CHAPTER 16

A REVIEW OF THE EMERGING INDIGENOUS PACIFIC RESEARCH, 2000–2018

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ABSTRACT

This chapter offers a selective review of the emerging Indigenous Pacific educational research from 2000 to 2018. The Pacific region is home to many and various cultural groups, and this review is an opportunity to celebrate the consequent diversity of thought about education. Common threads are used to weave this diversity into a set of coherent regional patterns. Such threads include the regional value to educational research of local metaphor, and an emphasis on relationality or the state of being related as a cornerstone of education, both in research and as practice. The relationship between indigenous educational thought and formal education in indigenous contexts is also addressed. The review pays attention to educational research centered in home islands and that which focuses on the education of those from Pacific Islands in settler societies since connections across the ocean are strong. Because of the recent history of the region, developments are fast paced and ongoing, and this chapter concludes with a sketch of research at the frontier. Set within the context of an area study, the chapter concludes by suggesting what challenges the region has to offer in terms of re-thinking the field of international and comparative education.

Keywords: Indigenous; Pacific; education; research; relationality

INTRODUCTION

A review of developing indigenous thought focused on education in a particular region is an opportunity to consider the dynamic balance between globalization and contextualization, a key element of international and comparative education (Wiseman & Anderson, 2013). Since one aim of the field is to learn by comparison, a bounded discussion of the specific offers a particular set of wisdoms and experiences which can illuminate others, through both shared pattern and uniqueness. For, by "learning about other peoples and cultures, comparative education offers a lens for scholars to better know themselves" (McLaughlin, 2018, p. 213). Although area reviews are by nature place-based, as Wiseman and Anderson (2013) warn, using a geographic idea as a way of bounding a review is problematic, for "the boundaries and characteristics of educational spaces and of previously defined areas are shifting – often quite rapidly" (p. 21).

In the case of the Pacific region, European-imagined boundaries were set through cartographic conventions which ignore the connective experiences of those who live on and with the fluidity of the ocean (Hau'ofa, 1994). The relevance of the term Pacific is disputed (e.g., Airini et al., 2010; Ferris-Leary, 2013; Māhina, 2008), sometimes viewed as a colonial leftover. This is with some justification. Historically, the body of water, Pacific, was named as a result of three distances – in comparison to other far-off bodies previously experienced by Magellan (Gulliver, 2011) and in a language from another continent. Further, the naming was done in possible ignorance of the actual location of what is now recognized as the world's biggest ocean (Freeman, 2013). Despite this, we adopt the term Pacific as the most frequently used descriptor for both the region and the ocean in this review while acknowledging the implications and claims of other namings.

We commence this chapter by providing a brief discussion of the characteristics of the Pacific region. We imagine the needs and potential of comparative education in the region to justify the usefulness of a motutapu (Johansson-Fua, 2016), an island-defined sacred space for renegotiation and re-understanding of ideas, interests, and practices from diverse places. Then, we offer a contextualizing account of the development of a Pacific Indigenous research paradigm (Sanga, 2004) as a platform from which negotiations might securely develop. Next, we locate a helpful starting point for a discussion of the relationship between indigenous thought and educational developments in the region through an account of the Tree of Opportunity. This section refers to a specific point in space and time in which Pacific scholars sought, through articulation, to clear past assumptions and attitudes so that a new direction and a new set of relationships could develop. Following this, we examine the genealogical nature of framework developments in the region as one point of coherence through which scholars of comparative education may approach Pacific Indigenous knowledge. A second kind of coherence, re-occurring patterns of concern across Pacific Indigenous research frameworks, is then offered. In both cases, our concern is to offer some navigating

points for discussions to be developed in the space of comparative education in the Pacific region. The chapter concludes with a review of cutting-edge research discussed in three sections: advocacy, developmental, and transformational research.

A recent offering in the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education* which focused on the Pacific region (McLaughlin, 2018) discussed the value of "problematizing the focus and practice of our scholarship by decolonizing our epistemologies and methodologies in comparative education research" (p. 226). This acknowledges a history in which comparative educational thought was tacitly value-loaded and not celebratory, a shadow which remains on our horizon. The same chapter stated how urgent it is:

> that Pacific Islanders reclaim their systems of education and navigate uncharted waters of global agendas and maintenance of knowledge systems and cultural values in specific island countries, within Oceania and abroad. (p. 227)

A claim of this nature values coherent local knowledge as way forward, but reminds of the need for disentanglement from the imposed judgments of the past. This chapter takes up both of these challenges by honoring the deeply rooted contributions made by many writers and by reviewing some of the work which continues to be done in bringing indigenous ideas to new contexts so that future negotiations can occur.

In this chapter our aim is not to provide an exhaustive account of literature or ideas but to follow lines of development and offer connections. We seek to examine relationships and relatedness in educational thinking, research and practice in the Pacific region in a way which honors what the region has to offer. Much thinking in the Pacific region understands the world through a relational lens (e.g., Anae, 2010; Gegeo, 2001; Helu-Thaman, 2008; Ka'ili, 2005; Reynolds, 2016; Sanga & Reynolds, 2019; Vaioleti, 2006; Wendt, 1999). We honor these various traditions by adopting a methodological perspective which brings discourse about relationality, the state of being related, to the fore. We seek to provide a glimpse into how Pacific ideas are challenging conventional educational thinking. In this, what was brought to the region as an international practice from distant shores is reconfigured so that, by way of return, others can learn through comparative practice.

The relationship between indigenous thought and Western ideas in education is a reoccurring theme in the chapter. This relationship is the critical and vital site of comparativism-on-the-ground in Pacific education. Relevant Western practices in Pacific education include formal education and formal research, although of course education and research are, in other forms, activities indigenous to the region (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001; Sanga, 2014b). The chapter may be helpfully thought of as an act of walking backwards into the future (Māhina, 2008), a movement which articulates the relevance of the way people have lived sustainably for aeons to the present, a time characterized by change. Drawing attention to some of the strands of indigenous thinking in the region, this chapter is an act of weaving a celebration.

CONTEXT: THE PACIFIC

The Pacific Ocean is the world's largest. It covers approximately one-third of the earth's surface and is larger than the combined land mass of the planet. Although it is home to numerous indigenous cultural groups as well as settlers of various origins, some have drawn attention to the region as connected through identity, belonging, and common interest.

Crocombe's (1976) *Pacific Way* draws on both cultural and positional aspects of relatedness, "a product of common environmental and cultural experience" (p. 38) comprised of positive relational actions which express common interest as fictive kin (McGavin, 2014). With similar focus, Hau'ofa (1994) also stresses the value of a pan-Pacific approach. Confronted by relational "belittlement" (p. 149) in a post-colonial world, he says, "[t]here is a gulf of difference between viewing the Pacific as *islands in a far sea* [as European explorers] and as *a sea of islands*" (p. 152) in which one belongs. Pacific relational and interactional links have migratory roots in the mists of time, evident in mythology (Ka'ili, 2005) and language (Wendt, 1999). Trade and exchange crossed present political boundaries long before Europeans drew them. A Pacific identity of routes (Whimp, 2008) not roots, of relationships rather than institutions, understands the region as a space for difference as well as a frame for connection.

A focus on connection can also be seen in recent developments within the field of comparative education. Through a process of renaming, the Australian and New Zealand Comparative and International Education Society (ANZCIES) became the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES), signaling a reset of relationships and focus in the regional body (McLaughlin, 2018). Through this change, the Pacific region was imagined as an Oceanic relational space in which "indigenous researchers and other Oceanic research-ers together develop the research approaches, methodology, ethical protocols" (Coxon & McLaughlin, 2017, p. 16) required to enhance Pacific education. Thus, part of the mission of OCIES is to articulate cultures, systems of traditional knowledge and long-trusted traditional processes, acknowledging the "ocean in us" (Hau'ofa, 2000, p. 32) in relation to global ideas about what it is to be modern and developed (Coxon & McLaughlin, 2017).

As stated, as part of this re-imagination, Johansson-Fua (2016) offers the Polynesian cultural reference of a motutapu, a sacred island. This is "a place of sanctuary from internal wars or… a place for negotiations, a middle ground, a place for rejuvenation as well as a place to launch new journeys" (p. 36). Imagining comparative education as a motutapu provides an actionable hybrid space ded-icated to the development of the kind of knowledge which can well serve the peoples of the region. This is similar to other ideas of sacred spaces in which dialogue can occur in order to develop relationships. For example, the idea of a negotiating space (Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009a, 2009b) in which to develop and configure relationships between knowledge traditions has been proposed in health, building on a structure proposed in bio-ethics (Hudson, Roberts, Smith, Hemi, & Tiakiwai, 2010; Hudson, Roberts, Smith, Tiakiwai, & Hemi, 2012). A motutapu focuses on the presence of interested people as bringers of their ideas and concerns as well as on ideas themselves.

A motutapu is a place where people can talanoa, talk in a space where the aim is increased mutual understanding if not agreement. Talanoa, a tradition which can be found in multiple Pacific Island cultures understands space and relationality such that in "a good Talanoa encounter, *noa* creates the space and conditions. *Tala* holistically intermingles researchers' and participants' emotions, knowing and experiences" (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 24). While talanoa may be a common practice for many Pacific groups, a motutapu is not an ordinary talanoa space. A motutapu assumes that it is a meeting point of different cultures, ways of being and agenda (Johansson-Fua, personal communication, March 21, 2019). The OCIES motutapu is a specific example of an intercultural place where relationally focused meetings and learnings can take place. It is with this reference and goal in mind that this chapter unfolds.

PACIFIC THEORY: PARADIGMATIC THINKING

Like all educational research, that undertaken in the Pacific region is underpinned by theory. Pacific theory has been on the move as a developing field for some time. Sanga and Reynolds (2017) provide an account of the way the field has advanced from which we here draw a summary. This process of development is significant for this chapter because it explains to some extent the vibrancy and creativity at work in the field, its fast-developing nature and the significance of relationally locating new developments in the frame of existing wisdom. Pacific theory is a crucial element in what Pacific people bring to Pacific education and thereby into negotiation with the Western ideas embedded in current education systems. As such, it should be celebrated.

Although research as a practice is not new to Indigenous Pacific knowledge communities, the space for a Pacific Indigenous Research paradigm (Sanga, 2004) in the academy was foreshadowed by developments in post-modernism (Helu-Thaman, 2003), Kaupapa Māori theory from Aotearoa New Zealand, and feminism (Vaioleti, 2013). However, just after the turn of the millennium, Sanga (2004) observed that some who were involved in Pacific research seemed to lack confidence. This was evidenced by frequent justificatory reference to literature from outside the region, the effect of which was that the "naming" of Pacific research came through distant voices.

Whether this situation was the result of writers' educational backgrounds, lack of confidence, experiences of belittlement or some other cause(s), Sanga issued a challenge to the field to change the location or direction of its naming. Following Hau'ofa (1994), and seeking to embrace the creative tension between connection and separation in the region, Sanga proposed a stance which assumed that "Pacific understandings of reality, knowledge generation and values stand on their own as the bases of a research paradigm to serve local Pacific interests without justificatory reference" (Sanga & Reynolds, 2017, p.198) from elsewhere. As a paradigm, the umbrella of Pacific Indigenous research is capable of honoring unique indigenous thought from many cultural groups while simultaneously valuing common experiences, concerns, connecting threads and practices where

they exist. Reference to global theories is justified by their usefulness and helpfulness rather than their long standing in an academy from which much Pacific (and other) thought was historically excluded.

Through hard work and careful thought, Pacific theory has advanced. In a relatively young field, as might be expected, some diversification of understanding exists (e.g., Tunufa'i, 2016) and some new links are being forged (e.g., Suaalii, 2017). However, through "the passage of time, identity continues to be negotiated in a journey which requires clarity, transparency and reflexivity" (Sanga & Reynolds, 2017, p. 201). It is that identity journey which this chapter seeks to reflect upon. It is important to realize that holistic views of society and the world promote theory which does not silo education so that areas such as health, education, leadership, and so on are theorized in integrated ways. Where values, metaphor, relationships, and so on are featured in this review, they offer thinking tools to comparative educationalists as much as to others. With a secure identity, Pacific theory and the indigenous educational thinking framed by it has much to offer.

A KEY MOMENT: THE RETHINKING MOVEMENT

Perhaps a key catalytic moment in the deliberate re-negotiation of the relationship between bodies of knowledge in Pacific education is recorded in the collection *Tree of Opportunity* (Pene, Taufe'ulungaki, & Benson, 2002). This is the written output of a 2000 colloquium on Re-Thinking Pacific Education, hosted at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, and contributed to by educational thinkers and practitioners from across the region. This collection of separate papers is a reminder that Indigenous Pacific educational "thought" is not only a noun, but also a record of a verb and community: people who think from their own Indigenous positions and the learning-centered relationships between them constitute the field. One way of understanding the re-thinking movement is to see it as critically and deliberately clearing the space from the clutter (Efi, 2005) of past practice for a motutapu of re-negotiation.

The Suva colloquium, which was supported by New Zealand Aid and Victoria University of Wellington, developed a Pacific contextualization for widespread concerns about relevance and effectiveness in education with the aim of examining the values, assumptions, and beliefs, which underpin education in the Pacific. It also sought to foment action by exploring relevant new directions. The depth and urgency of the inquiry reflected frustration borne of previous foci on quality, access, and equity in education. Such issues are important, but secondary to the fundamental issues of what education is and why it is (or what it is for). McLaughlin (2018) offers a helpful historical account of the colloquium and its relationship to further forums such the Rethinking National Education Directions conference in Vanuatu in 2003 and the Vaka Pasifiki Educational Conference in Honiara (Toumu'a, 2017) in 2016. Here, we offer a brief relational account.

Connections are at the heart of the organic growth-based *Tree of Opportunity* metaphor. This relates the soil of the past, the elements of the present, and the

fruit of the future in a unity. Although new material can be grafted onto the body of an established tree, sustainability comes from the depths of the root system and the integrity with which soil and tree are bonded. A well-bonded relationship between education and local understandings of the world is likely to produce nourishing fruit over a long period of time. However, ineffective education, a symptom of a poorly configured relationship "between the values promoted by formal western schooling… and those held by Pacific communities" (Pene et al., 2002, p. 1) is likely to produce restricted amounts of fruit of limited value. Thus, in Pacific education, resolving relational issues is key.

Unfortunately, reviewing the situation in 2002, symposium members found poorly configured relationships at the heart of Pacific education, perhaps most easily visible in structural terms. In the view of participants, Pacific people lacked ownership of the education process due to imposed or donor sourced values, visions and priorities (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002). For example, the non-inclusive values embedded in the progressively exclusionary nature of Western pyramidical educational systems mediates against education as a shared resource. In addition, participants noted that Pacific education systems, like many others, have been:

> structured in such ways that create an adversarial relationship between a privileged framing of *modern* and *knowledge* and a non-Western *Other* something else, sidelined as traditional or indigenous… meant as the object to be displaced. (Menefee & Asino, 2014, p. 31)

In this way, not only people but ideas and frameworks are also excluded from education with insufficient justification. A clear and strong relationship between education and sustainability is unlikely where the relationships between people, their cultural reference points and social sustainability are poorly configured.

The symposium sought to provide a forum for the propagation and development of the already present seeds of Pacific ideas for education using the tree metaphor to indicate that Pacific roots of "processes, skills, arts, crafts, institutions, languages, values, beliefs, histories and worldviews" (Pene et al., 2002, p. 3, punctuation added) could nourish an appropriate and individualized local education, enriched rather than colonized by "new grafted elements" (p. 3) from other places. One embodiment of this is the construction of a "choice of pathways" (Taufe'ulungaki, 2002, p. 20) for Pacific educational systems, to replace a more-or-less unitary pattern of education derived from distant places, but emulated and repeated by Pacific people (McLaughlin, 2018) despite political independence, perhaps in the absence of clearly articulated alternatives. Proposed elements of choice, which re-configure the relationships surrounding education by questioning the nature of education itself, include an outcomes-based assessment of education. This has potential to contribute to "cultural survival and continuity" (Thaman, 2002, p. 27) by preparing students to behave and perform in culturally appropriate ways as well as to gain knowledge of subject matter. This re-understands formal education not primarily as a producer of human capital for the economic system, but as an element in cultural sustainability and/or survival (Nabobo, 2002). As aspects of the "epic search for relevance of school… to life" (Teaero, 2002, p. 74) in the Pacific, these features imagine a more harmonious and

productive relationship between local and other knowledge systems. This relationship provides nuance to any comparative work.

Although some (e.g., McLaughlin, 2018; Van Peer, 2006) value the rethinking movement as engendering effective initiatives, making space for the capacities of Pacific people and for a wider and more representative Pacific voice to direct change in decolonizing ways, others offer critique. The re-thinking as represented by the *Tree of Opportunity* is appraised by Māhina (2008) as failing to "make effective formal, substantial and functional links between model and reality" (p. 74). Burnett (2007) finds uncritical, homogenizing, essentializing, and dichoto-mizing origin-based "pedagogies of cultural difference" (p. 261) underpin aspects of the re-thinking movement. A focus on difference may erase the complications offered by mobile, multi-layered societies. However, difference can also be used strategically (Puamau, 2006) as a thinking tool; a heuristic purposefully adopted but not understood as fact. Such a heuristic can promote attention to the configu-ration of different knowledges, their intersections, overlaps, dialogues, purposes, and aspect-focused distances from each other. Comparative education values the articulation of difference within a nuanced multi-leveled approach because it embraces "an argument to recognize diverse epistemologies and ways of being" (Menefee & Asino, 2014, p. 31). As Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) illustrate, introduced (or different) ideas and activities can be brought close to people when understood through local values and by reference to everyday experience. In the re-negotiation of relationships required by Pacific education, ideas which speak from specific (indigenous) perspectives are a key element required for critical encounters.

INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORKS

A framework is a way of organizing the way people think about an area of life, especially one which is experienced on a day-to-day basis. As we move through our lives, cultural logic (Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009) provides us with links and directions, ways of understanding and conceptualizing. A framework is informed by the way a group generally organizes its thinking and, when expressed, can con-tribute to future organization in new contexts. In the Pacific region, the ongoing development of frameworks with which to research, practice, and think about education is a reflection of the paucity of local thought as a driver in the devel-opment of formal education in previous times. Framework development is an element in renegotiating the relationship between introduced ideas and practices about education and Pacific thought. Frameworks emerge as well-grounded indigenous knowledge is rendered to take its place in the relatively new, develop-ing and fluid context of Pacific education. As an emphatic statement of contribu-tion, various Indigenous Pacific frameworks represent the relational motutapu of Pacific educational renegotiation.

Pacific theoretical frameworks generally assert a holistic view of the world. As a consequence, many areas of life such as leadership, research, health, and educa-tion may all be navigated through a common framework. Values which underpin

a framework apply to practices and concepts, and, when understood in relation to each other, reflect a world view. Paying attention to framework development is useful in comparative education precisely for the way frameworks point to structures and logics which can be compared and contrasted since they embody varied contextually derived perspectives. Reflecting the diversity of the region within the Pacific Indigenous research paradigm, a number of frameworks have been developed. These are often articulated through metaphor. Although each framework can be seen as an individual construction, there is value in examining framework development in at least two ways so that points of access for those who wish to appreciate them can be established. Here we offer genealogical analysis and attention to recurrent patterns as starting points and points of coherence for those who wish to deepen their appreciation of Pacific Indigenous contributions to Pacific education.

Genealogical Development

A genealogical lens takes account of relatedness as well as individuality. This is because patterns of genealogical development reveal layers of shared understanding that point to the ways people interact as their ideas develop. Genealogical analysis of theory can be understood in many ways, such as those proposed by Foucault or Nietzsche (Rasche & Chia, 2009). Here, we benefit from the potential of a genealogical approach to focus on related theories as a family development (Babchuk, 2010), where individual strands have their own existence but also intersect. This position assumes that theoretical constructs are developed in time and space in a community whose members are cognizant of each other at one level or another. Genealogical analysis of this nature offers comparativism a way of mediating between the specific and the patterned, a movement which focuses on the significance of context as a key element in a more general field. In an expanded version of an early conceptualization (Sanga & Reynolds, 2017), we turn by way of example to the Tongan Kakala framework. This has developed over time at the hands of a number of researchers, but is also related across space to other non-Tongan frameworks.

Kakala was initiated by Tongan academic Helu-Thaman (1992, 2010). The model's metaphorical base draws attention to the process of weaving flowers into a garland. Such decorations are common across the region, each with its own process and origin. According to Helu-Thaman (2010), the Kakala framework "embodies physical, social and spiritual elements and reflects the integrated nature of indigenous epistemologies and knowledge systems" (p. 361). The three original processes are: toli, the collection of material to make a kakala; tui, the weaving or making of a kakala; and luva, the gifting of a kakala as a sign of peace, respect and/or love. Kakala is a philosophical and methodological construct useful for research and teaching (Helu-Thaman, 2010) which has been used in contexts such as research on sustainable livelihoods (Helu-Thaman, 2013), problem gambling (Vatuvei, 2017), and academic information literacy (McFall-McCaffery & Cook, 2016). It deals with the joint knowledge construction which is at the heart of education.

Where ongoing development occurs, refinements and additions attest to the robustness of a framework to respond adaptively to new contexts. In the case of Kakala, developments also suggest the embeddedness of the base metaphor in lived experiences; additional nuances can continue to be developed within a construct to reflect further aspects of the way people live their lives. A number of rounds of development of the Kakala model have occurred. Tongan academics Johansson-Fua and Taufe'ulungaki (Johansson-Fua, 2014) expand the Kakala framework to six phases by including additional steps: teu, a preparatory stage; malie, the appreciation by an audience of a performance; and māfana, "where we seek whether transformation, and application and sustainability of the trans-formation, has taken place" (Johannson-Fua, 2014, p. 55). The last two of these, derived from developments by Manu'atu (2001), work to expand to focus of the framework to embrace a wider sense of community.

The genealogical relationships which surround frameworks such as Kakala need not be limited to structural changes within a model. Other models developed in different spaces can be informed by prior decolonizing, localizing, and contextualized construction. For example, the Fijian Vanua framework was inspired by Kakala but also informed by Kaupapa Māori theorization (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). The word Vanua refers to a universal whole "inclusive of a chief or related chiefs, their people and their relationships, their land, spiritualities, knowledge systems, cultures and values" (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 142). The framework is supported by a philosophy of relatedness and connection:

> the interconnectedness of people to their land, environment, cultures, relationships, spirit world, beliefs, knowledge systems, values and God(s) and through Vanua is pivotal to the Fijian's identity and is the heart of his/her existence. (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 143)

Like Kakala, Vanua has also contributed to the development of other constructs (Meo-Sewabu, 2014).

Vanua shares with Kakala the imperative to ground research in local practice. Contextual nuance can be valued when research into matters such as educational re-thinking is conducted in ways recognizable to the people involved (Nabobo-Baba, 2013). In this way both frameworks make statements about appropriateness of approach and ask questions about the relationships between a researcher, their contextual connectedness, their understandings, and the kinds of research they are best equipped to undertake. This kind of thinking does not inhibit comparativism, but does demand accountability to the local as a support for the robustness of comparison. Genealogical thinking about frameworks developed by the Pacific community of indigenous scholars can help to avoid a sense of dazzlement in the face of what may seem to be a "web-like array" (Tunufa'i, 2016, p. 226) of theoretical constructs available to researchers, including comparativists, when attempting to learn in and from the region. Seeking the origins and familial relationships of a framework offers a pathway to respectful and deepened understanding as a basis for constructive and informed future dialogue.

Re-occurring Considerations

In addition to paying respect to genealogical developments in emerging Pacific Indigenous thought applicable to the study of education, attention to re-occurring considerations across constructs can reveal patterns of utility to comparativists. In this section, we present a limited number of fairly recent frameworks. These have been selected for differences in context. One has a Pan-Pacific application, one was developed from the context of a particular social group within one of the larger island states, while the third is at home within the social setting of a small island cultural group. Each has its own moment of being; pedagogy, ethnography, and health policy, respectively. However, when considered together some common themes of value to comparativists emerge. These themes offer sensitization for those engaged in the mototapu of comparative education. The frameworks themselves represent contextual indicative answers to the question of how indigenous knowledge might be organized in order to interface beneficially with Western forms of knowledge, while the themes may help those who travel to the mototapu to read such frameworks.

The first example, the i-Talitali framework (Lingam et al., 2017), was developed by a group of tutors to support engaged teaching and learning in the Pacific region within the context of a regional education provider. It offers a model of how the relationship between constructs from beyond the region, in this case Willison and O'Regan's Research Skills Development conceptualization (cited in Lingam et al., 2017), and local experiential knowledges can be usefully applied together. Doing so ensures that a critical contextual account can be made of the accessibility, usefulness and relevance of non-indigenous conceptualizations to Pacific students. The i-Talitali framework was developed in situ at the University of the South Pacific in an essentially urban setting in order to meet a specific need, but offers more general lessons for the way comparativists might negotiate the configuration and presentation of their work and ideas when seeking to serve indigenous interests in the Pacific region.

At the core of i-Talitali is the central metaphor of weaving which is intended to translate "research skills from abstract to complex ideas through reference to familiar cultural processes" (Lingam et al., 2017, p. 3) for Pacific tertiary students. However, as discussed in the context of the Kakala framework above, a key usefulness of metaphor is the presentation of the kind of layered complexity that allows for continual re-framing as understanding develops. The weaving metaphor carries the idea that weaving produces a product which is ranked according to form and construction, shaped in line with purpose, occasion, or intended recipient. The framework is constructed around a process, the steps of which identify how approaches required for success in an activity like research already exist within longstanding indigenous experience in other contexts. By way of example, the second step, "Find and Generate (Vakasaqaqara)" (p. 5), alludes in part to time in the research process through the need to invest time in the preparation and selection of suitable weaving materials. Similarly the fourth step, "Organise and Manage (Tuvana)" (p. 6), can be understood by reference to the application of

logic such as that used in the layering and construction of raw organic materials in mat construction. In these ways, knowledge from different origins is related.

As can be seen elsewhere in Pacific thought (Airini et al., 2010), the ethics of research imagined as i-Talitali invokes a motivation of community usefulness rather than researcher fascination as a key marker of ethical research; the research product is a gift for others rather than to oneself or one's career. A balance is established in the construction of the model between the specific and the general. The linguistic and cultural reference is i-Taukei (Indigenous Fijian), referencing the place in which the model was developed. However, the intended users and the wider application of the metaphor are regional, illustrating the way that both uniqueness and commonality can be accommodated. This acknowledges the understanding that relationships in the region are characterized by connection as well as separation (Hau'ofa, 1994). Thus, despite specific reference, the generality of the weaving metaphor promotes pedagogic usefulness among a diverse Pacific group.

The second example is the 'Iluvatu framework (Naisilisili, 2015). This framework was developed for an ethnographic study exploring indigenous knowledge and education at a village level (Naisilisili, 2012). The setting is a particular society in Fiji, the Cu'u. One aim of the framework is to provide an avenue through which Cu'u knowledge, "normally delegated as the 'other' knowledge" (p. 102), can be represented and valued in academic discourse. Developed by a Cu'u woman, the model is deeply contextual and, like Vanua, is an example of the kind of insider research which relies on a researcher's deep relatedness to the community. However, there is learning for others in many elements of this framework; ways of thinking about key aspects of research and education become visible in the way the framework articulates these in context.

The 'Iluvatu framework values the 'iluvatu mat, a specific and special large coarse woven artifact produced only by the women of Cu'u and the Udu Peninsula (Tarabe, 2015), "as a metaphor for the community values" (Naisilisili, 2015, p. 103) appropriate to guide fieldwork. Like the mat, the framework is restricted in provenance but instructive in ways of thinking about research. We summarize Naisilisili (2015) by saying that for this Fijian author, the 'iluvatu mat represents 'iluvatu ethical thinking of research which includes: understanding sample size related to the ethics of inclusivity and belonging which are embodied in a large mat; space as an expression of respect, both physical and relational when people are seated on the mat; quality stemming from a familial starting point for mat construction; subsequent structure as interlaced and layered; parameters or research boundaries as inclusive and wider than the thoughts of one person; the inclusion of the spiritual, as an element of hidden construction; and reciprocity – the researcher positioned herself as *lower* than others involved in the research, and as a satisfier of community needs.

As a result of reversing the research lens (Naisilisili, 2012) and approaching indigenous people as holders of the knowledge being sought about education, the study approaches the key relationship in Pacific education from an atypical direction, that of community as experts. As a consequence, findings include ideas about using community-based relational ties to teach curriculum content and

the reshaping of space in educational contexts to mirror village structure. An "inquiry method or va'ayaleyale" (Naisilisili, 2012, p. 212) involves the ability to "read gaps" (p. 141) in plans as a way of developing the kind of criticality favored by Burnett (2007). All of these features show how education can rest on a platform of values-based community understandings and practices, replacing the idea of knowledge displacement (Menefee & Asino, 2014) with a more dialogic approach.

As a third diverse example, Tuvaluan researcher Panapa (2014) presents Ola Lei, a framework which synthesizes practices and concepts relevant to many areas of Tuvaluan life, including health and education. The metaphor of te feke, an octopus, draws attention to the connectedness of the framework. The octopus, common on Pacific reefs, is a complex creature of an unusual shape, having many limbs or tentacles which, while separate, often intertwine. Panapa explains:

> In Tuvalu, an octopus is known for its intellect, agility, and ability to camouflage itself, making it difficult to catch. The intertwining tentacles can make the octopus form into different shapes, and tentacles can move and interlace in different directions. These features symbolise complexity and interrelatedness, which makes the octopus a good model for ola lei. (p. 112)

In the framework, the head of the octopus hosts four related qualities which combine with the tentacles of eight practices. The four qualities are "filemuu (harmoniousness, peacefulness), fiafia (happiness, contentment), malosi (fitness) and ola leva (longevity)" (p. 64, punctuation adjusted). The eight practices include "galue malosi (hard work), maumea or maukoloa (richness/wealth), poto faka-Tuvalu or logo (traditional skills and knowledge), Talitonu and Fakatuanaki ki te Atua (belief and faith in God)" (p. 80, punctuation adjusted). A key finding of direct relevance to education from the application of the framework is the poor configuration of school and societal understandings of health. Through schooling, the complex idea of ola lei, "the ideal physical or emotional state of a person or people" (p. 65), is merely represented as physical health. Panapa concludes, "It seems that schools are a bit narrow in teaching the students only the biomedical meaning of health or ola lei at the expense of a more holistic understanding" (p. 116). The potential of the Ola Lei framework in the education context, therefore, can include the restoration of a holistic understanding in the health area, both within the curriculum and in educational practices. Where this occurs, it is likely that community and school-supported understandings will be mutually supporting.

An interesting aspect of framework development in the case of Ola Lei is the familiarity of the feke as metaphor. The idea, suggested by a community elder, enabled the researcher to conceptualize more general thinking about a complex area of Tuvaluan understanding. However, it was also augmented by others in pedagogic interplay. For example, Panapa (2014) records that Tuvaluans, when presented with the framework, linked the octopus' ability to live in deep water and only occasionally put its head up to breathe as a way of thinking about Tuvaluans surviving in Tuvalu and in the diaspora under the duress of climate change. Similarly, suggestions were made regarding the creature's suckers. These can be understood as teaching that it is hard to escape some practices which are

not conducive to ola lei. Just as with the genealogical development of Kakala, the metaphorical basis of the Ola Lei framework is an invitation to knowledgeable people to contribute to the value of the construct. In this way, a framework based on significant but common knowledge and practice can become a shared enterprise.

A number of themes of relevance to those interested in comparative education emerge from considering these diverse examples of frameworks together. These themes should not be viewed as reductive but indicative, offered to comparative educationalists from the region and beyond as starting points for the development of a context in which to appreciate individual frameworks. If we are working at "problematizing the focus and practice of our scholarship by decolonizing our epistemologies and methodologies in comparative education research" (McLaughlin, 2018, p. 226), tentative analyses of this nature can act to support future dialogue within comparative education. Themes we touch on here involve space as specific and regional, the significance of metaphor, the centrality of ethics, educational re-thinking and holism.

Space

As discussed above, the Pacific region can helpfully be understood as a sea of islands (Hau'ofa, 1994) in which relationships provide the fabric of connection. While individual states and their territorial waters might present a patchwork of division across a map, embodiments of connections exist including institutions such as the University of the South Pacific (USP). Of the three frameworks discussed above, one, i-Talitali has a Pan-Pacific context and is built on a common activity, weaving. A second, 'iluvatu also uses weaving, referencing a highly specialized activity undertaken by one group within a larger island state. Aspects of Pacific Indigenous thought underpin each; what differs is context. Space can be understood as primarily a plane of division. However, if space in the Pacific is understood relationally, to be about connection and separation, what matters more is context. The construction of a mat (or a kakala) is not an abstract or isolated event but the production of an artifact, "a focus on weaving… for a particular purpose, occasion or person in mind" (Lingam et al., 2017, p. 4). In this way, attention is drawn to the relationships between context, including purpose, and framework so that neither is seen in isolation. Thus, when seeking to appreciate frameworks of various origin, it is important to pay attention to where a framework has come from, on what scale it seeks to be relevant, what it aims to achieve and for whom. Looking for re-occurring considerations can assist in this.

Metaphor

Each of the constructs discussed above rests on metaphor, a feature that also applies to other Pacific frameworks and methodologies (e.g., Maua-Hodges, 2000; Naufahu, 2018). One way to understand the significance of metaphor as a basis of framework construction is the desire to bridge between "thought worlds." This

desire acknowledges the everyday-ness of much of what happens in people's lives while concurrently indicating the way many aspects of Pacific life are excluded from education. A bridge is required where formal education as constructed in the region asks many participants to be academic migrants (Mason & Rawlings-Sanaei, 2014) in their own spaces on a daily basis. According to Burton (2012), formal education can act to separate communities from some aspects of social reproduction unless community values underpin educational practice. Hence, the use of metaphor is an opportunity to ground understandings in existing knowledge and, as a consequence, to expose educational practice to critique. This can happen when a relevant metaphor is shared and understood by a community or group, leading to the kind of metaphoric and framework extensions discussed earlier in relation to Kakala and Ola Lei. The use of metaphor is a common aspect of life in many places in the Pacific. Metaphor is capable of imparting information of many kinds; practical, ethical, and spiritual. Metaphor also provides a complex ground for negotiation and understanding in the motutapu space of comparative education because appreciating metaphor makes apparent much which is hidden through assumption.

Ethics

Ethics, how to behave in rightful and recognized ways, underpin the Pacific frameworks discussed earlier. For example, among the arms of the octopus of Ola Lei are references to faith and harmoniousness, and one aim of the framework as a whole is to describe a person's ideal emotional state. Similarly, the 'iluvatu metaphor informs the ethics of inclusion, consultation, and so on. Although it has more of a utilitarian purpose, the i-Talitali ethics of weaving as a process anchors the idea of research as a social activity, "working with the people of the Pacific… and not just about them" (Lingam et al., 2017, p. 8). In these ways, ethical considerations which are part of everyday life are central to the Pacific Indigenous frameworks described here. An approach which seeks the ethical basis of actions as a way of understanding their practical significance has potential for those who wish to serve Pacific education through comparative study. A technocratic approach to education that erases or assumes ethics can exacerbate the distance between students' experiences at home and at school.

Re-thinking

Another area of significance for comparative education in the Pacific region that embraces the metaphor of motutapu is re-thinking. As discussed above, the circumstances of education in the region mean that a central relational issue is the configuration of Western-origin and Pacific Indigenous thought. One aim of 'iluvatu is to articulate indigenous knowledge so that it can be active in academic discourse. An effect of Ola Lei is to challenge curriculum representations of health and well-being, resetting a narrow view to embrace a more holistic understanding. As an ethical act, bringing previously de-valued community knowledge into articulation with the practice of Pacific education can have the

effect of supporting education to be relevant beyond schooling. This in turn supports social sustainability through the "reversal" of the research lens (Naisilisili, 2015). Re-thinking is not replacement; sustainable education in the modern world requires well-configured relationships. There are examples of the unsuccessful creation of "second tier" education which feature elements of indigenous culture (Burnett, 2007) that remain undercut by an undisturbed "top tier" where education continues as if it were a pre-fab to be imported more-or-less wholesale from the West. A consideration of Pacific frameworks indicates the significance of ethics and values to re-thinking in Pacific education. These aspects can underpin the more tangible aspects of language, resources, and assessment. Through rethinking, elements of education such as the roles imagined for teachers, the use of space, the relationship between social stability and education, and classroom conduct can become subject to critical thought in discussions on the motutapu of comparative education.

Holism

Many Pacific cultures have a holistic worldview (Helu-Thaman, 1993) in which thinking does not "separate the physical, cultural and spiritual from one another, nor divide time into past, present and future" (p. 256). Embedded in the frameworks discussed earlier is a concern for relationality, the state of being related or connected. Each metaphoric representation links people to each other, connects aspects of life and imagines how knowledge which has been developed in past times remains relevant now for the development of new skills. For example, Ola Lei links thinking to action, the world of the sea to the world of the land, and the spiritual to all other spheres. i-Talitali links the practices of the village to the modern urban focus of developing research skills for the academy. Educational thinking which arises from 'iluvatu seeks to connect wisdom from the village to school-based practices. Those who seek to benefit from an appreciation of Pacific Indigenous frameworks in comparative education might do well to pay attention to relatedness as a feature of holism within the models they encounter.

In the past two sections we have offered ways of thinking about frameworks which have potential to positively configure the relationships between knowledge systems within and beyond the Pacific region. It is important for those who develop frameworks and for those who seek to appreciate them that a disciplined approach is adopted (Sanga & Reynolds, 2017) so that creativity is tempered with usefulness and contextualization balanced with robustness. However, given, for example, the number of language groups in the Pacific and the lack of access to the academy so far of people from many groups, a further expansion of Pacific Indigenous frameworks relevant to education might be expected. What matters within the motutapu of comparative education is that each is approached with respect and critical intelligence. The focus should not be on the exotic but on the process whereby in "learning about other peoples and cultures, comparative education offers a lens for scholars to better know themselves" (McLaughlin, 2018, p. 213).

THE CUTTING-EDGE

Having offered both genealogical and thematic accounts of Indigenous Pacific thought through an examination of model making, as a final act we turn to a brief exploration of the cutting edge of the creative relationally-focused field which is Pacific Indigenous theory. The intent of this section is to indicate the vibrancy and ongoing nature of the field to interested comparative educationalists.

This section is organized into three parts: Advocacy, developmental, and transformational research. First, the past two decades have seen much advocacy research, a kind of research which is primarily concerned with raising the profile of a key issue by highlighting the needs of a particular people and exposing an injustice in order to raise awareness (Marshall & Rossman, 2014) or as a way of participating in policy (Sankar, 2005). Examples of stakeholder involvement include the calls of Tongan researcher MacIntyre (2008) for the inclusion of Tongan language, culture and lived experiences in the education of Tongan children, and Samoa researcher Faamanatu-Eteuati (2011) for the inclusion of curricula consistent with the policy rhetoric on inclusive curriculum for all Samoan students. The school–Pacific context mismatch, a key element of this chapter, has been an education issue of concern during the review period. This can be represented by Manueli (2012) who points out a mismatch between the expected Information Communication Technologies (ICT) skill levels for Pacific Islands' students and their actual skill levels at tertiary institutions. Similarly, Samoan researcher Leaupepe (2011) points out the mismatches relating to the place of play for Samoan early childhood education students at home and at school.

Calls for inclusion of Pacific cultures into schooling have also been a common advocacy theme. Examples include Tongan Kalavite (2010) for the inclusion of Tongan culture into schooling and Ng Shiu (2011) who advocates for Samoan students in New Zealand university settings. Advocacy research has also critiqued key concepts (Samu, 2013), the educational frameworks used (Baba, Mahina, Williams, & Nabobo-Baba, 2004), and assumed educational understandings (Helu-Thaman, 2009). The vibrancy of this scholarship is marked by the use of indigenous metaphors of the kind discussed earlier, the centering of Pacific voices, a wide range of challenge to theoretical, methodological, and political issues, and an overwhelming uptake by a new generation of Pacific Islands' researchers.

In addition, the review period is also marked by considerable developmental research. By nature, developmental research is about progressive change over time (Grove, Hass, & Kibel, 2005). It shows the results of achievements of markers, associated stories and case studies of progress toward longer-term goals at different paces and in unpredictable ways. Three strands of developmental research can be cited as examples. Firstly, the review period saw the introduction of new and indigenous articulations of research such as by Samoan researcher Fouvaa (2011) who offered Fono a le nu'u (meeting) as a framework for the preservation of the Samoan language or Joskin (2013) of Papua New Guinea who proposed the Kibung (gathering) as a framework for curriculum implementation. Further,

Vaioleti (2006) offered Tongan talanoa as a research method and Nabobo-Baba (2008) of Fiji proposed the Vanua Research Framework, discussed earlier, for indigenous Fijian contexts.

Secondly, the review period also saw indigenous research frameworks increasingly being applied. Examples include Vudiniabola (2011) of Fiji who used Nabobo-Baba's Vanua Research Framework to examine the Fijian Nursing curriculum, and Cowley-Malcolm (2013) who explored the perceptions of Samoan parents about childhood aggression by using Samoan approaches including the Fa'afaletui (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005) framework.

Thirdly, developmental research during the review period included indigenous articulations of concepts and ideas such as by Sanga and Walker (2012) who introduced the Solomon Islands Malaita mind – ontological, cosmological, anthropological, epistemological, metaphysical, and axiological representations of indigenous Solomon Islands thought or Te Ava, Airini, and Rubie-Davies (2011) who explored the concept of a Cook Islands' culturally responsive pedagogy, offering the Tivaevae Framework as an analytical metaphor for teaching and learning responsively with Cook Islands students. In this developmental research, exploratory work has been attempted, using Indigenous Pacific languages as tools and Pacific Islands as new intellectual spaces of thinking.

Finally, the review period began to see examples of transformative research wherein Indigenous Pacific research's transformational potential is institutionalized within contextual policy, practice, and research environments. From a process perspective, transformation research shows a profound direction, departure or level of change (United Nations Development Program, 2011) and is achieved, sustained over time, and leads to improvements of people's lives.

Four strands of examples are given. Firstly, in relation to leadership development, in an edited volume by Chu, Rimoni, and Sanga (2011) visionary images of the future of Pacific leadership are shared by university students. These creations were inspired by the leadership stories of their post-graduate student counterparts. The use of collages and imagery is a novel idea for framing and applying leader/leadership development. Secondly, a number of edited volumes (Chu et al., 2011; Nabobo-Baba, Houma, & Veramu, 2008; Sanga & Chu, 2009) use storying as an approach for educational and leadership development. At the time of these projects, capturing the leadership stories of students (as opposed to status-position holders) was a novel approach, still uncommon in the popular literature on leadership development.

Thirdly, two representative examples of indigenous knowledge creation are cited: Sanga (2014a), who wrote of and for the Gula'alā people of Solomon Islands, using Gula'alā language and on the subject of indigenous ethics for the cultural sustenance and survival of this people; and Aporosa (2012) of Fiji who used Vanua Research Framework to create a post-development perspective on traditional-contemporary tensions in yagona consumption by Fiji teachers. These studies give recognition to place-based knowledge and local voices who must, themselves, find solutions to local challenges.

Fourthly, there are examples of work which shows direct influences on policy. These include Johansson-Fua (2012) who penned a research manual for Tongan

teachers that was adopted as a policy document by the Tongan Ministry of Education, and van Peer (2006) whose study on the Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative influenced the Pacific Strategy (Falepau & van Peer, 2010), a policy document of Whitireia Community Polytechnic in New Zealand. In these examples, Pacific Islands researchers at institutional, national, and regional levels have influenced transformational change through the way their work has been subject to uptake at individual, organizational and societal levels.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Having discussed the nature of relationality in the Pacific region both geographically and paradigmatically; examined a key moment in the development of the field of Pacific education; offered genealogy and patterning as ways of understanding the growth of the field; provided a tentative discussion of how models in the field that have developed and will continue to develop may be approached; and sketched the cutting edge of educational research in the field, this chapter concludes by suggesting what challenges the region has to offer the field of international and comparative education.

A relationality scholarship is gaining momentum in the Pacific region. While this review has introduced such a scholarship, this work is by no means a comprehensive or exhaustive coverage. A development yet to be undertaken is a systematic review to include post-graduate theses on Pacific education and research and writings in the grey literature by Pacific Islanders on local, national and regional education. By tracking this literature through relationality, one of the challenges to comparative education of this chapter – to make relationality a central unit of organization in future research – will be gain focus. Expecting education in the region to make sense solely in Western terms is unhelpful. However, given the social nature of humanity, a Pacific focus on relationality may be of benefit to comparative educationalists more widely.

Generally, relationality scholarship is regional and cooperative. A closer look, however, will show a sparseness of quality research articles and an uneven spread of work across the three regions of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. In time, future systematic and comparative reviews can be done. This unevenness challenges comparative education to think of education in the region and of the peoples in the region not only through what research already exists. Instead, those involved might also pay attention to the research which could exist and to those peoples currently excluded from the literature of the field. Any tendency to represent partial understandings of a field as the whole, or uncritically to transfer thinking from one context to another, constitutes continued colonialism. Equally, tendencies to essentialize or simplify should be avoided, perhaps in part by looking for the dynamics of uniqueness and commonality in and across the region. Those involved in the field should facilitate space at the table for an increasingly diverse representation so that learning can be further nuanced and beneficial to all. These concerns also apply beyond the Pacific region.

The future, however, looks bright given the vibrant and increasing capacity of the emerging Pacific research. In the short term, greater coordination and collaboration are needed by research institutions if the long term Pacific education research landscape is to support and lead the Pacific relationality scholarship. Extending the vision of Pacific relationality scholarship requires collaboration between experienced researchers and emergent researchers; comparativists can partner with located works, qualitative with quantitative, and conventional with indigenous. As well, the use of indigenous languages must be encouraged. The challenge given by the Pacific region to comparative education as a whole is thus to adopt a family and caring approach to those who constitute the field; the people who contribute to research. Emerging Indigenous Pacific research offers metaphoric, genealogical, relational, and strengths-based models which the field on a global scale may find inspiring.

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