights than what they are currently entitled to and a higher possibility of full citizenship than what the international human rights regime can put forward.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper makes several contributions to knowledge. First, it extends our limited knowledge of youth citizenship and citizenship education in Myanmar, by employing the notion of citizenship education as public pedagogy to explore the role of everyday life in the construction of the young Buddhist citizen-subject. The study found that for these young Buddhist citizens, learning, being, and acting as citizens often took place within the context of Buddhist communities, practices, and institutions, which complemented and, at other times, substituted the state in social welfare provision. Further research might explore the everyday sites by which non-Buddhist citizens experience being and acting as a citizen, and whether everyday life in Yangon constructs the young non-Buddhist citizen-subjects differently.

In addition, this paper contributes to debates on postcolonial citizenship and indigenous democracy in former decolonized states. Through eight Myanmar citizens' lived experiences and understandings of citizenship, this paper has sought to illustrate the socio-political realities of citizenship in a postcolonial context, where the social and political are intertwined. Indeed, this study found that participants saw Myanmar citizens as necessarily encompassing culturally Buddhist characteristics and expressed their political commitment to the state through cultural practices at Buddhist sites. Participants also understood their duties and rights as Myanmar citizens through the lens of a Buddhist adherent. The findings from this study challenge Western liberal conceptions of democratic citizenship, which require the separation of the political and the social. Rather than force-fit postcolonial states into the Western democratic model, I have proposed that the notions of relationality and radical democracy offers a means of indigenizing democracy and I drew on Myanmar's Buddhist democracy to illustrate the political

potential of relationalism. Further studies might employ similar notions of relationality and radical democracy to explore their political potential in indigenizing democracy in other former colonized states, and thus advance the social justice agenda of postcolonial citizenship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIOGRAPHY

Liyun Wendy Choo is a doctoral candidate at the University of Auckland. She holds a Master of Education (Curriculum and Teaching) and a Master of International Studies, both of which proved to be fundamental to her current PhD work on citizenship in Myanmar. Her PhD seeks to understand young Myanmar citizens' citizenship and investigates how Myanmar citizenship is produced. It takes a broad view of education and examines the educative process of citizens beyond formal schooling. Her research interests are in the areas of postcolonial citizenship, critical realism, Southeast Asia and comparative education.

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Connecting global and local relationships with the '*Kibung Framework*'

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This paper examines the relationships between global education policies at global and local levels that have driven the outcomes-based curriculum reform into Papua New Guinea (PNG). It reports on evidence from a qualitative case study that investigated the implementation of the outcomes-based English curriculum into two lower secondary schools in Port Moresby, PNG. Data were collected from 10 teachers and 90 students through classroom observations, document analysis, field notes, structured interviews, post-observation interviews, and focus group discussions. Findings revealed challenges in the implementation of the global curriculum reform agenda as there was little alignment between policy intentions and classroom practices. Thus, findings also highlighted a need for collaborative professional development programs to help sustain the curriculum changes required for classroom implementation. A co-constructed approach called the 'Kibung Framework' is presented in this paper as a strategy to assist with the implementation of mandated global curriculum policies into local practices.

Keywords: Papua New Guinea; outcomes-based curriculum; Kibung Framework; professional development; global education relationship

INTRODUCTION

When global agendas drive educational changes, there are bound to be challenges despite good intentions. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Education for All (EFA) policies drove Global Education Reform Movements (GERMs) in education systems in the global north and south around the 1990s (Kuehn, 2015; Robertson, 2015; Sahlberg, 2012). Pacific Island countries (PICS), being recipients to educational aid, were also influenced by the GERMs (Daudau, 2010; Joskin, 2013; Ruru, 2010). Thaman (2005) cautioned that there are positives and negatives when examining globalization and aid issues in the PICs. Nevertheless, the global agenda pushed for a common education model and curricula to meet market-oriented needs, which, arguably, was considered relevant from a developmental perspective (Kuehn, 2015; Robertson, 2015; Sahlberg, 2012; World Bank, 2005).

However, research revealed that driving global education reform into local contexts is not simple and straight forward (Fullan, 2016; Kuehn, 2015). There is contention that one worldview for driving global issues can be problematic because "no one shoe size fits all" (Koya-Vaka'uta; 2016; OECD, 2017) because there are different factors and actors involved (Bentley, 2010; Fullan, 2016; Joskin, 2013). Teachers, being main actors, need special consideration prior to implementing reform agendas (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2013; Sanga, 2016) enabling professional development (PD) to implement the change (Fullan, 2016; Ucan, 2016).

This article reports on one aspect of a larger research project that explored the implementation of curriculum reform into Papua New Guinea (PNG) (Joskin, 2013). This paper: 1) explores how the notion of relationality is evident in the implementation of global reform on a local level; 2) reports on how PNG responded to the global agenda; and, 3) offers the Kibung framework as a relational way to implement the global outcomes-based curriculum reform agenda within the PNG context.

GLOBAL POLICY CLIMATE DRIVING LOCAL CURRICULUM CHANGE

Over the last 25 years there have been numerous discussions on the need for countries to provide quality basic education to children in line with obligations under the *Convention on Children's Rights* (UNESCO, 2005; UNICEF, 2007). The discussion relates to the statement that education is a right for all people, as captured in Article 26 of *The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights'* (UN, 1948). This led to a global agenda for the provision of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and prominence to UBE (UNESCO, 2005).

The UBE policy was re-ignited by the international educational reforms of the mid-1990s, which propelled the matter onto the world stage (Fullan, 2016; UNESCO, 1996). EFA also became a global agenda, reiterating calls for countries to provide access to basic education to increase enrolment rates (Bentley, 2010; Fullan, 2016). Consequently, GERM spread through the global policies of EFA, UBE, and UPE (Robertson, 2015; Sahlberg, 2012). The three policies resonated with number two of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aimed to "Achieve Universal Primary Education.

Seemingly, global education policies that drive change go through a top-down decision-making process. For instance, global policies instigate changes that influence the decisions of Education Ministries, who then require changes within their local systems (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2013; OECD, 2017). This type of process occurred in the Pacific Region (Daudau, 2010; Joskin, 2013; Ruru, 2010). Top-down changes requires political will and administrative processes to drive global change agendas.

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM

The discussion here focuses on the spread of the OBE model and curriculum as a global policy. The term OBE, here, refers to both the model and curriculum. The OBE model and the OBC were global reform policies driven under the framework of the UPE, UBE, and EFA policies. OBE is an educational concept that is perceived and applied differently in local contexts (Killen, 2000; Spady, 1994). Its advocate, Spady (1994; 1998) asserts that OBE has three main premises: 1) education theory, 2) instructional strategy, and, 3) systems theory. Those involved in the implementation of the OBE need to have understandings of the three features because each can influence implementation processes (Joskin, 2013).

As a theory of learning, the OBE affiliates with certain assumptions about teaching and learning within systemic structures (Killen, 2000; 2012; Spady, 1994; 1998). Killen (2000) describes OBE as being a collaborative teaching approach within an education system that needs administrators, teachers, and students to all aim for "desired results of change" (p. 2). The OBE posits that successful learning promotes even more successful learning. In addition, OBE highlights that students have different learning abilities, and schools and teachers facilitate learning environments. These propositions are echoed in

other learning theories, such as constructivism, social constructivism, and behaviorism (Hall, 2013; Joskin, 2013).

As an instructional strategy, the OBE informs pedagogical approaches deemed suitable for classroom practices (Killen, 2012; Spady, 1998). Teachers need clarity for developing curriculum instruction and assessment to measure learning practices and OBE resonates with student-centered teaching and learning, discouraging direct instructions or teacher-centered practices in classroom learning (Hall, 2013; Joskin, 2013). Arguably, OBE principles accord with constructivism and social constructivism theory. OBE asserts that students need to be self-directed and responsible learners while also working collaboratively with peers and teachers to achieve common learning goals; that is, to use experiences from social environments to create new knowledge during classroom interactions (Creswell, 2009; Killen, 2012). Critics argue that those OBE traits also accord with behaviorist theory, especially when social environments condition students into acquiring new knowledge or classroom behavior (Hall 2005; Joskin, 2013).

Spady (1998) argues that a genuine OBE system requires holistic changes because it exists within a wider social systems. Thus, Killen (2000) argues that, for OBE to be successful, there needs to be an alignment of systemic processes, including classroom practices, theories behind the OBE, and collaboration among stakeholders to embed changes locally. Interestingly, Spady (1994) stressed that centralized education systems should take charge of decisions for adopting and implementing OBE.

The UN MDGs chartered a "global blueprint for education development" (Coxon & Tolley, 2005, p. 42); the recommendation being for the same set of policies to be applied globally (World Bank, 1995). Seemingly, since OBE had potential to be used as "a systems approach" (Hall, 2005, p. 305), it could be implemented in both developed and developing nations; for example, as educational aid to some PICs, (Sanga, 2005; Thaman, 2005). Thus, Solomon Islands developed science OBE curricula for primary education (Daudau, 2010); PNG developed all subject curricula for primary and secondary levels in the 2000s (Joskin, 2013; Nongkas, 2007); and Fiji developed teachers' college materials (Ruru, 2010). While, educational aid was welcomed by those PICs countries; the sustainability of OBE was a concern because aid supports were tied to projects with time frames (Maha, 2009). In short, the OBE rode on the mantra of global developmental frameworks and was seen to be a "quick fix solution" for educational issues in developing countries.

INTRODUCING THE CASE: PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PNG is a developing Melanesian Pacific nation with an education system strongly influenced by history (Joskin, 2013; Thomas, 1976). Traditional societies in the 1800s had diverse informal learning systems. Generally, contents for teaching and learning were needs-based according to local contexts, and lessons were informally conducted (Nongkas, 2007; Narokobi, 1983; Smith, 1975). Teaching strategies consisted of stories, life experiences, wisdoms of tribal elders, and specialists of respective Indigenous knowledge (McLaughline & O'Donoghue, 1996 as cited in Nongkas, 2007).

Formal education was introduced in the 1880s through Christian missionaries and the colonial administrators. Two different learning goals were set by the respective education providers and, consequently, two different approaches to curriculum development and implementation that continued till 1970, when PNG established a unified education system during the self-government and pre-independence periods (Joskin, 2013).

To align with the global agenda, PNG implemented the UPE, UBE, and EFA policies through the National Department of Education (NDoE) (NDoE, 1991; 2001). PNG implemented a two-tier reform of structural and curriculum in the 1990s onwards. The former had a 9-2-2 structure (elementary, primary, lower, and upper secondary) to enable accessibility to basic education (Joskin, 2013). The latter saw the OBE adapted to the PNG education system. Australia's developmental aid (AusAID) assisted PNG to change curricula through a Curriculum Reform Implementation Project (CRIP) (NDoE, 2003; 2006).

Arguably, the spread of OBE into PNG was influenced by global developmental discussions (Coxon & Tolley, 2005; NDoE, 2003; Joskin, 2013). PNG reformed their curriculum in 2000 onwards for elementary, primary, and secondary schools, with each level having its own respective curricula. However, some national educators argue that the reforms were done hastily, thus raising sustainability concerns (Franken & August, 2011; Guthrie, 2014; Maha, 2009). Interestingly, little is reported from independent researchers on PNG curriculum reform experiences, despite the vast Western literature available on global education reform. This article seeks to address this gap by reporting on research that has examined the implications of the rushed policies of curriculum implementation in PNG.

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical lens for examining relationality

Constructivist and interpretivist theories underpin meaning creation in this paper. The former asserts that learners construct knowledge through active participation, take responsibility for their learning processes, and use past knowledge to build new learning within formal instructional situations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2009). The latter premises that knowledge is contextual but subjective and is embedded in peoples' interactions and their socio cultural relationships in societies.

The two theories also allow for investigations of social acts such as investigating the global education agenda within systemic structures (Neuman, 2006). The lenses show that people act towards things on the basis of the meanings given to those things. Meanings are also elicited from social interactions that people have with others and society. In addition, meanings are filtered and personalized through an interpretive process used by individuals in response to their experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2009). Thus, in this study, the notion of relationality is examined through the connectivity of global reform policies with local systems.

This paper is derived from research conducted for my PhD thesis, which was grounded in a qualitative case study; a method used to investigate programs, implementation processes, and organizational change (Yin, 2009).

Three questions guided the investigation:
1. How can the notion of relationality be seen in global reform?
2. What global policies influenced reform in Papua New Guinea? And why?
3. How can global reform be sustained locally in Papua New Guinea?

Methods

Data were collected in two phases: Phase 1 involved a document investigation of global policy on curriculum reform and the OBE. This involved scanning the literature using the

key words "global educational reform". Documents from the global literature reviewed were: OECD (2017), *Education Policy Implementation: A Literature Review and framework,* Fullan (2016), *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (5th Ed.), UNESCO (2009), *United Nations decade of education for sustainable development*, UNESCO (2005), *Understanding Education Quality in EFA Global Monitoring Report*, and UNESCO (1996), *Learning: The Treasures Within*, (Delors Report). I used content and thematic analysis to identify themes in these international documents.

Phase 2 probed local implementation of the global education reform policies. Evidence was drawn from multiple data source, which included focus group discussions, semi-structured interview, document analysis, post-observation interviews, and field notes taken at research sites. The cases investigated were two urban secondary schools—School 1 (S1) and School 2 (S2)—in Port Moresby, PNG. The former is located in the north-east of the city, the latter north-west. Both schools are level nine schools with accessibility to policy information about the education reform (NDoE, 2003; 2006). I obtained ethical clearance from both the Ethics Committee of the Education Faculty at Victoria University Wellington, and the NDoE in PNG. Staff participants signed consent letters, and parents of the observed grade nine classes signed consent letters for student participants, who were between 15 to 16 years old.

Ten teacher participants and 90 students were observed in Phase 2. The teachers were two school principals (P1-S1 and P2-S2), six focus group English teachers (FGT1-S1, FGT2-S1, FGT3-S1, FGT1-S2, FGT2-S2, and FGT3-S2), and two grade nine English class teachers (ET1-S1 and ET2-S2). The two observed grade nine classes were identified as C1 and C2. All were given code names to protect their identities.

Observation enabled me to collect data from naturally occurring situations (Yin, 2009), such as the two grade nine English classrooms. I used an audio-visual recorder to record four x 40 minutes' classroom observations from both sites, giving me a total of 320 minutes recorded time. I also made field notes of physical and contextual settings. Additionally, I used triangulation to help me determine meanings of global reform policies being implemented locally.

I have both outsider and insider roles as an academic teaching at a tertiary institution in PNG. As an outsider, I was able to interpret the participants' views through a Western theoretical lens because of my teaching experiences, grounded in my qualifications. This enabled me to give meaning to the notion of relationality as elicited from data. To avoid bias, I used a journal to record instances that would have influenced my interpretations. As an Indigenous person, I also had an insider's role of being a former secondary school teacher, and of having common cultural and social practices (Narokobi, 1983). The two roles enabled me to give meanings from the constructivist and interpretivist lenses.

I applied a three–tier iterative approach to give interpretation to data (Neuman, 2006). Firstly, I examined two PNG education reform policies, the National Curriculum Statement (NDoE, 2003) and the grade 9 English Syllabus (NDoE, 2006), to determine policy intentions for the classroom implementation. Next, I interviewed the participants to determine if policy intentions were realized during classroom observations. The coding of themes was done both deductively and inductively. Themes were also guided by the research questions; thus there were preconceived themes initially before the labeling of codes to the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006).

Five similar themes were identified across the PNG policy documents (see Table 1).

Table 1: Sample document analysis of the PNG education policies

No	DA	DB
1	TA -Teaching Approach	TA - Teaching Approach
2	KLT - Knowledge of Learning Theory	KLT - Knowledge of Learning Theory
3	TU - Teachers' Understanding	TU - Teachers' Understanding
4	CD - Curriculum Design	CD - Curriculum Design
5	CTF - Curriculum Theoretical Framework	CTF - Curriculum Theoretical Framework

Codes: DA = National Curriculum Statement (NDoE, 2003), DB = English Lower Secondary Syllabus (NDoE, 2006)

These themes were then categorized into concepts to begin the inferential analysis process of interpretation while at the same time further reducing data. Hence, a micro-analysis process was used (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Three questions were used to reduce data at this second stage:

1. What theme is consistently seen in the policy documents and classroom practices?

2. What are the relationships between the themes in the data?

3. How can the themes be categorized?

Data analysis revealed three themes: factors facilitating change, little alignment, and suggestions to improve global agenda. The findings for each theme are discussed next.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Factors facilitating change

The findings from the Phase 1 literature reviews and Phase 2 focus group discussions, document analysis and literature reviews revealed that both external and internal factors initiated the PNG education reform (Joskin, 2013; NDoE, 2003; 2006; Maha, 2009). Firstly, global education policies drove education reform into PNG because of the requirement to expand learning opportunities (Bentley, 2010; Fullan, 2016). For instance, the signing of the EFA agreement in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and its reaffirmation in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, guided UN member countries to champion accessibility to basic education (World Bank Report, 1995; 2005, UNESCO, 2009). Hence, the global education reform waves reached the PNG's shores (Joskin, 2013; Nongkas, 2007). That contention is supported by the argument that the MDGs point two also influenced global reforms through the UBE and the EFA agendas by calling for countries to "Achieve Universal Primary Education" with PNG being signatory to that global direction (Coxon & Tolley, 2005; UNESCO, 2009).

Secondly, global development discussions around the UPE policies drove the 1990s educational reforms into PNG. The literature review showed that the reform agenda was pushed through the OBE model because of its potential to be used as "a systems approach" (Hall, 2005, p. 305). The OBE was packaged as educational aid to the PICs (Coxon & Tolley, 2005; Daudau, 2010; Hall, 2013; Ruru, 2010), and PNG was recipient to that partnership through the AusAID CRIP Project (Joskin, 2013; Maha, 2009; NDoE, 2003; 2006). This policy excerpt captures the relationship of OBE and global reform

discussions: "An outcome-based curriculum will help teachers to monitor student learning" (NDoE, 2003, p. 5).

Thirdly, the findings from the Phase 1 literature reviews and Phase 2 focus group discussions and document analysis done on the NDoE policies (1991; 2001; 2003; 2006) also revealed that there was connectivity between global reform agenda and the PNG education system. The issue of accessibility to basic education was stressed as a significant factor driving global education reform (Bently, 2010; Joskin, 2013), as illustrated in this participant's remark:

> The reform that they're trying to bring about in our system. (Focus group teacher 1–School 1)

The word, "reform" indicates global relationships, while the pronoun "they" is representation of the development partners (AusAID/CRIP), and the NDoE. This policy curriculum quote also corroborates the notion of "accessibility" driving global reform discussions into PNG:

> The Education Reform will result in enrolling more girls and boys into school and retaining them, giving them a higher quality, more relevant education in context and making it more cost effective. (NDoE, 2003, p. 3, lines 16–20)

Internally, PNG had internal issues that dated back to the pre-independence era of the 70s (Matane, 1986; Tololo, 1975). Therefore, the bi-lateral developmental aid relationship with Australia was a welcome gesture for PNG (Maha, 2009; Nongkas, 2007). Thus, the AusAID project (CRIP) facilitated the PNG curriculum reform in the 2000s (NDoE, 2003; 2006). Furthermore, deeply embedded systemic practices of top-down decision-making processes hastened the global agenda locally (Guthrie, 2014; Joskin, 2013). Consequently, PNG was seen to be adhering to global requirements of implementing the UPE and EFA policies, and opening up accessibility to basic education through a reform OBC (Joskin, 2013; Maha, 2009).

Moreover, findings from Phase 2 also suggest that stakeholders in the local context had little say on how to implement the reform agenda because they were on the edges of decision-making formalities. That view was heard from a participant:

> We had to go ahead and implement it because our superiors said so. (Focus group teacher 2–School 1)

The remark echoed passiveness and compliance to top-down leadership and management styles ("superiors") of a bureaucratic organization ("implement") (Nongkas, 2007). Arguably, the PNG education reforms occurred more because of global political lobbying than rational thinking (Joskin, 2013; Matane, 1986; Nongkas, 2007). In summary, both external and internal factors motivated the PNG education reform. While the reform looked good, there were systemic issues.

No one size shoe fits all

PNG met global requirements through enactments of the education and curricula reform (NDoE, 2003; 2006). However, findings from the Phase 2 of document analysis, classroom observations, post-observation interviews, and field notes showed disparity between policy intentions and observed practices (Joskin, 2013). This revelation is important for others to consider within relationships of global agenda. Table 2 below gives an example of a mismatch.

Table 2: *Comparing Policy Intentions with Classroom Practice*

Policy Intention	Observation finding
A student-centred approach allows teachers to be more flexible in determining the most effective ways to help all students. (NDoE, 2003, p, 20)	Four observed lessons from Classroom 2 in study site 2, and two from Classroom 1 in study site 1 indicated all teacher-centred, grammar lessons taught in isolation. (Field notes)

(Source: Joskin 2013, p. 250).

Evidence from eight English lesson observations indicated that Teacher-Centered Lessons (TCLs) were still prevalent, despite the national policy indicating implementation of the OBC in the local context, which should have reflected a more student-centered approach. However, the eight observations still resonated with past teacher training experiences (Nongkas, 2007) and with historical learning practices of regurgitating facts (Joskin, 2013). This finding contradicts both global and national policy intentions for implementations of student-centered classroom practices (Hall, 2005; 2013; NDoE, 2003; 2006). The TCLs describe traditional approaches of teacher "talk and chalk" instruction. Thus, this reveals knowledge gaps.

Moreover, observations also noted direct transmission of teaching which implicates the teachers' worldviews of being sources of knowledge, while students were passive learners. Evidence suggests that teachers acquired this worldview from their own training and work experiences (Joskin, 2013; Nongkas, 2007). For instance, one participant said:

> I'm still in the old system. (Focus group teacher 1–School site 1)

The meaning is probably of individual defiance at institutional levels, of not knowing how to implement the reform curriculum. Moreover, it could also show teachers being overwhelmed by the reform agenda. One school principal corroborated the interpretation; when asked as to how the OBC was implemented; he reported that:

> Teachers sort of find their way through it. (Principal 2–School site 2)

Both citations projected the agony teachers experienced when trying to implement reform agendas locally (Joskin, 2013).

Discussions here imply that the global education agenda was not systematically and effectively managed locally in PNG (Guthrie, 2014; Joskin, 2013). OBE was claimed to have practical systems theory attributes that could be adaptable in systems (Spady, 1998; 1994). However, the situation in this local PNG context revealed that OBE was not conducive as a systems theory attribute (Spady, 1998). Furthermore, the findings from Phase 2 from the lesson observations, and literature reviews also uncovered that the government needed to resource and train practitioners well before accepting OBE. Preparations were considered inadequate as this quote shows:

> Where are the materials to help us? (Focus group teacher 1–School site 2)

The NDoE used the following interventions to support the implementation of the OBC

- National Curriculum Statement (2003)
- English Syllabus, Lower Secondary School (2006)
- Official notification letters
- School inspector's visits

- Train of trainers' workshop
- Curriculum personnel school visits

Findings from Phase 2 classroom observations, focus group discussions, document analysis, field notes and literature reviews also revealed that the interventions seemed minimal and not effective for successful implementation of the OBC. Hence, in situations like this, PD should be a priority when implementing any reform agenda into local contexts, because teachers are the ones who make educational changes become realities (Fullan, 2016).

Lastly, evidence from the literature review, focus group discussions, classroom observations, post-observation interviews, and field notes from Phase 2, and literature reviews in Phase 1 suggest using PD as an intervention strategy to sustain global reforms locally. This is appropriate as critics argued that the PNG education reforms were carried out hastily (Franken & August, 2011; Guthrie, 2014; Maha, 2009). This argument raises sustainability concerns (Joskin, 2013; Ucan, 2016) because Pacific scholars also realize the importance of teachers' roles and call for continuous support to be given to teachers when reflecting on education theories and practices in Oceania (Sanga, 2016; Koya-Vaka'uta, 2016). To support the use of teachers' PD, Fullan (2016) stresses that, "educational change depends on what teachers do and think'' (p. 97), therefore, this paper offers the Kibung Framework as a way to connect global education reform locally.

Kibung Framework

Kibung is an indigenous term in "Tok Pisin", a Melanesian Pidgin spoken in PNG (Franken & August, 2011; Joskin, 2013). *Kibung*, pronounced /ki:bung/, means coming together to have discussions. The term captures "relationality", and literally, embraces the connectedness of humanity (Narokobi, 1983; Sanga, 2016), where people of common interest meet and *toktok* (talk) about issues (Joskin, 2013). *Kibung* involves people who are related through social relationships or genealogy. In the PNG context, relationships are forged through family ties, work, whom you know (*wantokism*), education, extended families, kinship, villages, and nationhood (Joskin, 2013; Narokobi, 1983). The notion of *kibung*, a PNG cultural practice, is embedded within the broader *wantok system* practices of the Melanesian countries of the Pacific (Joskin, 2013; Sanga, 2016). Thus, *Kibung* is an appropriate metaphorical PD framework for supporting global agenda locally.

The Kibung Framework (KF) is a general overview for using PD to improve curriculum implementation locally. The notion of the KF resonates with Western discussions of using PD as an intervention strategy to help facilitate educational change (Fullan, 2016; Hall & Irving, 2010; Joskin, 2013). The KF allows for dialogue and is premised on the idea of a two-way communication process between *wantoks* (people) who have working relationships within Western-based systems (Narokobi, 1983; Sanga, 2016). Moreover, Kibung resonates with one of the beliefs in Western policy development and implementation (Hall, 2013); that is, with a "co-construction" approach of policy and implementation between government and stakeholders working together to embed policy reforms (Hall, 2005; Hall & Irving, 2010). Hence, as Figure 1 demonstrates, the KF offers a co-construction approach between central administration (governance level), the experts (external partners), and teachers (local implementers) to embed curriculum mandated changes locally (Hall & Irving, 2010; Joskin, 2013).
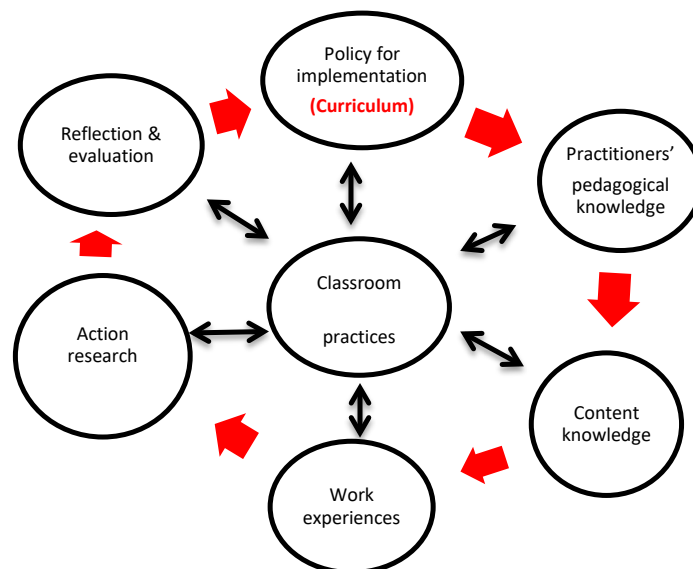
Figure 1: Kibung Framework for Professional Development

The KF has seven features: they have Tok Pisin names with the English version given:

1. *Bihainim lo* (Policy) – This refers to the curriculum that is circulated for institutional implementation.

2. *Kaikai blo tingting* (pedagogical knowledge) – refers to the teachers' worldviews. That is, the pedagogical knowledge or the personal belief systems making up teachers' cognitive abilities.

3. *Save blo tisa* (subject content knowledge) – refers to the teachers' content knowledge for teaching subjects with relation to both theory and practice.

4. *Wok tisa* (professional work experiences) – refers to worldviews that teachers have accumulated over their teaching years.

5. *Lainim samting* (professional development) – refers to the interactive process of continuous PD learning for teachers.

6. *Skelim pasin* (reflection and evaluation) – refers to teachers' reflection and evaluation skills developed through action research in the classrooms.

7. *Skulim sumatin* (classroom practices) – refers to teaching programs, lesson plans, teaching materials, assessment, extra-curricular activities, classroom management, professional development, and teachers' action research among other essential features needed for curriculum implementation at the local level.

In response to a need for contextually and culturally relevant PD model, the KF offers a tool centred on the notion of relationality to support implementation of global policy into local PNG school-based PD activities.

CONCLUSION

This paper revealed that global educational policies, namely UPE, EFA, and UBE, drove educational reform into PNG in the 1990s and, in the process, engulfed internal recommendations that had also asked for educational change. The reform consisted of re-structure and curriculum. The former encompassed accessibility to basic education, a

point stressed by these three global education policies, and MDG indicator two. The latter saw the outcomes-based curriculum packaged as educational aid and adapted into the PNG national education system, supported by the AusAID's CRIP project. Despite the good intentions of global education reform policies, the process of implementation has been challenging.

This paper offers the Kibung Framework as a connector to help overcome challenges because it provides a contextually relevant and relational way to implement global policies in any local PNG teaching and learning context. Consequently there are opportunities for future research into any area of the seven attributes of the Kibung Framework. Researchers, educators, or other stakeholders can investigate and document how elements of the Kibung Framework could support teachers' PD. PD sessions should be continuous and be built into school training programs so that it demonstrates a relational approach to human resource capacity building in PNG.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIOGRAPHY

I'm Anna Joskin and I work at the University of Papua New Guinea. My research interests are in areas of curriculum development and implementation, second language teaching and learning. I have a PhD in Education from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, an MA in "English Language Teaching", and a Post-Graduate Diploma in TESOL, from the University of Canberra, Australia. I also hold a BEd from the University of Goroka (PNG), and have 32 years of field experiences as a PNG educator. I believe in empowering Papua New Guineans through mentoring and training to transform individuals, and build human resource capacity.

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The importance of strengthening relationality: Experiences of women living with visible, physical disabilities in rural Papua New Guinea

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This article reports on research that explored the views and experiences of daily life for five women living with visible, physical disabilities in a rural setting in Papua New Guinea. The findings show that women with disabilities experience discrimination not only because of their disability and gender-, but also because of the attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs about disability and gender which generate discriminatory practices and social structures, which together worked to silence women with disabilities. This contributes to the work around disabilities and relationality in the Pacific. It puts forward an argument for a focus on building relationships and making connections to enhance understanding and reduce marginalization of women with disabilities. This opposes the traditional approach which has focussed on addressing the material and /physical needs that result from the disability itself. A focus on relationality is argued to encourage inclusion and social participation for women with disabilities at their local communities.

Key words: Women with disabilities; views and experiences; Papua New Guinea; Pacific; relationality; foster participation.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my mother, who left too early to see the completion of my academic journey, Helen Kukie Pangura Yenas. Born 17 October 1958. Passed away 2 November 2017.

INTRODUCTION

There is limited research on women and girls with disabilities in the Pacific region (Spratt, 2013; Stubbs & Tawake, 2009; Thomas & Legge, 2009). As a result, very little is publicly documented about their lives and-, their situations, and the issues that impact on their rights as women and as women with disabilities (Groce, 1997; Sands, 2005). Spratt (2013) examined the situation and needs of women with disabilities in three Pacific Island Countries (PICs): Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga. She conducted situational analysis interviews with women with disabilities with a focus on their sexual and reproductive health. Her study indicated that Pacific women with disabilities experience more violence than Pacific women without disabilities. The author also acknowledges the "lack of published evidence" (Spratt, 2013, p. 29) on the situation and needs of disabled women in the PICs. Stubbs and Tawake (2009) conducted a survey across various PICs,- including Papua New Guinea (PNG), which focussed on issues and challenges faced by women with disabilities in the Pacific with the goal of examining "social and economic factors impacting on their human rights" (p. 7). Their findings also revealed that women with

disabilities in the Pacific experience physical and sexual abuse and discrimination, as well as discrimination in many other aspects of life, including social participation in their communities.

Although research shows that the majority of women with disabilities live in what is called "the developing world", a report by the World Bank (2009) notes:

> Many women with disabilities report feeling "invisible" in the development context and largely absent from the development agenda. Even when gender considerations are incorporated into development projects, the specific perspectives and needs of women and girls with disabilities are seldom sought or incorporated. (para. 1)

This issue has been noted by several academics and organizations in other studies conducted on women with disabilities (Boylan, 1991; Groce, 1999; Sands, 2005; Yeo, 2005). *The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* enshrines equality, empowerment, and recognition as universal rights for women (United Nations, n.d.). However, in terms of development initiatives, including research, women with disabilities are "not recognized as a priority" (Sands, 2005, p. 52), - rather they are recognized for their neglected rights. In cases where they are identified, the focus is on "rehabilitation, impairment, prevention, healthcare and the provision of technical aids and equipment" (Sands, 2005, p. 52). The views and experiences of the daily life of women, beyond their disability, are neglected in both research and development initiatives. This indicates the need to conduct research on various aspects of the lives of women with disabilities, including their views, lived experiences, their relationships and the connections these women have within their communities.

The lack of research on women with disabilities in Pacific countries extends to PNG where, women with disabilities have an extremely low status. They are disempowered, disrespected and their voices can go unheard, unrecorded, and their needs unmet (National Disability Resources and Advocacy Centre, [NDRAC], n.d). In this article, I aim to explore this situation and address the concerns of women with disabilities in a rural setting within PNG. I also aim to suggest ways to raise awareness of the needs of women with disabilities by outlining the importance of establishing and strengthening relationships and connections in a relational space, such as the local community, that can foster social participation and inclusion.

I begin by briefly discussing the current situation for women with disabilities in rural communities in PNG. I then provide an overview of the concerns in their daily life before presenting an argument for the importance and value of relationality in raising awareness of these concerns. I conclude by arguing that it is important to maintain the value of kinship and bonding at the community level by strengthening relationality. I suggest that this can be achieved: -through the development of relationships at the community level in rural PNG communities. The development of such relationships creates better opportunities for women who live with disability to be respected for who they are and have their contributions in their community recognized.

INTRODUCING THE CONTEXT: PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PNG is the largest island country in the Pacific region. It shares borders with Indonesia, Solomon Islands and Australia. It gained independence from Australia in 1975 (Geissinger, 1997). About 85% of the population live in remote and rural communities (Hanson, Allen, Bourke, & Mc

Carthy, 2011). PNG is a developing nation in the Pacific and is also an aid donor in the region (Aisi, 2014).

As a culturally diverse nation, PNG has more than 800 different languages and two national languages, Pidgin *(Tok Pisin)* and Motu (Winis, 2013). The main languages that are used as a medium for business communication are English and Pidgin. The country is situated in the tropics and has rugged mountains, swamps, lakes, rivers and seas. Communities are geographically isolated, and this complicates service delivery to many rural communities (Bomen, 2017). Culture has a predominant influence on day-to-day practices of the rural PNG population, and on people's views, assumptions and attitudes (Mapsea, 2006).

ATTITUDES TOWARDS GENDER AND DISABILITY

People's attitudes and the physical and socio-political structures that make up PNG society are some of the factors contributing to the discrimination, marginalization, and stigmatisation (NDRAC, n.d.). Negative attitudes are often more debilitating for women with disabilities than the disability itself (Boylan, 1991). As a result of negative attitudes, a disabled woman'—s health, her wellbeing and social life can be affected, thus limiting her opportunities for equal participation and inclusion in the community (NDRAC, n.d.). Women with disabilities in PNG are more likely to benefit when they are given space to voice their life experiences and concerns (Yenas, 2019). If their voices are heard, their concerns can be addressed. To encourage and empower women to speak about their concerns, connections and relationships at the community must be encouraged and strengthened (Fa' avae, 2018). For this reason, it is important to build and maintain connections at the local community level.

Of the many values held by people in Pacific societies, is the sense of connectedness, the bonding of kinship and the relationships that people have with one another, within their families, their clans and communities; and with their land, sea, mountains and rivers (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat [PIFS], 2013; Fa' avae, 2018). Although, the sense of connectedness in the Pacific is strong, women in countries such as PNG, who come from patriarchal societies are recognized as second-class citizens (Vali, 2010, Yawi, 2012). They do not have the same value as men and, are required to be submissive to men, and become homemakers (Vali, 2010; Yawi, 2012). Being a homemaker is not necessarily inferior or a bad thing, but if women are only allowed to be homemakers and not afforded opportunities to do other things, then that is inequitable. Women, who are disabled, have an inferior status, are discriminated against, are stigmatized and marginalized, because of both their gender and disability (Spratt, 2013; Stubbs & Tawake, 2009; United Nations Enable, n.d.).

Socio-cultural beliefs and practices in PNG have a strong influence on how able-bodied people perceive disability and disabled people (including women) (Byford & Veenstra, 2004; Mapsea, 2006). These beliefs, practices, and the physical environment also substantially influence the disabled women's level of involvement in their communities (Yenas, 2019). This also influences the relationships and connections they have in their communities or local spaces, thus affecting their involvement at the community level because their contributions in the community are not recognized or acknowledged (Spratt, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

This study is set within the field of disability studies and was designed to explore the realities of daily life for women living with visible, physical disabilities. A qualitative research design sets the foundation for this research (Punch, 2005; Smith, 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2004). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used in this study and is an approach used in qualitative research that is committed to exploring and understanding lived experiences of a particular phenomenon (Smith, Larkin & Flowers , 2009). IPA is an "examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 1). Each of the interview participants have their own individual experiences of their social and personal worlds (Grey & Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009) IPA, as a methodology and framework, was considered suitable for the study, because it facilitated a way to explore and understand a life-world phenomenon— in this case, the views and experiences of women living with visible physical disability in rural areas in PNG.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

At the core of this study are five semi-structured interviews conducted with five PNG women aged between 16 and 35 years who have visible, physical disabilities. The interviews used were exploratory and facilitated the collection of accounts about the views and experiences that the women themselves chose to talk about. The participants in this research came from a rural setting, in one of the provinces identified as 'least developed' in PNG. Service delivery is of a very low standard, life is complicated, and people work very hard to daily survive.

As a PNG woman from a patriarchal society, the approach I took in this research has been guided by the socio-cultural beliefs and practices which frames my identity as an individual (Fa avae, 2018). In this research, I took both an insider and an outsider perspective (Sultana, 2007). I was an insider because I speak the same language as the participants (*Tok Pisin*) and we all come from rural PNG and share cultural commonalities. Although I share much in common with my participants, I also took an outsider perspective as a non-disabled woman, - researching the lives of disabled women.

This study complied with Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities and Regulations at the University of Waikato (2008). I had to protect the anonymity of my participants and make sure my research maintained a high level of confidentiality. I encountered some culturally sensitive issues that could have influenced what the participants shared with me, such as participants not sharing their experiences of ill-treatment, and the hurt and the pain they experienced in life to protect the good name of their family, clan or the community to which they belong.

The participants were women with physical disabilities which, at times, made it difficult to access the research site. For example, there were times we agreed to meet at a certain time and venue, but they did not turn up. I was flexible and worked according to their timing and convenience.

The geography of the research location, it's remoteness and poor communication system were some challenges I encountered. Direct access to the research participants from my location in New Zealand (during my time of study) was not convenient, so I enlisted the assistance of a contact person, who formally agreed to act as liaison between the participants and myself. The contact person had access to the women participants because she has an existing data base of

people with disabilities in the wider area. This made it convenient for the initial selection of the participants.

Upon my arrival at the research location, I met each woman, spoke to them, explained what my research was about, and asked if they wanted to participate. Each woman gave consent to participate in the research. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

During the interview, each woman and I sat on either side of a mat that was spread on the floor of a *haus win* (rest house) or on a seat in a rest house. The seating position did not establish any power difference. In this way, trust and rapport was established with the participants so that a safe space was created. *Tok Pisin* was used as a medium of communication between the participants and me. An idiographic focus was adopted throughout the research to complement the qualitative research design (Charlick, Pincombe, McKeller, & Fielder, 2016; Smith et., 2009).

I transcribed the five interviews verbatim in PNG *Tok Pisin* and then translated them into English. First, I read and re-read the transcript several times to capture the essence of the participant. Second, I noted and highlighted important points from the texts. I then used the English scripts to develop participants' narratives as single cases. I started the process with the transcript of the first participant and followed the same process for the other four participants. Rich complex narratives were uncovered during the process of developing participants' life stories/ narratives (Gibson, 2012; Hamilton & Atkinson, 2009). My reflections were later placed at the end of the narratives (Gee, 2016). The narrative development included a brief background of each participant, their personal story, which included the participants own voice (direct quotes) on their views and experiences of daily life, and my reflection at the end of each narrative.

FINDINGS

As part of a larger study, four salient superordinate themes (see Table 1), also understood as major domains or main themes, emerged from the women's narratives (Walsh-Gallagher, Sinclair, & Mc Conkey, 2012). Each theme area was considered in relation to the individual's views and experiences.

Superordinate Themes
Perceptions of self, related to disability Positive Perceptions/Affirmation Marginalization Violence

Table 1: Superordinate themes (major domains) Adapted from Yenas (2019, p. 89)

Table 2 links the superordinate themes to constituent themes that emerged from the narratives. As the focus of this article is on the experiences of women through a relational lens, this section

examines the superordinate themes of *Perceptions of self, related to disability* and Positive Perceptions/affirmation.

The *views and experiences* of daily life for women living with visible, physical disabilities.		
Perceptions of self, related to the disability	Self-identity Negative self-perception Responding to lack of acceptance	Identity Negative-perceptions
Positive Perceptions/ Affirmation	Affirmation at home Participants find acceptance Affirmation in community Affirmation about being disabled Hopes and aspirations Resilience	Affirmation Acceptance
Marginalization	Stigma and Discrimination Lack of opportunity	Discriminated against Exclusion
Violence	Abuse	Verbal Physical Emotional

Table 2: Superordinate themes (major domains) and constituent themes (Adapted from Yenas, 2019, p. 89)

SUPERORDINATE THEME ONE:

PERCEPTIONS OF SELF, RELATED TO THEIR DISABILITY

Constituent Theme 1: Self-identity

Four of the participants identified themselves as *women living with disability* and indicated that they were more or less comfortable being seen this way.

> God made me disabled (Angie)

> I view myself, as a person living with a disability (Rebecca)

> My name is Gee. I am a disabled woman (Gee)

> I live as a disabled woman - I accept it (Amber)

Essie however did not see herself as a woman with a disability. This could be because of her cognitive disability, as she seemed much younger in her outlook than the others.

Constituent Theme 2: Negative self-perceptions

While participants accepted *disabled* as a description of themselves, they were not always happy about how they were viewed by others in relation to the term.

> I see others stare at me and make me feel I have a disability – I feel different (Rebecca)

Being seen as different could result in feelings of discomfort.

> Having a woman with disability like me brings shame - they do not want me to live with them - I felt so bad because they are not the same as me; I am different from them (Angie)

> I am different to my sisters (Gee)

Putting up with these feelings and accepting that their difference caused comments of discomfort was a strategy used by the women to cope.

> I do not bother telling them to stop … I feel that, it is not ok. [But] I do not tell anyone [about how I feel]. I just listen … (Amber)

The effects of being seen as *other/disabled/different* in relation to non-disabled people affected how the women were treated at home.

> In the family home, they mistreat me (Gee)

> My brother in-law built my house separately from his family because his wife does not accept me (Angie)

Support from other family members was not always there.

> Last year, we [Sophie, my younger sister and I] had a very big argument and I left the house to live with Betty [a close friend] (Gee).

Ill-treatment for looking different could also be found in the local community.

> They call me S - they say I am a snail that crawls (Angie)

Constituent Theme 3: Responding to lack of acceptance

Sometimes the women were able to answer the taunts they received.

> Sometimes I get angry and ask them, "how do you feel when you call me such names, do you feel good?" They will just laugh (Rebecca)

> When I want to rebuke them, they say, "you don't have a full arm, you hand is short, that's why we call you that" (Amber)

But it wasn't easy knowing what the response was likely to be. Remaining silent was also a way to get through unpleasant incidents.

> When it becomes too difficult to bear, I will just sit [and not say anything] (Gee)

The women were often left emotionally distressed when such incidents happened and in some instances this (triggered a dangerous mental state).

> This makes me feel so sad at heart and makes me think of committing suicide, but I keep it all to myself and move around with a heavy heart (Angie).

The findings from this research suggest that participants identified themselves as disabled and they had self-perceptions that were mostly negative. They seemed vulnerable due to high levels of self-doubts and how they responded to lack of acceptance from others. Their sense of self was

strongly influenced by other people's views and assumptions about disability and disabled people. Their narratives indicate that beliefs and perceptions impact the way that people behave towards them. As previous research also suggests, these beliefs and perceptions are influenced by socio-cultural practices in PNG society and have a significant influence on the widely held beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions towards disability and disabled people (Byford & Veenstra, 2004; Kuzma, Ramalingam & Karthikeyan, 2016; Mapsea, 2006). These are evident in the day-to-day experiences of the participants in this study. These perceptions continue to disadvantage them in their communities. In response to a lack of acceptance in the wider community, participants seem to have accepted that they are different. Being different and being seen as different developed a new, negative identity for these women, a finding that is supported by Hans and Patri's (2003), research. How being seen as different might become an asset rather than a liability for disabled women in PNG is a question for further research

SUPERORDINATE THEME TWO: POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS: AFFIRMATION

Constituent Theme 1: Affirmation at home

As the participants' narratives reveal, many talked about what they do at home. All spoke positively about completing daily activities and their competence in achieving the set tasks.

> I do my own cooking; I scrape the coconut [dried] and [extract coconut] milk [from its flesh] and prepare greens [independently] … I do my own laundry …[I] chop fire wood … I clean around the house … I conduct these [daily chores/activities, all] by myself (Angie)

> I walk independently … I do the dishes and I do my own laundry (Essie)

> I fetch water from a tank, which is close by (Rebecca)

> I hold the axe in one hand [left hand], and lift it to break firewood, scrape coconuts (Amber)

All participants contributed to the running of the house and they highlighted that these tasks were achieved independently of support from others. All took pride in these achievements and the contribution they made to their daily existence.

> I am a hard-working woman … I do most things independently (Gee)

> I do these things to sustain my living … (Angie)

However, at times the lack of support from others for the more difficult tasks was felt.

> I do everything by myself … It is difficult (Amber)

Constituent Theme 2: Participants find acceptance

In general, participants have found acceptance in certain groups in the community. While Angie spoke of difficulties related to living with her family, others talked about being accepted by family members without reservation.

> I move around with them [family]. I like all of them (Essie)

> I live with my mother and grandmother. I feel happy … we live together (Rebecca)

> I have a good relationship with my family members. My family accepts me. My in-laws come and help … (Amber)

When living with family became tense, Gee was able to go to stay with a (non-disabled) friend who lived close by. This relationship, with a person Gee considered as *a family member*, was very affirming for her.

> To find peace, I usually walk to Betty's [a close friend] place — that is when I am most happy. I stay with her for as long as I want before returning (Gee)

Participants are most happy when they leave the home environment because that is when they feel happy and are not bothered about what happens at home.

> When I leave home and go out … ooooh, … I forget about everything that happens in the family home (Gee)

> When I leave home, come out and meet other people … I feel happy. Like sitting with you now and talking, I am happy, and I appreciate this because it helps gives me space to think positively (Angie).

Constituent Theme 3: Affirmation in community

All the women participated in a number of positive and fulfilling activities in their local communities. For example, selling products at the market; such an activity allowed the women to maintain at least some independence from family, as these statements reveal.

> I sell things at the market … betel nuts and mustard (Amber)

> I make bilums [string bags] (Angie)

For Essie, affirming experiences included being able to move freely within the community. She took great pride in this achievement in particular.

> I can get on the bus (Essie)

Other highly valued activities for the women included attending church.

> I am a female youth of St Philomena group … that is the only group I am in the community (Gee)

Rebecca was the only participant who had the opportunity to complete primary school education. She spoke positively about this opportunity. Her comment reflects the love, care, and support her family provided to enable her to complete her primary school education.

> I attended Mango Primary School; I completed Grade 8 (Rebecca).

The participants' narratives also revealed that participants have positive perceptions about themselves, both as women and as people with disabilities. They are self-motivated as much as possible; they live independent lives and are able to sustain themselves. In addition, two participants communicated messages of affirmation as disabled women. All the participants spoke positively about completing daily activities and their competence in achieving their set tasks. The finding that participants were independent in performing the daily activities at home engendered feelings of confidence and self-appreciation of completing daily tasks with independence and competence. In PNG, women are viewed as key producers in their families, thus, these examples, and the narratives are not uncommon in PNG where life for women in rural remote communities is difficult and challenging (Hinton & Earnest, 2009; Mikhailovich, Pamphilon, Chambers, Simeon, & Zapata, 2016). This finding is supported by existing literature on women with disabilities which indicates that regardless of their limitations, women with disabilities adopt positive measures in their own ways and make significant contributions in their communities (Boylan, 1991; Nosek, Robinson-Whelen, Hughes, & Mackie, n.d.; Spratt, 2013). However, as Spratt (2013) also shows, their contributions are not always acknowledged or recognized.

DISCUSSION

The women's narratives reveal a complex picture of the lives of women with disabilities in PNG. The narratives gathered are empowering despite the difficult challenges the women encounter in their communities. The stories reveal the values of courage, strength, and determination. Their situations compared to able-bodied women are severe and complicated, yet their stories revealed hope, determination and resilience. Both able and disabled women develop resilience and self-reliance. This helps them provide for themselves and their families (Hinton & Earnest, 2009, 2010). While this is the case for all women, women with disabilities can find it hard to adhere to the day-to-day lifestyle and situations because of the already difficult, challenging and complex situations in their communities.

From this study, it can be argued that women with disabilities in PNG are marginalized in different areas of their lives. The experience of being marginalized is evident in the participants' narratives because they are viewed as *other/disabled/different* compared to non-disabled people, as the word *different* seemed to have appeared in all the stories except, Essie's. It is clearly evident in the narratives that the participants experience stigma and discrimination. Throughout the interviews, participants spoke about the type of treatment they received from family and members of the wider community which made them feel different. The feeling of being stigmatized and discriminated against generates low self-esteem, doubt, and a lack of acceptance. This has caused the participants to not recognize their value as women, as people and as members of the community. Literature on women with disabilities confirms these accounts (Stubbs & Tawake, 2009). Indeed, when further compounded with factors such as socio-cultural beliefs and practices, about gender and disability, women with disabilities experience multiple forms of discrimination (Stubbs & Tawake, 2009; United Nations Enable, n.d.)

Also, the way they are treated has a negative impact on their daily experiences. People's perceptions, actions and attitude towards them have affected them in many ways. Several other studies also confirm that women with disabilities are marginalized in society (Barranti & Yuen, 2008; Sands, 2005; Spratt, 2013). Existing literature also suggests that women with disabilities in countries identified as "developing" are one of the most marginalized groups (Boylan, 1991; RI/ Global Work Women and Disability [RI/GWWD], n.d.; United Nations Enable, n.d.). Local beliefs, norms, and understandings, have a great impact on how able-bodied people perceive, treat, and react towards people with disabilities (Kuzma et al., 2016; Mapsea, 2006). As this study shows, all the women reported experiencing verbal humiliation through name-calling and labels describing how they moved around.

I found that these five women with disabilities in rural communities in PNG were bound up in a complexity of experiences. Socio-cultural beliefs and perceptions strongly constitute the attitudes that abled- bodied people have towards them (Mapsea, 2006). Although, the value of women is gradually becoming more recognized and respected in PNG society today, the perception that society holds towards women as subordinates or inferior to men still prevails (McNae & Vali, 2015; Vali, 2010; Yawi, 2012).

The women's narratives also reveal that they are socially excluded in various aspects of life. It is clear that "social exclusion is a complex concept that encompasses a variety of interconnected process and problems" (Hutchison, Abrams, & Chritian, 2007, p. 30). Yet, all the participants experience exclusion in slightly different ways. The narratives revealed that it is important to maintain the value of kinship and bonding at the community level as well as the need to

strengthen relationality (PIFS, 2013). In this way a sense of connectedness, and the bonding of kinship that people in Pacific societies have (PIFS, 2013) could create a relational space to support women- who live with disability to be respected for who they are; and their contributions recognized. This will also strengthen the relationships that women with disabilities have with their families, clans, and in their communities (Fa'avae, 2018). This view is supported by Paulson (2018) who argues that despite differences, Pacific Islanders have commonalities: including "their beliefs in principles of obligation, reciprocity, greater good, and strong family; and community ties and Christianity and spiritual connections to ancestors, the land and the ocean" (Paulsen, 2018, p. 40). The relationships and the sense of connectedness in the local community space can also help to dismantle attitudinal barriers and perceptions that people have towards women and disability in the local community spaces.

The findings of this study have indicated the need to conduct further research towards improving the situation for women with disabilities in rural community spaces by ensuring that they participate in activities that help strengthen the connections at relational spaces such as within the community. Further research needs to be conducted with men and children living with disabilities to help them understand the value of relationships and connections within their communities. Research is also needed to explore the views of able-bodied people about their practices towards people with disabilities in their communities. This could strengthen our understanding of the value of being engaged in relational spaces.

CONCLUSION

Women with disabilities "are often perceived as weak and dependent" (Morris, 1993, as cited in McDonald, Keys, & Balcazar, 2007, p. 147), a position that can impact on how they feel about themselves, their identity, and their value in their community. As this study has shown the way women with disabilities feel about themselves is strongly determined by other people's attitudes, actions and behaviour towards them (as discussed earlier).

This research has explored the meanings of the lived experiences of daily life for the participants that emerged from the narratives about their individual experiences. In accordance with the principles and guidelines of the IPA approach, this research has provided authentic information and insights into the views and lived experiences of five women with disabilities in rural communities in PNG. It has also shown how the socio-cultural context strongly influences the quality of life for women with disabilities and affects how these women experience their physical disability and day- to-day functions. This article therefore argues that it is important to engage women with disabilities in a relational space, such as the community, in order to strengthen the relationships and connections that are established as the community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

The author was awarded a New Zealand scholarship to do her post graduate studies at the University of Waikato in New Zealand in mid-2016. She completed her master's degree in Disability and Inclusion studies in early 2019. Prior to commencing studies, she worked as a primary school teacher, special education teacher and a teacher's college lecturer in her home country, Papua New Guinea. Her research explored the views and experiences of daily life for women living with visible, physical disabilities in rural Papua New Guinea. She is passionate about making a difference in the lives of those who are marginalized by disrupting their silence. Her research aims to give voice to women with disabilities through the voices of her research participants.

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