Navigating the waters: Swimming in Samoa

Resistance, Negotiation, Acceptance and Identity

A reflexive examination of the socio-cultural influences on competitive swimming participation in Samoa

A thesis presented in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy in Sport, Health and Human Performance
at

The University of Waikato

by
SUZIE SCHUSTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2023

Abstract

Swimming and water-based activities are replete within Polynesian history through missionary accounts, ethnographic writings and historical accounts. However, formal competitive swimming began in the Oceania region in 1963, with Samoa joining in 2003. For the past two decades, the sport has grown slowly and with little explanation. A growing corpus of research has found that Samoa's historical landscape and its unique culture have influenced sport engagement, even though non-mainstream sports, such as swimming, have received less attention.

This thesis examines the enablers and constraints on swimming participation in Samoa. The research used a Samoan conceptual framework, the *Talanoa ile i'a*, that has an inherent multiperspectival design. This proverbial expression, coupled with the *talanoa* method, was used to capture the voices of 32 participants living in Samoa who were affiliated with swimming, competitive swimming and sports development. The data were condensed into unique stories, vignettes, and poetry using thematic analysis and creative nonfiction practices to construct a multiperspectival window into the life of a swimmer in Samoa, traversing across a variety of periods, locales, geographical settings and experiences.

The stories of the participants were structured around several themes, including natural and built swimming environments, freedom, fear, and humour, disobedience and obedience, being seen but not heard, and becoming a swimmer. Written from the perspectives of the swimmer, parent, coach, swimming pool, and the code, the stories highlighted the challenges of negotiating traditional roles and expectations, infrastructure issues, rural and urban disparities, the parent-child divide, and sport-related conflict.

There were three significant findings that could contribute to sports and swimming development in Samoa. The first discovery was the power and influence of the parent's voice, which directly supported or opposed the child's decision to become a swimmer which was hinged on the cultural value of time. Secondly, the challenges of being seen, metaphorically, geographically, and physically, in a new sport and context revealed novel evidence on gendered competitive swimming experiences, including the internationalisation of semi-nudity social norms. Lastly, the findings revealed that a young person's sense of agency and identity as a swimmer intersected and clashed with cultural elements, but through a process of resistance, negotiation, and self-acceptance within the family and community, a young person could successfully emerge as a contemporary competitive swimmer.

Furthermore, the thesis provided new insights into the existing conceptual framework. The additional perspective of the shoreline represented the personal, historical, cultural, and sociopolitical legacies that hindered the growth of competitive swimming in Samoa. The study's findings shed light on the

shifting practices and perceptions of the sport, the historical and cultural influences on swimming development and the complex role of Samoan youth participating in modern sports within a non-Western society.

Dedication

"For whatever we lose (like a you or a me),
It's always our self we find in the sea."

e.e. cummings

I dedicate this to my father, Wayne Gwizdala, who passed away during my time as a PhD student. He is my fallen first love and my hero. He is a great man that no longer walks this earth, but his legacy remains in me, in my memories and now in my words.

R. Wayne Gwizdala

10 September 1939 – 3 June 2021

Acknowledgements

(I) give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever. (I) give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. (I) give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever. Psalm 136:1-3

First and foremost, Fa'afetai le Atua, fa'afetai Yaweh, Fa'afetai, Lord, for your goodness. Words are not enough for my Lord, who never left me. I encountered many storms during these three years, and I know He was with me.

My wonderful participants, thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. You shared your stories, concerns, challenges and successes in the name of swimming. I hope this thesis allows your voices to rise above the waves and your stories direct the tides to help develop the sport of swimming. Without the parents, there would be no swimmers; without the swimmers, my swimming colleagues and I would have no job. We are all connected, and your passion for this sport was palpable. Thank you all.

Thank you to my supervisors, as it was a team effort to keep me moving along, stroke by stroke, lap by lap. I preferred to dive deep and hide in the depths of my mind instead of writing. But as the famous Louis L'Amour once said, "Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on." Thank you to my Chief Supervisor, Kirsten Petrie, for standing at the helm. You are a strong captain and an even stronger voice who did not shy away from calling a spade a spade. You knew I was my worst enemy; your directness and humour kept me on course. Thank you for your insights, guidance and forthrightness over the past three years. It takes a strong woman to deal with me. Lisette Burrows, thank you for always having keen insight, confirming my steps, providing guidance, and giving endless encouragement for me to use when I waivered in self-doubt. Clive Pope, thank you for your consistency, availability and advice via urgent Zoom meetings, chats over coffee and your peppering of questions to make me think differently. Apo Aporosa, my on-site cultural advisor, supported and encouraged me when I doubted my positionality, voice, and work. Vinaka vaka levu, Apo.

As for my Samoan supervisors, Malama Meleisea and Penelope Schoeffel, fa'afetai tele lava, you supported my decision, direction, and endless queries from the beginning. You made the distance to my island home closer by being there for me. Thanks for making the sea between Samoa and New Zealand calmer with your expert input and advice.

My husband, Toeolesulusulu Cedric, has been my *ma'a*. Although distance has separated us for over three years, thank you for being there night and day, supporting, encouraging, and even arguing with me. You know what motivates me; without you, I could not have done this.

Thank you to my fabulous four children, Brandon, Matthew, Andrea and Jonathan. You were the sole reason I started coaching over 20 years ago, and you remain the inspiration for me to stay the course. Brandon, my Olympian, we have travelled on this journey together, and you are my inspiration. Matthew, my quiet observer, you see me and my world through a unique, authentic lens. Andrea, my heart and my listener, your unfailing support of me was balm to my soul. Jonathan, my shadow, thank you for reminding me that water and life can be fun. I never imagined you would be involved in my PhD journey, but you were here in New Zealand, ensuring that I write, remain focused, and finish strong.

A special thank you to my mom, Mary Lee Gwizdala, who never stopped believing in me even when I couldn't find my words. I thank God for you every day. Thank you to my extended Samoan and American families, as your constant support was always with me.

My PhD crazies, Dassia Watkins-Matavalea, Tepora Afamasaga Wright, Wanda Ieramiah Allen, Kimberly Norman and Francis Asare, thank you for allowing me to be me and supporting me in this journey. It was God's providence that we were all here together. To Deanne King, friend, colleague, supporter, Māori advisor and walking partner. We kept each other accountable with our writing though I hope our walks and talks will continue beyond our thesis. Tangkyu tumas, Lisa Murgatroyd, my sister in Christ, stayed with me during the most challenging times. Assalamualaikum, Lisa. To Alison Schuster, my older sister and friend, you opened your Waihi home to me without question, so I could write in peace while receiving constant support and love.

Thank you, Dawn Rasmussen, for teaching Health and Physical Education in my absence. And back in Samoa, thank you, Kerrie Moana Punivalu, for keeping swimming together during my absence. I promise to come home soon.

There are also so many people whom I would love to thank individually for their involvement in my PhD journey. Family, friends, Hope church family, Apia Protestant Church *aiga*, my National University of Samoa colleagues, Samoa Swimming and Oceania Swimming fraternities and individual friends, too many to name. You all have continued to uplift me during this journey. *Alofa atu*, and may God bless you always for your prayers.

Finally, I thank all those who have gone before me, both in the academic world of swimming literature and swimming practitioners within Oceania and Samoa. You all started this swimming journey well before I swam into the picture, and I thank you for your perseverance in establishing

competitive swimming worldwide, regionally and in Samoa. Without your legacies, I would have only a tiny pool of history to draw from, whereas you gave me a vast sea of inheritances to anchor my words. Thank you.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Glossary

a’au	to swim
Afakasi	a half Western/half Samoan person
aiga	family
Aitu	spirits
alagaupu	proverb
Alofa	love, kind, generous, compassion
Aoga faifeau	Pastor school
ata	laugh, humour
Atua	God
aufa’i	bunch of bananas
fa’aaloalo	respect and dignity
fa’apalagi	Western way of doing things
fa’aSamoa	Samoan way of doing things
fa’asinomaga	identity
fa’i	bananas
Fafo	outside
fai	to make
faifeau	Pastor
fale	Samoan house traditionally with no walls
Fale Komiti	committee house
fale kuka	cooking house/outside cooking area
faletua	wife of chief
feau	chores
finau	‘trying your hardest’; advocate
I ga ve’a	the call of the banded rail
lafi	hide
lotu	prayers
ma’a	rock
maka nana	cry baby
malae	field
manatu lelei	good idea
masi	biscuit; hard cracker
matai	Chief, title holder
nu’u	village
o le faautaga i tumutumu o le la’au	the perspective from the top of the tree

o le faautaga i tumutumu o le mauga	the perspective from the top of the mountain
o le faautaga o le i'a	the perspective of the fish
o le faautaga o le pii ama	the perspective of the person in the canoe
palagi	a person of estern descent
pikiapu	pick-up truck
pulenu'u	mayor
salu le vao	cut the grass
sami	sea
sasa	to hit; to slap
se'evai kosokoso	jandal; flip flop shoe
su'e	seek
suka	boiled root crop
suli	position
ta'ao	we go
ta'ele	to shower; to bathe
taeao	tomorrow
tagata	people
talanoa	rights to talk, to discuss
talanoa ile i'a	talking to the fish
tautua	service
totonu	inside
umu	food baked underground
usita'i	obedience
vā fealoaloa'i	harmonious relationships between people
vā tapuia	harmonious relationships between people, land and the environment
vā	relational space between people
ve'a	Banded Rail (bird)

Prologue: Swimming Through the Thesis

This research began merely as a requirement in my mind. After thirty years of teaching, coaching and living in Samoa, it seemed natural to aim for my terminal academic degree. It was yet another thing to tick off my life's 'to-do' list. Ironically, this research journey gave me more than I bargained for, as the journey was far from a prefabricated list to complete. In satisfied reflection, I would not alter my journey, no matter how difficult, challenging and, at times, ridiculous the process became.

As a teacher and a coach, I cannot recall when I did not use parables, stories and object lessons with my students and swimmers. The PhD process remained mysterious, allusive and intangible, so I drew on my use of storytelling to guide me through from beginning to end. Typically, the stories centred on various perspectives, culturally grounded angles and appreciating alternative viewpoints. As such, I have used storying coupled with a Samoan proverb from which to hang my research questions, ultimately unearthing the participant's stories. The framework that provides the structure for this research is the *Talanoa ile i'a*, a parable by Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, former Prime Minister of Samoa (Western), derived from the work of Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave (1997) and Tamasese et al. (2005).

> *In Samoan culture, there are three perspectives. The perspective of the person at the top of the mountain, the perspective of the person at the top of the tree, and the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the fish. In any big problem, the three perspectives are equally necessary. The person fishing in the canoe may not have the long view of the person at the top of the tree, but they are closer to the school of fish. (Tui Atua, cited in Tamasese et al., 2005, p. 301)*

In the *fa'aSamoa*, it is determined that with any problem, the three perspectives are equally necessary as they represent the views from the hierarchical levels of Samoan society. Faleolo's (2003) landmark research focussed on including the fish, that is, the young person ensuring that the primary stakeholder's perspective is included and considered.

The thesis opens with Chapter 1, which introduces the researcher and the research question, as both I and the research question are central tenets of this thesis. This study's tensions, concerns and rationale are outlined, and the overarching question is stated.

Chapter 2 aims to give a comprehensive historical account of swimming within the Pacific Islands to place swimming in its proper context within Samoa. This foregrounding chapter was published during my doctoral tenure.

Chapter 3 leads into an expanded literature review following the historical chapter. The literature review encapsulated every perspective, internationally from the top of the mountain, regional literature from the top of the coconut tree, Samoan research from within the canoe and swimmer/child-centred research from the perspective of the fish (Faleolo, 2003). All literary perspectives provided a comprehensive overview of the existing body of literature. The literature review concludes with the research justification, aim, and scope highlighting how this research can contribute to scholarship, having identified the existing gaps in the literature.

Chapter 4 explains the research methodology and methods used to answer the research question of this study. It uses a Samoan conceptual framework called the *Talanoa ile i'a* (Tamasese et al 1997; Tamasese, 2002; Faleolo, 2003) as the blueprint for this research. The methodology chapter harnessed the concept of travelling to these destinations to discover the research question and search for answers. Everything is hinged on this proverbial conceptual framework from beginning to end.

The following five chapters house the findings and discussion, designed to weave in multiple perspectives using creative non-fiction practices and storytelling based on the research data. I draw upon the proverbial framework of the *Talanoa ile i'a* to frame the participants' stories of what swimming is to them, their experiences, their beliefs, the socio-cultural influences and how these elements shaped the development of competitive swimming in Samoa from various perspectives of those involved. Each chapter unpacks distinct themes from the data: natural and built swimming spaces; freedom, fear and humour; disobedience versus obedience; being seen but not heard; becoming a swimmer.

Chapter 5 introduces the reader to the geographical setting of Samoa and its traditional relationship and response to swimming. This chapter forms a foundation for understanding how swimming is viewed in Samoa. It then invites the reader to visit the newly built space of the Aquatic Centre, where competitive swimming was formalized. Laying the groundwork of natural and artificial swimming spaces will flow into the subsequent chapters. The geographic and cultural landscape will be layered within the stories emphasizing that all the dichotomous findings presented, such as urban/rural, parent/child, village/family, individual/collective, and hidden/seen, are linked to the relationship to the physical, social and cultural aspects of Samoa.

Chapter 6 illustrates a hesitant relationship with water and how fear empowered the participant to access competitive swimming. It extends the discussion by looking at the various factors that led to these frightening experiences, both in the natural and built environment, and the exposure to Western ideologies and Samoan folklore, which led to formal swimming engagement.

Chapter 7 introduces the reader to the life of a competitive Samoan swimmer, both in a rural and urban context. The cultural elements of service, respect, obedience and consequence are brought to the fore with the geographic landscape supporting the findings. The findings are housed in stories that offer insights into the push and pull of the *fa'aSamoa* upon an emerging competitive swimmer.

Chapter 8 moves to detail the *vā fealoaui*, the shared space between the participants and their interactions with swimming participation. It highlights the tensions, the dominant voices, the negotiations, and the power imbalances between swimmer/parent, family/village and Western/*fa'aSamoa* and how these shared spaces impact participating in a sport that may reveal itself to be more collective than an individual in nature due to the cultural interplay.

Chapter 9 extends the journey of a competitive swimmer through the eyes of the swimming suit, specifically the sports code, in relationship to modesty and visibility. It moves to detail the layers of resistance, negotiations and acceptance of becoming a swimmer within a conservative indigenous culture leading to identifying as a swimmer.

Chapter 10 presents the conclusion of this research project and leads into proposals for this project in understanding minor sport development issues, such as swimming, in cultural, political and socio-economic contexts. It closes with a recommendation to consider an additional, peripheral yet critical perspective to the conceptual proverbial framework in understanding problems within the Samoan context.

Chapter 11 circles back to me as the reflective researcher, returning to my initial life in Samoa, living along a river, and now seeing myself as a new, vulnerable and humbled researcher. The final chapter is a published reflective postscript completed during my doctoral studies. The article is a critical reflection as a non-Pacific researcher using Pacific Methodology and the lessons learnt in this research process.

In this prologue, I climbed back up to the top of the mountain, looking at the evolution of this final product with a sigh of relief. I invite the reader to join me in this story as it was in the middle of my journey that I found my participants' stories and myself. I found myself in the middle of the pool throughout this research process, where my feet no longer touched the familiar ground and the edges were not within reach, forcing me to extend into unfamiliar waters. Being in the middle reminds me of Albert Einstein's famous quote, "in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity,"

> *I am in the middle of my life, of my research, and of my grief. I am in the middle of my commitment, to my family and to myself. Opportunity will be found in the stories, in the surprises and in the unexpected revelations. I'll let the waves crash over me and immerse me in what awaits. Reflections of a novice researcher, S. Schuster Sept 2021*

Chapter 1: Samoa, Self and Swimming

Pacific Islanders regard all aspects of life as inseparable parts of who they are

Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson (1999)

The placement of the research

Before I get carried away in the story's current, I will place Samoa on the global map. Samoa is a small archipelago located south of the equator, about halfway between the Hawaiian Islands and New Zealand. It is a sub-tropical island nation boasting year around humidity and heat on average of 26°C coupled with an annual rainfall of 254 centimetres annually. The sea is as warm as bathwater, and the lush green, mountainous volcanic forest radiates thick humidity when it is not raining. The south-easterly trade winds attempt to cool the dense air bringing a brief reprieve from the heat. It is home to approximately 190,000 people, with 96% being Samoan, who live in organized village designs scattered along the winding coastlines. Thirty thousand reside in the only city, the capital of Apia, which sits quietly on the north shore of the main island of Upolu. Samoa was an ex-German and New Zealand Protectorate but gained its independence in 1962. The official languages of Samoa are *Gagana Samoa* (Samoan language) and English. It is the oldest Polynesian culture based on the foundational concepts of the *vā fealoa'i* and *fa'aloalo*, coupled with Christianity within a collectivist societal framework. In the *fa'aSamoa*, the Samoan way, the cultures, relationships with each other, *aiga*, past and present and the interconnectedness between people play a central role in each person's identity.

The beautiful volcanic islands are geographically different and culturally opposite to my initial mid-Western American upbringing. The five inhabited islands are surrounded by a protective reef system creating natural lagoons and waterways. The mountains boast flowing rivers on all sides of the islands, some with deep waterfalls and strong currents. Freshwater tidal pools are found in most rural areas, another natural water source provided by the volcanic island earth. It is an enviable geographic setting that I have been able to call my home for the past 30 years.

The water, the sea, the rivers, and the pools in Samoa house my story as much as the stories that have evolved throughout this research. If I am asked to define myself, who I am, and what is important to me, it always includes the context of swimming. In my formative years, I was a competitive swimmer and diver in the USA, which led me to a long-term career in international coaching and teaching across Physical Education and swimming. Swimming has brought me an inordinate amount of pleasure, opportunity and joy throughout my lifetime. Personally, through physical fitness, competitively as a student-athlete, relationally through the networks of people I have met through

aquatic activities, and professionally through coaching in various contexts and countries, especially within Samoa.

Just as swimming is part of who I am, so is being from Samoa. While I was not born a Pacific Islander, my relationship with the islands became permanently entwined through marriage. I have now lived 29 years in Samoa, negotiating my various roles. I am a *faletua*, the wife of a Samoan high chief, who is a member of Parliament. I am a mother and a coach raising four Pasifika children. I am the National Swim Coach and a Health and Physical Education lecturer at the National University. I find myself not with a resume of achievements but rather a rich account of a life immersed in the *fa'aSamoa* and the opportunities that the culture, my family and my passion for swimming in Samoa have brought me. Swimming and Samoa have become intricately woven into the tapestry of my daily life through my children, my students, my church, and my communities.

Working as the National Swim Coach, teaching Health and Physical Education at the local universities in both Samoa and Fiji and coaching a myriad of swim programmes in Samoa has given me a personal understanding of this very belief that all parts of my life are inseparable. My highlights include coaching one son to the Olympics; raising two more national swimmer representatives with my other son and daughter; and raising the youngest child who twirled and tested the boundaries of *siva afi* (fire dancing) only to settle on ultimate frisbee as his sport. The squads, clubs and student groups are further extensions of my family with indelible memories cast throughout the years.

Over the decades, I have taught as a senior lecturer in health and physical education, trained in Christian ministry, led Sunday schools, trained coaches as a regional sports educator for Oceania National Olympic Committee and taught as a national sports educator for the Samoa Olympic Committee. HPE swim curriculum design, instructor training, and policy development also accompanied my swimming profession in Samoa. My coaching and teaching extended to church communities, women in aquatic exercise, girls in rural development, and athlete rehabilitation.

Ultimately, my positions within the Samoa Swimming Federation, the University, and the wider church and *Fa'aMatai* community are threads of who I am. Someone recently asked me, "Why are you so involved with swimming in Samoa?" For those who know me, I am inseparable from swimming in Samoa, as swimming and coaching thus they have authored my life. I spearheaded formal swimming programmes, created athlete pathways, trained local teachers, coached high performance and led swim teams to regional and world events. I have sacrificed jobs, invested in personal resources, and stressed the relationships with my family to develop this sport. My position both within the Samoa Swimming Federation and at the University has the inherent focus to mobilize formal swimming for all within Samoa. It is what I have done for the past three decades, and admittedly, it is what I am continuing to do now, in the form of my PhD as I am confounded that

formal swimming participation and commitment within the swimming development pathway has not incrementally increased over the past 13 years. Understanding the factors that inhibit, prevent or support individuals, schools and communities from engaging and continuing in formal swimming remain to be addressed.

Since the Aquatic Centre was opened in 2007, my colleagues and I tasked ourselves to build formal swimming from the bottom up. A participatory sport development approach was taken to develop the sport of swimming, which targeted communities, schools and peri-urban individuals. Annual goals to increase school-based swim programmes were aimed at three new schools yearly. Reaching out to the rural areas included identifying villages that expressed interest in swim development. Assessment of each rural location was prioritized, be it protected ocean venues, freshwater pools or safe river swim areas. Swim teacher training programmes were conducted by overseas counterparts and via support materials. Contextualized swim coach programmes were then integrated into the Health and Physical Education curriculum within the Teacher training programme at the National University. The International Federation offered support through various FINA (rebranded now as World Aquatics, 2022 FINA Congress, Melbourne) clinics to train schoolteachers, community coaches and technical officials.

The Federation's approach focused on sustained programme practices versus mass campaign engagement. This slower yet methodical approach to formal swim development has come at a cost. The overall catchment for participatory swimming could be higher, leading to a smaller enrolment of varying age and elite-level athletes. The impact of swim development initiatives has resulted in two primary schools offering formalized swim programmes, one village with a sustained formal swimming programme and one peri-urban swim club independent from a village or school extension. Regarding human resource development, there are less than ten certified coaches in the country, with three only actively coaching. Fifty primary and secondary teachers have been trained in lesson delivery, and 200 student teachers have collectively engaged in water safety and learn-to-swim promotion courses. In technical officiating, there are ten local officials certified through international affiliates.

My frustration with swimming became heightened with the government pressure for podium performances at international competitions and long-term facility closures. When the Government of Samoa hosted the 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games, the largest international sporting competition in Samoa, the expectation of developing a team of competitive swimmers ages 15–17 was a challenge as there needed to be more swimmer selection repositories. The low intake was due to a two-year pool closure to prepare the facilities for government to host the third UN International Conference on Small Island Developing States. After an unremarkable competition, there was a more substantial investment into developing swimmers, thus being placed in a better position for future competitions.

The Federation took a more direct approach to developing swimming. It employed Australian coach volunteers, Japanese elite swimmer volunteers, local Peace Corps Volunteers and tertiary students to assist with rolling out a learn-to-swim campaign. Unfortunately, another long-term facility closure stalled the growing catchment of formal swimmers, squad development, and new coach development.

Concurrently with the 2018-19 pool closure, the government vocalized their desire to increase medal achievements for the next international competition in Samoa. The challenge to field a winning team for the 2019 Continental Olympic Qualifiers brought the familiar burden it had in 2015. Although there was marked success, maintaining and training local swimmers within the development pathway has been astonishingly complex. Fortunately, swimming was regionally competitive and internationally ranked at the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa and achieved 17 medals at these Olympic Qualifiers. The pressure to perform and to contribute to the medal tally was tangible.

My final concern is a recent policy endorsement from the government. To reinforce the commitment to school children and being physically educated (in swimming), the government signed the 2018 Kazan Action Plan endorsing the 'Swimming for protocols' (2018 Kazan Action Plan, International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS), as set out by World Aquatics (previously named FINA, the international sporting federation for aquatics). However, it was the first time the government made a formal declaration regarding a commitment to swimming within the schools. A response to this commitment spearheaded a new Sport in Education Policy outlining a target to increase foundational swimming skills for school children by 10% over ten years. With my understanding of the current landscape within Samoa and the low engagement with the sport, I question who will support this policy and what the plan is to back up this policy statement.

Therefore, within this landscape and context, my sense of unease over the slow development of swimming continues. Although competitive swimming is a relatively new sport in Samoa, my unease is connected to carrying the burden of showing success in the sport from the grassroots to the elite level. From a Federation standpoint, all aspects of competitive swimming have been implemented with a prescribed development pathway for swimming in Samoa. However, the sustainability of low competitive swimmer representation and engagement is in question. Regarding new intakes, the catchment at the learn-to-swim phase has stalled. At the same time, competitive swimmers in age-group development are low with most other sports, and at the performance level, only some swimmers remain in the sport. These concerns have become a sharper focus in recent years, leading me to embark on this research journey to gain a more nuanced understanding of the factors impacting the development of a more sustainable competitive swimming programme in Samoa.

The Research Question

> *Presently, I wish to take my curiosities, my questions and my interests and for the moment, push them out from shore, letting them float in the waters, until such time the answers are firmly anchored in understanding.*
> *S. Schuster, (2019) Self-reflections as a novice researcher*

Thus, after years of coaching in Samoa, I am yielding to this opportunity by stepping back from my personal and professional life to understand what impedes formal swimming development in Samoa. The long-term facility closure since mid-2019 due to an ongoing local and global public health crisis is only one obvious factor impeding swimming for people and communities in Samoa. With swim development at a standstill, it is an opportune time to investigate the underlying socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-political and other issues specific to swimming development through the overarching question of what enables and constrains participation in formal swimming in Samoa.

Chapter 2: Historical Perspective of Samoa and Swimming

You live life looking forward, you understand life looking backward.

Soren Kierkegaard

Introduction

As with the swimmer, the warmup is a critical element of training. The warmup not only prepares the body for the work ahead, but it also allows the swimmer to ensure all elements of their being are interconnected such as their mind, focus, emotional state, previous knowledge, physical sensation and attitude. I equate this to my research process with this topic. As much as I was interested in diving into my research question, I felt that the history must be foregrounded before the research question can be answered. I had spent an inordinate amount of time researching this chapter as I felt compelled to understand how formal swimming arrived and evolved in Samoa.

To fully understand a topic and for this research to move forward and offer substantial findings, I believe that the point of reference should be rooted in the past. Corfield (2008) explains that history is understanding the living person, understanding the history is essential to fully understand the context of the culture, language, traditions and even religions (Corfield, 2008).

This chapter is a historical journey of how competitive swimming arrived in Samoa. It was published in the Journal of Samoan Studies in 2021.

Article A:

Schuster, S. (2021). From voyager to swimmer: Transboundary intersections influencing the history of competitive swimming in Samoa. *The Journal of Sāmoan Studies*, *11*(1), 33–50. https://sadil.ws/bitstream/handle/123456789/2758/93.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

The research reported in this chapter has been presented at the following conferences:

Schuster, S. (2021). From voyager to swimmer: Transboundary intersections influencing the history of competitive swimming in Samoa. Invited presenter at the post-graduate Talanoa Hub, Pacific Studies, University of Waikato, May 2021

Schuster, S. (2021). From voyager to swimmer: Transboundary intersections influencing the history of competitive swimming in Samoa, Challenges and Lessons Learned. Invited presenter at the OCIES monthly post-graduate forum in May 2021.

Article A: From Voyager to Swimmer: Transboundary intersections influencing the history of competitive swimming in Samoa[1]

Abstract

Presently Samoa is a rising sporting nation with intentions of developing competitive swimmers though there is continued frustration of low membership. This paper addresses how the present situation is the result from a whole history, legacy and genealogy that has shaped competitive swimming in Samoa. Historical sources mention Polynesians and Samoans as highly skilled in swimming, however they did not enter the competitive swimming fraternity until the early 2000s, albeit 100 years after Great Britain introduced codes for competitive swimming. While Samoa has a deep cultural relationship with the sea, there remains a disconnect between the documented fluency with swimming and the codified sport of competitive swimming. As what seems a simple argument, that swimming activities in Samoa were functional and not for competitive sport, invariably reveals a complex and nuanced relationship filled with undercurrents of colonization, racism, and classism and perpetuated myths. In the absence of a singular answer, this historical account lends insight to the critical junctures that intersect over the past two centuries giving shape to competitive swimming in Samoa. In this paper I investigate the presence of swimming in the history of the islands, the external influences that introduced competitive swimming and where it has evolved to today.

Keywords: Swimming, History, Polynesian, Colonisation, Influences

Background

While there has been a recent groundswell of sport policies and education policies addressing swimming both for educational development and high-performance programmes by the Samoan government, there remains a paucity of research to effectively respond to these endorsed policies. Competitive swimming in Samoa officially started in 2003 and has recently achieved podium success on the international stage, but participation rates remain low for this relatively new sport. The small membership of swimmers, coaches and swim clubs on the island do not fulfil present-day government expectations. Our knowledge base of the sport is rooted in contemporary times; therefore, it is helpful to understand Samoa's own history with swimming in order to address the larger research question of why competitive swimming has not become a sport with many participants.

This paper aims to focus, predominantly, on the development of swimming within Samoa and beyond its shores both regionally and internationally for insight to historical elements which led to Samoa's slow development of competitive swimming. Codified competitive swimming was established in

[1] Text is consistent with the journal guidelines: Author-Date System and English United Kingdom spelling.

1874 by Britain (Hayes: 2002), but Samoa did not begin competitive swimming until 2003. The neighbouring Fiji Islands had records of competitive swimming since 1963 (Masters: 1978) when competitive swimming came to the region. It is prudent to investigate what other contentious factors occurred in Samoa that may have contributed to the sport being a newcomer to the competitive sports fraternity in Samoa.

In Samoa's idyllic island environment, it is assumed that Samoans are strong and keen swimmers. This myth has been perpetuated throughout time, but socio-political history may tell a different story. A story may have originally begun with the sea and its people but was intruded upon with European occupation, colonisation, Christianity and urbanisation. Samoa's historical priority of sovereignty, cultural preservation and autonomy created a climate that did not foster a logical relationship with this particular modern, codified competitive sport. Samoa may be an ideal setting for swimming, but its legacy of relationship with the sea, relationship with their water sources and engagement with swimming may not have been the necessary backdrop needed to encourage the codified sport of swimming to emerge as it has in many other countries. Canvassing Samoa's history and landscape is critical as “no fully formed debate on sport can take place without reference to the historical dimension (Vamprey: 2015). As the past of swimming shapes the contemporary context of swimming, the story of Samoa and swimming needs to claim a veritable anchor in its rich history.

Chaline (2017) and Colwin (1992, 2002) have written the most comprehensive academic accounts of swimming evolution. Other researchers have tackled the swimming histories of Africa (Dawson 2010), Britain (Holt 1990; Parker 2001, 2003; Love 2013; Cock 2012), Indigenous communities (Osmond 2015, 2017; Stronach et al. 2019), US immigrant societies (Norwood 2010; Ross et al. 2014) and New Zealand (Moran 2007; Moran and Wilcox 2013). However, there are only cursory glances at swimming in Polynesia cited within their work. While this reinforces the perception that there is "no line of ancestry" of swimming (Colwin 2002:12) it also reveals the shortfall within the existing body of literature, and the need for research to address Samoa's history with competitive swimming. I argue that although early accounts, social memories and recordings indicate that Samoans were fluent swimmers, in the broadest sense of the term, missionary influence, European occupation and local politics contributed to the latent arrival of competitive swimming in Samoa.

This paper is a socio-cultural history of swimming in Samoa using a reconstructionist/constructionist historical design (Booth 2007) coupled with a cultural studies theoretical approach. Cultural studies intertwine history, cultural expression and power (Nathan 2015). The method of historical research used both primary and secondary resources. As the records of Samoa swimming had been destroyed in the 2020 floods, reliance on oral history through interviews, personal records and memories of the author comprised most of the contemporary section. Secondary resources included scholarly articles, books, manuscripts and media shaped the historical sections. Six *talanoa* sessions were conducted to

recreate the course of events leading to the establishment of competitive swimming in Samoa as it is situated in the greater Oceania region. This paper specifically analyses the shifting perceptions, political interplays and power dynamics within the diffusion of codified swimming in a cross-cultural and cross-national context.

Samoa: the gods, the sea and the voyagers

Long before the first explorers came to Samoa in the late 1700s, Samoans anchored their worldview through myths, legends, genealogy and proverbs. Samoa was first settled at least 3,000 years ago (Green 1969; Green and Davidson 1974; Davidson, 1969, 1977) and significant legends have water, the ocean and swimming central to the islands' birth. In Samoan mythology, Tagaloa, the supreme god of ancient times, sighted the earth as "one expanse of water", and "his spirit moved upon the waters" (Nelson and Anderson 1925: 127) before causing the sea to give birth rocks, then land and living creatures (Meleisea et al. 1987: 2-3).

Water was the primary source of creation, and many legends were placed within this environment to explain migration, significance, warfare and marriage (Nelson and Anderson 1925). While there are many myths and legends referencing swimming in the folklore, it remains part of the oral history of Samoa and other parts of Polynesia to give shape to its history, the genealogies and how ancestors voyaged from one archipelago to another. It also provides meaning and grounding to explain gods, natural phenomena and cultural practices in the Polynesian worldview.

Chaline (2017) claims that aquatic history has shaped human physical development and, consequently, people's cultures. Revered Pacific academic and political activist Teresia Teaiwa, who wrote, "We sweat and cry salt water, so we know that the ocean is really in our blood" (Teaiwa 2017: 133) profoundly encapsulates that the ocean is the essence of Pacific Islanders. The sea is significant to the people of Samoa as it served as a transboundary and dynamic resource, placing the very people within its fold. The first writings from explorers, missionaries and settlers recorded their observations of the people in the islands and rendered a portrait of people fluent with their ocean home. Reference to long-distance swimming and playing in the surf (Ella 1897: 153), "swimming like fish" in Fiji (Wetherell 2002: 81), 'natural' swimmers and watermen (Osmond and Phillips 2004) actively swimming and surfing (Osmond and Phillips 2004) and being inherently natural at swimming in Papua New Guinea (Stallman et al. 2008: 372) paints an oceanic landscape of islanders swimming within the waters. Reactions and observations by Westerners included "wonderment to Polynesians capabilities of swimming" (Oliver 2002: 54), who spent much of their days in the water, which contributed to their remarkable aquatic abilities (Oliver 2002). The aquatic environment was an imperishable presence for Samoans as it was their home and permeated both past and present.

Before Samoa's collision with European settlement and colonisation in the mid-1800s, pioneering missionaries who lived in Samoa provided some of the first recordings of the Samoan's way of life at the time. Reverend Stair, a missionary from 1838 to 1845, made precise references to Samoan's ability, natural ease and affinity with swimming in the warm waters of Samoa. He wrote that “at that time Christianity had not exerted much influence on Samoans" (Stair 1897: 9-10), observing that Samoans are at 'ease in the heavy seas', 'leap from canoe to sea without concern', and were ‘swimming of great distances’ when outrigger canoes break. "Samoans are expert swimmers, being almost at home in the water as on land. It is interesting to watch the ease of their movements, and their coolness under circumstances that would sorely perplex a European". He emphasized the fluid relationship Samoans had with their physical environment, mentioning them "swimming for several miles holding onto their canoe" (Stair 1897: 64-65). He also recorded their ability to dive great depths and remain submerged for significant periods; that a Samoan dived "over 30 fathoms" to fasten a rope to an anchor a length that is equivalent to 54 metres. His account offers rich evidence that Samoans had strong swimming skills then with their close relationships with the ocean, rivers and freshwater pools. Gill (1876) had similar accounts of “South-Sea Islanders" during his 22-year sojourn as a missionary. “Supreme delight of islanders is surf-swimming” (Gill 1876: 65). He observed that both men and women were expert swimmers and divers, swimming mainly with their feet and having duration to float (Gill 1876: 66).

There were many land-based sports in ancient Samoa such as wrestling, hide and seek, juggling and throwing contests. Stair (1897) describes boxing, club fights, kicking matches as combative sports and strength contests. Showing that Samoan athleticism embodied physical strength, aggressive competition and land-based activities, Stair's (1897) reflection on Samoan's physical prowess in swimming is indisputable:

> Amongst a people so much at home in the water as are the Samoans, aquatic sports will naturally be supposed to excite much interest. All classes were fond of them, and the perfect manner in which they had mastered the art of swimming enabled them to indulge in such pleasures with fearless boldness quite surprising to Europeans. I [Stair] have often been delighted to watch the joyous sporting of the natives amidst the wild billows of some parts of the islands where the coast is bold and rugged (Stair 1897: 139).

While Stair’s and Gill’s accounts lend insight to the daily movements of local Samoans, it is clearly one perspective written at a time “exoticness and fascination” (Stieglitz 2013: 28) may have influenced the scale of imaginative observational writing of missionaries. However, it is still observed today, recreational play within the ocean, rivers and pools though very few Samoans would venture into deep water without holding onto a canoe for support even though “Europeans have long romanticized Polynesians (Kabutaulaka 2015: 200). Other naturalising narratives within the Pacific

eliciting stereotypes perceived by outsiders are Hawaiians are amphibious beings (D'Arcy 2006); Maori savagery and physicality (Hokowhitu 2003a, 2003b); and Fijian indigenous masculinity (Molnar and Kanemasu 2014). Though outsiders observed the physicality of these culture groups, the uniqueness and differences were emphasized thus rendering a skewed perception of Pacific people.

Colonising through Sports- Missionaries, Germany and New Zealand

By 1820, Samoa's way of life was changing with the steady arrival of missionaries, traders and settlers. Meleisea (1987) describes how foreign occupation accelerated Samoa's path towards colonisation when American, British and German interests grew in Samoa before 1889, leading eventually to the partition of the Samoa archipelago between Germany and the USA in 1900. In 1914 with the onset of the First World War, New Zealand took possession of German Samoa until 1961. Since European contact from the mid-1800s until the mid-1900s, dual agencies of colonisation and missionary agendas shaped Samoa's landscape.

From the first arrivals of Missionaries in Samoa from the 1830s throughout the nineteenth century changed Samoan behaviours, including swimming. Chaline (2017: 63) proposes that "the link that water had endured over many millennia was severed by the Judaeo-Christian religion, which emerged in a terrestrial setting that was completely divorced from the aquatic environment". The churches discouraged swimming as it perpetuated immorality through semi-nudity and "transformed attitudes to the body" (Chaline 2017: 99). The church promoted modest dress codes as part of their means to convert their disciples (Jenkins 1990). This likely slowed swimming development during this impressionable time between 1830 and 1962 as the Christian compass pointed to Western manners, modesty and puritan values. The Christian doctrine impacted Sunday activities as swimming, or playing in the water, was prohibited on Sundays and the new modesty norm made it less likely that people would engage in the water. Dunlap's (1951) original research on recreation in Samoan culture reaffirmed that missionaries "frowned upon bathing and swimming on Sunday because these activities took too much time away from religious duties" (Dunlap 1951: 305). However, McKay's (1968) personal story of the Samoan islands in *Samoana* recorded McKay's own inability to observe the Sabbath by racing his canoe (*paopao*). The response from local Samoans in his error was "It does not matter, the missionaries brought sabbath observance here, and they feel more strongly about it than we do" (McKay 1968: 71). While Christian structure and rules diffused into the Samoan culture, it did not erase recreation activities though did curtail them.

While missionaries established the first formal schools to enculture Samoans, colonisers used sports as a tool to socialise. Although Chaline's (2017) suggestion that the religion severed the natural relationship with humans and water, Samoans continued to engage in the water through recreation, play, travel or fishing. Modern sport was introduced by Western agents such as missionaries, settlers and colonial administrators who used codified sport as a function of European colonisation (Khoo et

al 2014). Likened to Dunlap's findings, colonial powers viewed the indigenous sporting cultures as 'peripheral' merely providing 'entertainment and recreation' (Chatziefstathiou 2008: 39). Thus said, indigenous sports and activities became marginalised in favour of sports like rugby, cricket, tennis, lawn bowling, netball, croquet, horse racing, boxing and shooting (Rasmussen and Fuamatu 2012). However, most of these introduced sports were offered in the urban areas while village sports and activities remained unchanged until recent times. King (2009) claims that gradual embodiment of the European culture through European sports pursuits was used to civilise and socialise 'savage' cultures. Samoans' predilection for land-based combat sports encouraged the adoption of Western sports such as rugby.

Sacks's (2019) extensive research on sport, namely cricket, and imperialism in Samoa during this time, notes that "Germans did not invest in modern sport as much as the British or Americans as he concluded that Germans were suspicious of modern sports in the context of the broader competition between Germany and Great Britain (...) and that Samoan sports and games were to be in line with their vision for Samoa" (Sacks 2019: 98). Szymanski (2015) offers another argument regarding Germany's relationship with sport in that Germany's focus was military-based as opposed to modern sport-based. When New Zealand took over as administrators in 1914, the ideology to advance the political, economic, social and educational systems in Samoa was on the agenda. A more formalized rugby was introduced at this time of occupation in 1920. Although missionaries had introduced the game in the late 1800s, in 1920, "due to the arrival of increased New Zealanders" (Rasmussen and Fuamatu, 2012) rugby propelled its popularity. Other sports such as horse racing, golf, tennis and netball were introduced during New Zealand's administration. Competitive swimming was not imported with the influx of New Zealand expatriates even though competitive swimming was developing at pace in New Zealand at this time (Moran 2010).

England: the Pioneers, Powers and Appropriation of Competitive Swimming

Concomitantly when local European traders and missionaries settled in Samoa, England established the first competitive swimming organisation in 1837. Initially named the National Swimming Federation of Great Britain, the federation was rebranded as the Amateur Swimming Association in 1886. The established code already signals structural parity from the onset. Renaming swimming as 'amateur' emphasised the ideal of competitive swimming as an upper-class sport, engaged in by those who did not need to work for a living. Lowerson (1993) explains that 'amateur' was used in conjunction with 'gentleman' and seen as a code of ethics barring competition for "pecuniary gain" (p. 169). This distinction ensured that the sport was a gentleman's sport, not marred by gambling, and had strict membership codes. The emerging middle class in Great Britain gained membership into the competitive society by claiming higher moral standards coupled with their burgeoning disposable income (Holt 1990: 130).

When Britain established competitive swimming, preferred swimming strokes were confirmed. From the onset, the original code declared face-out-of-water breaststroke to be the accepted competitive stroke. The English continued their stance, commenting that overarm propulsion, as they had seen in native Americans, Africans and Pacific Islanders, produced a thrashing and disruption of the water, crude and elementary (Colwin 2002; Stronach et al 2019; Dawson 2006, 2010). Dawson's (2006, 2010) robust archival research on African swim styles revealed that the overarm propulsion did not fit with the code of a gentleman's sport as breaststroke was "refined and graceful" while overarm stroke was "unusual in the polished world" (Dawson 2010: 90). Colwin (2002) and Stieglitz (2013) also argue that many indigenous communities used more advanced, propulsive strokes than the Western culture. Osmond and Phillips (2004) challenge the European discourse that although islanders swam mainly due to lifestyle, competitive swimming remained a Eurocentric sport.

Thus it has been determined that in the sport's infancy, England was purposeful in controlling the development of the sport although indigenous peoples in many British colonies had developed more speed and power in the stroke and were better at swimming (Colwin 2002). In this period, competitive swimming grew in Australia 1846, the USA 1877, Germany 1882, Hungary 1896 and France 1899 (Colwin 2002). By the time competitive swimming made it into the modern Olympics, the front crawl was the accepted practice for speed swimming. The once criticised over-arm and bilateral kicking approach as uncivilised was now an accepted stroke. Consequently, Osmond and Phillip's (2004) research of Solomon Islander Alick Wickham's swimming style as "crawling over the water" raised issues of appropriation. Wickham's crawl was claimed as the "Australian crawl" (Osmond and Phillip's (2004); Osmond, 2015) although this overarm speed style had been used by Pacific Islanders for "more than one thousand years" (Colwin 2002: 4). Indigenous athletes from the Pacific such as Alick Wickham of the Solomon Islands and Duke Kahanamoku, a renowned Hawaiian surfer and US Olympic swimmer, all used a speed-based crawl swimming well before codified competitive swimming took it as their own (Osmond 2011, 2015). Appropriation was not an uncommon trait of imperialism. Observations of indigenous propulsive swim strokes were seen and reappropriated as in the case of Wickham (Osmond 2011, 2015). and Dawson's critical research on history of African swimming (Dawson 2006, 2010).

Polynesians Swimming- stereotypes and racism

During the 19th century, Europe drove sport into the world (Besnier and Brownwell, 2012) and the USA became a major competitor in all sports, including competitive swimming. The 1912 Olympics heralded an opportunity for the United States to showcase their talents. They fielded a strong team with Polynesian athletes in swimming with notable native Hawaiians, such as Duke Kahanamoku, Pua Kealoha, and Warren Kealoha headlining as Olympic swimming champions in 1912, 1920 and 1924. Kahanamoku's given name became a household moniker as 'The Duke' for his swimming

accomplishments and his world-renowned surfing career which continued long after his Olympic years through surfing and swimming promotions in the West coast of the USA. The Hawaiian-Americans' swimming success permitted them into the exclusive gentlemen's society and despite the racism of those times "allowed Kahanamoku, who was a US Hawaiian 1912 Olympic swimming Gold Medallist, entry to society through the avenue of sport" (Nendel 2009: 130). However, Yakovee's (2007:28) research revealed that inherent racism in the sport was already rooted in competitive swimming. His research disclosed accounts of the Duke "shattering the 100-yard world record," which prompted the Amateur Athletic Union to question whether "Hawaiian timers used alarm clocks instead of stopwatches". This paternalistic reference explicitly indicates that the association in the mainland held the belief that the Hawaiians could not organize competitive swimming. DePond (2019) asserts that the Duke's swimming and surfing success offset his racial discrimination as the austere image of codified swimming maintained its status as a 'true' sport. Those who performed within the sport code, carried middle-class attitudes and had undefeatable performances gained acceptance into this exclusive amateur society (DePond 2019).

According to Chatziefstathioum (2008), during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, there were expositions to display the exoticness of others who were predominantly from the East. These "displays of 'Others', such as people from 'exotic' foreign cultures (e.g. Arabia, China, Japan, Hawaii)" (page 29). Although some displays were intentionally showcasing 'pre-modern', or even as 'uncivilised' and 'savage' (Chatziefstathiou 2008: 29). The racist stereotype discounted the environment in which swimming and surfing was learn and continued to magnify Pacific Islanders as 'naturally' adept at swimming and could easily transfer these skills into competitive swimming. The portrayal of these renowned Polynesian athletes in the media mirrors Reverend Stair's observations almost a century before, assuming that the native Hawaiian athletes were "naturally good at certain activities such as swimming and surfing" (DePond 2019: 69). The Polynesian athletes had "paddle-like appendages", "natural inclination to the water", and "a wonderful perfection of the stroke" (DePond 2019: 69).

Osmond (2011) analyses racial stereotypes of Pacific Islanders claiming that their remnant strands within history and colonial ideologies have perpetuated the myths about Pacific islander's abilities, like the Duke has "romanticized, racialized and naturalized his abilities (Osmond 2011: 275). DePond (2019), Yakovee (2007), Smith (1995) and Osmond (2011) argue that sports myths and stories have reinforced a perception that may in fact only apply to a few but have had far-reaching race-based expectations. The concept of Others versus the Us being Europeans was coupled with the diffusion of modern sport from the West to the East. According to Chatziefstathiou, "the social structures of imperialism that defined colonial relationships produced powerful images of Others and allowed the idea of Europe to emerge" (page 30). The ideology of humanism emerged reinforcing the thinking of race and whiteness (Davies 1997; Carrington 2004). To exemplify how humanism aligned itself as a

narrow postulate of European-centredness, Chatziefstathiou claims that “ideologies of ‘race’ and white supremacy emerged in European thought, which promoted an ethnocentric, Western model of humanism” (Chatziefstathiou 2008: 31). Osmond (2015) summarizes the centrality of competitive swimming strokes which was once inherent in the Pacific Islands. “By 1930 the West had long since appropriated and refined various swimming strokes practiced by Indigenous people” (Osmond 2015: 18). While once seen as “transnational bodies of motion in the Pacific (...) crossing borders” (Stieglitz 2013) the correlation between Pacific Islanders and swimming had “diminished” and “the notion of unique aquatic prowess had waned considerably” (Osmond 2015: 18) after this time.

The Arrival of Competitive Swimming to the Pacific Islands

1963 marked when Pacific Islanders began to intersect with competitive swimming at the inaugural 1963 South Pacific Games. The South Pacific Commission (SPC), an institution founded by the colonial powers of the Pacific after the Second World War, created the South Pacific Games (SPG) in 1961. Masters (1978) described how the Pacific Games Council designed the games to "create bonds" and "form friendships and brotherhood" in sporting exchanges beyond "race, religion or politics" (Pacific Games Council n.d). The games had a "measure of paternalism with their establishment in keeping with the essentially colonial nature of Pacific History" (Masters 1978: 162). These "South Seas Olympics" (Masters 1977: 162) aimed to promote and develop sports for the Pacific nations and the people. The inaugural games were awarded to Fiji, a strongly linked British colony and the only Pacific island to have participated in the British Empire Games. The Pacific Games had an inherent ideology to reflect Olympic values. As Oceania island countries were some of the last to gain admission to the International Olympic Charter, it is critical to explore the establishment of the South Pacific Games and subsequent entry into the Olympics. While the documents gathered indicate a well-meaning intention to establish the Games, this was a historical shift from localized games and pastimes to structured, coded sport. While rugby and cricket had evolved within the region, overall the Western sporting model was seen as “the only efficient system that with its rules and regulations could lead to competitive sport performances” (Chatziefstathiou 2008: 39). As the Games were coined the “South Seas Olympics”, the comparison to the Olympic movement cannot go unnoticed. Founder of the Olympic Movement Baron Pierre de Coubertin expressed that to receive “the benefits of ‘sport civilisation’, it is imperative that we allow them to belong to the vast sport system, which entails rules and regulations and competitive sports results performances, which form the basis of this civilisation” (Coubertin 1931a: in Chatziefstathiou 2008: 39). Contrary to the premise of promoting friendly competition between the island nations, most competing nations at the 1963 SPG used the British or French flags and anthems while Samoa was the only independent country at the time competing under its own flag and anthem (Rasmussen and Fuamatu 2012).

The Pacific Games Council website is an extensive source of information which has been meticulously curated and archives council documents, results records, and has played a key part in developing a historical overview which is presented here: *"South Pacific Games 1963 - Fiji"*. (2010). For the inaugural games in 1963, the British administration in Fiji invested heavily in refurbishing the Suva Sea Baths and renaming it the Suva Olympic pool. This Olympic-sized pool was built in 1925 as a bathing facility following the popular trend of leisure bathing pools in Great Britain. However, the pool's history is marred with segregation with strict code ensuring separate pools for indigenous people and expatriates. It was not until 1954 that the pools became public and desegregated (Suva Olympic Pool n.d.). With its facility upgrade for the 1963 games, the pool became the first-ever Olympic pool for the Oceania region. Although fourteen countries and territories attended this multi-sport event, only four competed in swimming. Fiji stood to win the most swimming medals in this first competition, with only New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and American Samoa participating. Expatriate swimmers dominated the events and gained the most medals such as Masters's (1978) recalls Fiji's Carl Bay, who was an expatriate child of the Director of Education in Fiji. A native of New Zealand and schooled in Whangarei, Bay took out five aquatic gold medals. Using expatriates to represent the islands were supported in Master's (1978) claims that "water is not a competitive medium for the indigenous peoples of the Pacific, with a lack of public pools, and the modesty of their women, all being factors in this situation" (Masters 1978: 164). Swimming faced issues of culture, overseas representation and lack of facilities factor highly into the low popularity of competitive swimming amongst indigenous people (Masters 1978). Those present at the 1963 games observed that most islander competitors had no formal swimming experience, swam in rivers or even not at all. A 1963 post-games media article was the first of many to query the lack of swimming talent in the islands (Pacific Islands Monthly 1963). The article debunked the stereotype that had been believed for over a century. Pacific Islanders, once portrayed as naturally skilled in swimming, as they had failed to perform as expected. The article quoted a swim official saying "you'd hardly believe that an area that invented the style (crawl stroke), that is now the basis of world swimming could have slipped so far behind in the sport". The first SPG swimming competition did not impress due to the low turnout, their young age, their incorrect strokes and their inability to complete the distance required (Pacific Islands Monthly 1963: 161). The post-games article claimed that "competitive swimming was a foreign concept" and swimming was merely for "fun" (Pacific Islands Monthly 1963: 161). It highlighted that women had less experience as they were coy and were unwilling to uncover themselves in the presence of men and that many islands did not have modern swimming pools. The games overturned the romantic belief that Pacific Islanders were 'naturally' skilled, speed swimmers echoing Osmond's (2015) claim that the aquatic capabilities of Pacific Islanders had now declined. The nineteenth century British coded and rule-based sports culture had reproduced around the world through the colonies, like Fiji, with overtones of classism, sexism and racism (Chatziefstathiou, 2008).

During the next four years New Caledonia, a French territory in the Pacific, took to the helm when awarded the 1967 games hosting rights. According to Chatziefstathiou (2008) “France also used sport as part of its imperialistic practices to assimilate the local population into the citizenship of the motherland” (Chatziefstathiou 2008: 23). Darby (2001) argues that France used modern-day sport within the indigenous populations “to compete as ‘French’ maximising the potential for acquiring national cohesion (Chatziefstathiou, 2008: 23). This ‘Metropolitan French’ mirrored British imperial paternalism within the colonized Pacific Islands. Likened to France and Great Britain conflicts, French New Caledonia was not to be outdone by British Fiji, rendering an image of their ongoing rivalry played out through Pacific Islanders. New Caledonia, which has a large non-indigenous population, unlike other Pacific Island countries, spared no cost and built modern-day infrastructures funded by France and focussed on using proven coaching programmes and swimming systems to support their imported athletes to ensure victory at the next South Pacific Games (Pacific Games Council n.d). As the 1963 games promoted friendship and regionalism, 1967 was an aggressive competition as New Caledonia pushed the concept of required professionalism and uniformity to be considered competitive. Tensions around competing on Sunday and language barriers permeated throughout the games. Protests to keep the Sabbath sacred and not competing on Sunday fell on deaf ears by the French organisers (Pacific Games Council n.d).

Many of the expatriate swimmers who qualified for the minimum residency requirements in Island countries dominated the medal tally in the first Pacific Games; they originally hailed from New Zealand, the United States, Australia and France (Masters 1978). This contributed to the growing chasm between expatriate and indigenous swimming performances with island swimmers trailing behind expatriates consequently absent from the SPG records. Notable expatriate swimmers hailed from British and French colonies. Fiji's Carl Bay who competed in the 1963 games, won Gold medals in five events and held these records over thirty years (Masters 1978; *Athlete* Historical Snapshot 2009) and New Caledonia's Marie-Jose Kersaudy, a French National, dominated women's swimming events from 1963 - 1971 (Oceania Swimming Association n.d.). Masters (1978) describes that importing offshore talent for the games was the acceptable practice as the lack of facilities and training programmes hampered development of local athletes and their participation. Smaller countries lobbied for stricter athlete residency requirements, but Papua New Guinea, Tahiti, New Caledonia and Fiji did not support the changes as they had large expatriate communities at that time.

Tahiti, New Caledonia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea remained the usual winners, and rotated the hosting rights every four years, filling their teams with overseas and locally trained swimmers. The link between built swimming pools and swimming performance had taken root throughout the region. Sakovich’s (2013) historical report on swimming in the Pacific Islands emphasised a timeline of constructed swimming pools concurrent with the development of swim clubs within each island. In Tahiti, New Caledonia and Fiji whose infrastructure was at the time financed and driven by their

colonial administrators, countries with military links, such as Papua New Guinea, also had proven success in competitive swimming. Papua New Guinea had early success in swimming due to the army barrack's new swimming pool, allowing locally enlisted men to train for the games. Charles Martin, an indigenous Papua New Guinean, earned gold medals in the 1971 and 1975 SPG with a continued career at the Commonwealth Games and Australian competitions, proving the possibility of indigenous success given access to the facilities and opportunities (Pacific Games Council n.d.)

The Micronesian region drove their competitive swimming programmes by the late 1960s through expatriate coaches who lived on the various islands. Peace Corps Volunteers, private business merchants and other familiar residents took on the competitive swimming initiatives. Private pools and hotel pools allowed youngsters to join the various clubs that began popping up in the Northern Pacific such as Saipan in 1967 and Palau and Guam following in the early 1970s. Guam hosted the 1995 SPG boasting an enviable Olympic pool facility, then succumbing to permanent facility closure due to a super typhoon (Sakovich 2013). Palau, trying to keep on course with swim development, managed to build a six-lane 25m freshwater pool for the 1998 Micronesian Games but otherwise used existing lagoons and salt-water tidal pools to run swim development (Sakovich 2013).

Samoa Independence and the rise of competitive sport 1963 – 1995

Samoa remained at a competitive disadvantage as the sport of swimming continued to develop in the region. Samoa participated in the 1963 SPG though was absent from the swimming events. According to Rasmussen and Fuamatu (2012), Samoa's participation in the 1963 games fuelled Samoans to organize and affiliate new sports to the Sports Federation. By the 1970s more modern sports were introduced by returning overseas students and expatriates though swimming had not been recognized as a competitive sport and still seen as a recreational pastime. The inaugural SPG occurred the year after Samoa's achievement of independence in 1962, the first Pacific Island to do so. However, this reclaimed autonomy may have thwarted the predicted pathway towards competitive swim development. While the other islands invested in swimming pools to promote competitive swimming, Samoa focussed predominately on economic and political development which took precedence over sport infrastructure. In addition to the development of public pools, other countries began investing in tourism campaigns which included catering to the significant number of expatriates with hotels, swimming pools, and available European swimming attire. Until the 1990s, Samoa had very few hotels and far fewer swimming pools. No bathing attire was available at the small retailers and shops in Apia as it was not an acceptable norm to wear Western-style swimwear at any of the village-owned beaches. A traditional wrap of material (*lavalava)* or ordinary clothing were usually worn when swimming in the water signalling the legacy of missionary philosophy of bodily modesty.

The games had already rotated full circle from Fiji in 1963 through the more populated island countries of New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, and Tahiti, only to be hosted again by Fiji in 1979.

By 1981, to address equity and hosting rights, the South Pacific Commission introduced the South Pacific Mini Games. These were a less extensive version of the games to host and were offered for the smaller Pacific Island countries who desired to host the games, but could not afford the investment of sport infrastructure. The Mini Games did not mandate swimming within the competition schedule, thus sparing host nations the obligations to develop facilities beyond their means. Samoa did not perceive itself as a minor player or mini-games host nation and pursued the goal of hosting the 'major' games.

However, Samoa orchestrated a way to host the games without providing for swimming as the Samoan sport administrators believed their turn was long overdue, especially with continued gold medal successes in weightlifting and boxing. Although the Game Council's charter required host countries to have a swimming pool, Samoa pushed ahead with a forceful bid without the promise of a pool. The delegation spent inordinate time mapping out a solid proposal and great expense flying to Norfolk Island to present their proposal. The Samoan delegates convinced the SPG Council that they were prepared to host the games and proposed excluding swimming. Their invested effort to push for hosting rights without swimming heralded what came decades later.

Historical reference from the SPG Council revealed that the 1983 Games in Samoa certainly provided a first-time opportunity for Samoans to experience and spectate high-level competitive sport and placed Samoa in a competitive regional position However, competitive swimming was not sufficiently valued to build the infrastructure as other five rival nations had done. According to a past National Olympic Committee President, this "reinforces the general disposition towards competitive swimming at the time" as the National Olympic Committee members countered, ‘why do we need a pool when we have the sea?’ to the South Pacific Games Council pool regulation” (Aumao, T., March 31, 2020). As a reaction, dominant swimming countries later demanded that all subsequent host countries must have the appropriate facilities (Fiji Swimming n.d.). After the 1983 games, the competitive sports landscape took on a higher level of development in Samoa. Consequently, it was the first and last hosting bid to win without competitive swimming.

The legacies of the 1983 Samoa SPG brought sport development into sharper focus. Rasmussen and Fuamatu (2012) noted that elements of professionalism propelled the growth of sport. Focus on international federation membership, national federation restructuring, business management focus and sponsorship schemes (Rasmussen and Fuamatu, 2012). The country continued to compete at the SPG, Oceania and Commonwealth Games, and gained Olympic membership. Samoa's first appearance in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics occurred as the National Olympic Committee in Samoa (SASNOC) joined the International Olympic Committee the previous year. However, as Samoa's rugby success remained the flagship sport to promote the small nation competitive swimming remained marginal.

Likened to Micronesian's approach to swim development, swimming was taught by expatriates and volunteers based in Samoa to their local communities merely to share a skill rather than drive a competitive sport. Specifically in Samoa, a teacher at the Western Samoa Teachers College recalls using the only Apia swimming pool, owned by a local merchant, for student-teacher swimming lessons. Expatriates offered swimming lessons for the Anglican Church boy scouts and the Apia Protestant Brownie troops who used the seafront and Aggie Grey's hotel pool. The pool lessons were infrequent and accessible only through connections at the hotel. This ad hoc delivery of swimming skills continued until the early 2000s.

Samoa, Competitive Swimming and the International Circuit 1995 to the Present Day

In the early 1990s, SASNOC realised that international multi-sport competitions would overlook Samoa as a legitimate host nation if they did not provide the required sports facilities, including a pool. By 1995, the Samoa Swimming Association was officially established and joined the National Olympic Committee as the recognised national federation for swimming. By 2003, Samoa was awarded the 2007 Games on the promise of a completed swimming pool.

With ground-breaking effort, the Board of SASNOC and the Swimming Association Board secured land to build the Tuanaimato Sports Complex in an area known as Faleata. It was an underdeveloped area laden with forest, but the sports administrators' idea for the multi-sports complex to be unrivalled in the region was given full support by the Prime Minister. With the SASNOC, swim administrators and the government focussing on facility development for the 2007 SPG, there was limited focus on local swimmer development though interested swimmers practised open water training in the sea at Taumeasina, Apia Harbour and Faleasiu with infrequent opportunities to train in the Apia hotel pools.

In 2003, Samoa's first team of competitive swimmers participated at the 2003 SPG in Fiji. Membership into the International Federation of swimming (Fédération Internationale De Natation. (FINA)) afforded Samoa's entrance to swimming at the 2003 FINA World Championships and the continental Oceania Swimming Championships. Swimmers for these international competitions were enlisted talent from offshore locations, keeping local membership at abeyance.

By 2007 Samoa had a swimming stadium located in the urban area of Tuanaimato on the outskirts of the capital city of Apia. The Faleata Aquatic Centre was funded and built by China Aid for the 2007 SPG Samoa. The result was an unrivalled aquatic centre outfitted with two Olympic sized pools and a dive well. By 2008, the Swimming Association was re-established as the Samoa Swimming Federation. Like their regional island neighbours, expatriates filled the Board positions, edging out indigenous members to focus on building competitive swimming in Samoa. Initiatives such as school programs, coaching development, and institutional development were prioritized (Punivalu 2012). While growth at the policy, grassroots and administrative level excelled, filling teams with solely

local talent fell short forcing to import overseas-based swimmers to represent the country when swimming gained entry into the Commonwealth Games team in 2010, 2014 and 2018.

Concurrently, Samoa was able to field teams for the FINA world championships every two years from 2012 onwards. Another significant sports achievement was the first Olympic swimmers joining the Team Samoa campaign for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. With the Federation functioning at total capacity, school swim programs, volunteer enlistment through JICA and Peace Corps, and local coaching training evolved. 2019 recorded the first gold medals for swimming at the 2019 Pacific Games held in Apia. The swimming success at these games allowed this new sport to claim its rightful place as a competitive sport and was welcomed into the sporting fraternity both in Samoa and internationally.

Since 2003, support for competitive swimming development in Samoa has ebbed and flowed, surging at times and distinctly receding at other times. While the ocean is at every islander's doorstep, building swimming pools proved to be a determining factor in developing competitive swimming. Since 2008, there have been ongoing challenges to develop the sport. Due to ongoing refurbishments, maintenance and facility scheduling, the intermittent closures of the aquatic facility have critically impacted programmes, competitions, and training (Punivalu 2012). In order to meet government expectations for podium performances local swimmers relocated overseas to attend long-term training camps and competitions.

On a regional level, the Pacific Games have undoubtedly been another critical driver for establishing competitive swimming in the region and Samoa. In 2015, the SPG rebranded to become more inclusive as the Pacific Games (PGC n.d.). The justification in the name change was articulated in the Pacific Games Council vision as the name encompassed all the islands, north and south, and provided distance from the paternalistic labelling of "South Seas Olympics" in 1963 (Masters 1978: 162).Although the original plan had inherent “paternalism, hierarchy, conservative and racialist discourse in describing the colonial societies” (Said 1993) outcomes of this original plan have rendered national sports heroes, legacies and highly developed sports programmes. The Pacific can rightly reclaim their actual affiliation with the sport of swimming, albeit their reclamation comes decades after the British and other world powers excelled in this very sport.

Conclusion

The global history of competitive swimming is punctuated with elements of class, race, power and religion intertwined with political agendas, global sport schemes and international appeal. Similarly, these external agencies have impacted Samoa’s own history with political occupation, missionary influences, national reclamation, economic priorities, and resistance to the sport itself. While Samoa was the first to divorce from European powers, it was one of the last countries in the region to

establish competitive swimming. Historically, Samoans tethered their roots to the uncoded natural ocean environment, but the country now boasts an enviable pool facility as the cornerstone for competitive swim development. Both the aquatic centre and 2007 SPG were the primary catalysts to encourage local swimming participation but are underscored with inheritances from past colonialism. As a pattern seen throughout the islands, it remains common practice for competitive swimming to be driven by people outside the margins of Samoa and the islands. Sport in Samoa, including swimming, is a major influencer in nation building. Knowing the past helps locate Samoa swimming within wider narratives of social, political and cultural life. The location of competitive swimming within Samoa and how it is situated regionally and internationally offers an opportunity to understand people's roots, their movements, their investments, their extended relations and the ethnic and cultural practices (Polley 2006). Although earlier accounts showed Samoans and Polynesians fluent, fast and unbridled in the water, codified competitive swimming was a foreign concept. The sport may be seen as alien with paternalistic markings and racial discourse but was inevitably shaped by their own natural abilities and proven legacies in the water. Specifically, Samoa's swimming history has social and cultural elements which inevitably permeated into modern-day sport. Samoans were once seen as strong, confident swimmers, though local, regional and global movements, Western impressions, international sport influences and conflicting ideologies contributed to Samoa's reluctant establishment of competitive swimming.

Chapter 3: Literature Review & Justification for the Research

Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it.

C.S. Lewis

Introduction

The previous chapter aimed to set the scene by giving a historical account of swimming within the Pacific Islands and Samoa. Chapter 3 will lead to an expanded literature review of cultural and contemporary issues impacting the development and participation of swimming.

This literature review section begins by explaining the tactical approach that I took. While a traditional literature review intends to move from a general international scope of research to specific research with a localised focus, I am presented with a conundrum as there is a plethora of literature internationally on barriers and motivators to swimming, yet a paucity of literature specific to this topic within the Pacific region. Therefore, I decided to take a different approach as subsequently.

My approach was two-fold: to illuminate the unique socio-cultural and socio-political aspects of the *fa'aSamoa* and to draw connections to the existing regional and international literature specific to sport, physical activity and swimming participation. I begin with a literature review centred on existing Samoan-based research. Although the Samoan literature is not specific to swimming, it highlights the unique characteristics of the *fa'aSamoa* and the relevance to each section within the literature review. The literature review attempts to capture the scholarly findings on barriers and enablers of Pacific sport and physical activity research, then links it to a summary of the international academic work in the constraint research in swimming participation. The tandem approach will highlight the critical tenets within Pasifika research in sport, physical activity and leisure with the key findings from the international literature on swimming. Thirdly, as my research will include the youth as a central participant within the proposed study, I present literature on youth sport participation and the factors and people that invariably influence participation or non-participation in sports. As I am both inside and outside the culture, I found this section illuminating, opening new possibilities for consideration within this research topic.

The Fa'aSamoa / Self / Space / Sport

In Samoa, the *fa'aSamoa* is the Samoan way of life. The Samoan culture is diverse in its ways, ideas, customs, myths and legends. Initially, Pratt (1984) defined *fa'aSamoa* as "an act according to Samoan customs" (p. 131) and McPhearson (1990) expanded the definition indicating that the Samoan way of life, or the *fa'aSamoa*, is a collection of practices and rituals by which Samoans conduct their lives

which centre upon the *nu'u* (village) political and social constructs. Samoan historian Meleisea (1987) further illustrates that *fa'aSamoa* as 'the manner of the Samoans; according to Samoan customs and traditions" (p. vii). Tagoilelagi (1995) succinctly describes *fa'aSamoa* as "a term which encompasses the political, social, economic, cultural and spiritual system of the Samoan people" (p. 4). Cultural protocols that shape the *fa'aSamoa* are present in almost every aspect of Samoan society, with *aiga* (family) at the centre shaping how a Samoan person identifies through their family, where they learn the Samoan values such as *fa'aloloalo* (respect), *tautua* (service), *alofa* (love), *suli* (position) and *fa'asinomaga* (identity). Samoa has the oldest Polynesian culture and can be witnessed as a living culture within the communities of Samoans worldwide, though, most especially on the islands of Samoa. Although the *fa'aSamoa* is a practised culture, Pacific scholars attest that the culture is everchanging due to globalisation, Western influences and migration, ever mindful that the culture is not static (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004).

In contrast to Western definitions of the individual, the Samoan individual within the *fa'aSamoa* is demarcated differently. The Samoan self is defined through a person's roles, status, birth order, title and heritage within their *aiga* (family) context. Thus, the Samoan self is a 'relational self' (Anae, 2016) and is described as reliant on relationships (Tamasese et al 2005). Anae (2016) explains that these relationships occur within the *vā* or the space between people. To fully understand the *fa'aSamoa* demands familiarity with the concept of *vā* most specifically the *vā* tagata (the relational space between people), the *vā fealoaloa'i* (the harmonious relationships between people) and the *vā tapuia* (the harmonious relationships between people, land, and the environment). Lilomaiava-Doktor (2009) and Shore (1982) have contributed extensively to research on the *vā*, *vā feoloa'i* and *vā tapuia*, emphasising the centrality of the culture for research considerations within the *fa'aSamoa*.

As I canvassed the existing Samoan-based research, it became evident that there was need for research in the areas of leisure constraints in a local sport context. Furthermore, it needs to include research on competitive swimming in Samoa. Even though leisure, sport and physical activity research have been growing for over 30 years on an international platform, regional sports scholars, anthropologists, and sociologists are slowly developing this area of research within Samoa and Samoan communities. With this growing repository of research, there are two areas of focus: the non-professional local Samoan athlete and the professional Samoan/Pacific athlete who lives abroad. I will address both subsets of research as they demonstrate parallels to what constrains and enables participation in sport and physical activity in Samoa and the Pacific.

Samoa / Physical Activity / Sport

To date there have been a few yet significant contributions regarding the non-professional athlete in Samoa, such as sport and development (Kwauk, 2014a; Kwaku 2014b; Kwauk, 2016), rural Samoan

girls and sport (Schuster & Schoeffel, 2018); Samoa health and physical education constraints (Schuster et al., 2018) and the influences of play within early childhood development in Samoa (Schuster & Lauina-Viliamu Fa'amatuainu, 2019). Within the physical activity field, Tuagalu's (2009) research on physical activity practices in Apia, along with the work of Heard et al. (2017) who focused on female participation in Zumba, contribute to this small but significant research work. Findings from these studies indicate that key areas regarding prior knowledge, cultural values, challenges of societal acceptance to the new curriculum and sporting activities are recurrent themes within the education sector in Samoa. Kwauk's (2014b) research unearths how community sport is a tool for commodity, mobility and remittance. Schuster and Schoeffel (2018) conclude that culture, male dominance, and policy to practise dissonance limit sporting opportunities for rural-based Samoan girls. Although there is no literature specific to competitive swimming in Samoa, the following literature explores aspects of cultural norms that have impacted engagement in physical activity and indicates that these cultural codes could extend to the present gap in literature specific to swimming in Samoa. However, I will draw on concepts that can extend to understanding sports within the local Samoan environment.

Vā tapuia /Feiagaiga / Modesty

Building upon the concept of space is seen in Anae's (2010) work of the *vā* and defining the importance of the sacred space between individuals, family and the community. The *vā* between the opposite sex and the relational space between brother and sister is critical in the *fa'aSamoa* (Anae, 2010; Sauni, 2009, 2011) and *Pasifika* research. Within Samoa, cultural conditions deter females from engaging in sports (Schuster & Schoeffel, 2018), which aligns with the *feiagaga* (covenant). The *feiagaiga* is a traditionally placed *vā tapuaia* (sacred space) between brothers and sisters. This *vā* forbids any contact (physical) between brother and sister or contact with their respective possessions. The sister is considered sacred (*sā*) to her brother, which has fed into modern concepts of feminine modesty (Schoeffel, 1995).

Similarly, Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) work foreground the concept of the *vā tapuia* and sport participation. Their findings indicated that the cultural yet protective relationship between brother and sister was an institutional barrier for young girls participating in sports activities in the eyes of the traditional village. There remains a gap in scholarly research on swimming within the parameters of Samoa. The *feiagaga* (covenant) was just one example raised in Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) chapter.

Another factor that Schuster and Schoeffel (2018) contested was gender-based discriminations of young girls participating in sport in Samoa due to dress code, behaviour and cultural relationship boundaries. The Samoan culture values modesty which is evident through the relationship structures

within the family and village roles (Schoeffel, 1978), indicating that "all aspects of village life are regulated by the matai council from the dress (long hair for men and immodesty in women's clothes) are banned in most villages" (Hooper, 1998, p. 23). Given the nature of modesty in Samoa and the distinct delineated roles of men and women (Meleisea, M. & Meleisea, P.S., 1987), these nudity taboos exist within the *fa'aSamoa*.

In traditional codes of modesty, there was a different set of codes to follow. Females did not cover their breasts, but the sacred area of the female body between the waist and knees was concealed and decorated with the *malu* (women's tattoo). In contrast, Samoan culture nowadays teaches young women to cover the breasts, shoulders, the *pute* (naval), and knees, to limit exposure to the opposite sex (Schuster & Schoeffel, 2018), and to shower or bathe separately from the opposite sex, and when bathing in the sea for recreation, to be fully clothed.

Schuster and Schoeffel (2018) found similar findings regarding constraints to sports clothing for rural young females in Samoa. Regarding swimming, both males and females would wear minimal clothing, which is incongruent with Samoa society but has yet to be researched. Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) findings of modesty constraints and gender discrimination in sports have contributed to the gender studies movement in Samoa and the Pacific, which have focussed on women (Mead, 1928; Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1991; Simanu-Klutz, 2011) as well as gender and sport studies (Kanemasu & Molnar, 2017). However, Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) research was limited to rural girls and access to general sports and activities. What is missing is research encompassing both males and females participating in the gender-inclusive sport of swimming. These social norms surrounding the sport of swimming may be juxtaposed with the cultural norms of male and female interactions and the views of partial nudity within society. However, research needs to explore if swimming costumes and the act of swimming collide with cultural norms.

Similarly, international literature finds gender issues constrain swimming development (Giles, 2005; Golob et al., 2013). Globally, swimming purports to be gender inclusive but perceptual barriers to participation still exist (Evans, 2017), such as semi-nudity, surveillance of swimmers' bodies by others, and the presence of others within the swimming environment (Evans & Allen-Collinson, 2016; Evans & Sleap, 2012, 2015; Scott, 2010). Moreover, gender-based constraints can influence women to join alternative sports, as indicated by Kleindienst-Cachay's (2011) research with Muslim women who chose activities other than swimming as the clothing required (for swimming) did not meet cultural requirements.

Additionally, Giles (2005) addresses the female menses and swimming nexus. Giles (2005) offers new perspectives in understanding the nexus between the cultural mores of indigenous Canadian women and sporting practices. Her research revealed that spiritual belief systems adversely affected

women's intermittent swimming engagement. Giles's (2005) research on Dene communities in Canada showed an exciting finding that Dene menstrual traditions had strong influences on the Dene female swimming practices, such that menstruating women should not go into a boat on the lake and men and women should not swim together as a "negative outcome of 'hurting fish' spirits can hinder the female reproductive abilities" (Giles, p. 16, 2005 in Golob et al., p. 43, 2013). Her research findings helped apply more contextual and appropriate policies for indigenous sports in Canada (Giles, 2005). My personal and professional interactions with Samoan female swimmers and parents demonstrate a history of personal belief systems regarding females, menstruation and swimming practices, indicating another gap in the literature. Recent scholarship by Paice (2021) and Pinel et al. (2022) has focussed on female athletes and menses, but not specifically on ethnic minorities and swimming.

Being seen / Swimming Spaces

Adding to the Samoan cultural constraints of modesty and female/male relationships, Garth and Hardin's (2019) Samoan-based research have applied a new lens to the barrier framework using a social visibility paradigm. Garth and Hardin (2019) found that social visibility was a barrier framework for Samoans who wanted to avoid being seen exercising in front of others. While Garth and Hardin's study analysed weight management programmes in Cuba and Samoa, they found that social visibility positively and negatively impacted weight management participants. This social visibility concept can be readily applied to the constructs of swimming, whereas it is an activity evident in culturally unaccepted attire. There is an opportunity for further research to build upon barrier frameworks such as social visibility (Garth & Hardin, 2019) and gender roles (Schuster & Schoeffel, 2018), which echo similar barriers in the international literature regarding body consciousness (Evans & Sleap, 2015; McMahon & McGannon, 2017; Scott, 2010).

In contrast, Heard et al. (2017) research in Samoa on the relationship between organised physical activity and sport yielded different results. In the Heard et al. (2017) study on barriers to physical activity in Samoa, 28 participants were involved in semi-structured interviews to explore their experiences with physical activity. Researchers asked the participants what helped them stay involved in physical activity and what physical activity barriers they encountered. The findings showed that dance enabled the participants to negotiate around the discomforts of physical activity (Heard et al., 2017). The participants viewed dance as a comfortable and familiar activity. They found comfort in seeing many body shapes engaged in physical activity (Heard et al., 2017), contrary to Garth and Hardin's (2019) finding of the discomfort of social visibility of Samoan participants.

Furthermore, Heard et al. (2017) study, mainly involving Samoan women, revealed a different finding to Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) scholarly chapter on barriers to women and girls' participation in sports in rural Samoa. In the latter, gender structures and associated belief systems negatively impact

females' participation in sports and physical activity (Schuster & Schoeffel, 2018). The challenges of a woman's domestic role in the rural setting created a cultural barrier to sport participation in Samoa (Right to Play, 2008). As only urban women and rural girls participated in these studies, this research will address a gap in the literature swimming is an activity performed both in rural and urban settings inclusive of males and females.

In line with Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) and Garth and Hardin's (2019) constraints with visibility, international research on female body image and swimming had similar though more specific findings. The swimming-specific literature concludes that females encounter a double barrier when swimming. In the work of Berukoff and Hill (2010), firstly, women faced challenges with body image inadequacies and were more likely "to suffer from external pressures" (Berukoff & Hill, 2010, p. 714) regarding body image from media, family and peers. In an autoethnographic approach, McMahon and McGannon (2017) explored the conflicted relationship between body acceptance, image, size and ideal shape as a competitive swimmer. From the elite swimmer perspective, McMahon and McGannon's (2017) results relate to the research findings on recreational swimmers' inadequate feelings regarding swimming at a public facility (Evans & Allen-Collinson, 2016; Evans & Sleap, 2012, 2015; Scott, 2010). Additionally, the coach's opinion of a swimmer's body (McMahon & McGannon, 2017) and the effect of 'others' looking at a swimmer's body (Scott, 2010) have similar impacts on the swimmers' views of their body acceptance.

The concept of semi-nudity, which is not acceptable in the *fa'aSamoa*, may cause participation constraints. Scott (2012) draws on Burns (1992) concept of polite fiction when referring to the semi-naked presence at a swimming pool. According to Scott (2010), this tactful polite fiction approach indicates that "clothing plays an important role in managing the threats posed by nudity (in swimming) and can observe some interesting rituals for (un-)dressing the swimmer's body" (p. 135). Scott (2010) raises an interesting paradox about the activity of formal swimming as "swimmers are ambiguously placed between the naked and the clothed, the shameful and the civilised" (p. 135). Scott's (2010) study further elucidates that swimming can cause nudity taboos such as flirting, ogling, acknowledging partial nakedness, and gazing, creating stress in swimming. The international findings on the body, semi-nakedness, image, and public spaces demonstrate a parallel to the concept, as mentioned earlier, of the *vā tapuia*. This sacred space applies to harmonious spaces and relationships, including sports and physical activity. There is no research on how these concepts of semi-nudity, swimming spaces and being seen are experienced by female or male swimmers living in Samoa.

Class / Access / Water Safety

Not surprisingly, international literature asserts that three main socio-economic factors constrain swimming participation (Irwin et al., 2010; Moran, 2007; Ponessa, 1992). Firstly, Ponessa (1992)

indicates that socio-economic status is a prime factor in swimming proficiency, as those raised in the middle to upper classes have regular access to swimming facilities. Secondly, those within the middle and upper classes have access to water safety skills, namely lessons and programmes. Thirdly, those with access to facilities and water safety classes can acquire water safety skills (Irwin et al., 2010). These socio-economic factors contribute to the disparities in access, schooling, financial surplus, facilities, and equipment. Globally, ethnic minorities typically do not have the money to access pools, lessons, programmes or equipment (Irwin et al., 2010). While Ross et al. (2014) asserts that if structural constraints are overcome, access to facilities can alleviate these socio-economic differences. However, as noted by Woodward (1998), "simply overcoming structural constraints did not always lead to new leisure experiences" (in Ross et al, 2014, p. 2).

At the same time, competitive swimming is associated with social class, access, affordability, and culture of a socially elite sport. For example, DeLuca and Andrews (2016) wrote a series of publications on swimming and class-based power and privilege, which contribute to the complex interplay of capitals (economic, social, cultural, and physical) to showcase that swimming is a class-based sport or activity. The relationship between swimming and cultural protocols, gender, parental attitudes, generational beliefs, and class factors has regularly featured in the literature.

Despite the findings on class and access, Samoa follows a unique cultural framework regarding social class. As a point of interest, in Samoa, concepts such as heritage, titles, legacy and land ownership skew the Western concept of class. Samoa's socio-economic groupings are village-based, and wage labourers are primarily attached to customary land. The other groupings within Samoa are the public servants, those of lesser titles and authority within the government, higher ranked officials, and wealthy businessmen and finally, the power elite or the parliament force of the country. Those within the middle class are the people and businessmen with the resources to maintain a European lifestyle (Hooper, 1998). As Hooper (1998) states, "wealth and education are the keys to socioeconomic advancement in Samoa" (p. 47). Social class within a Samoan context offers another avenue to understand how swimming is perceived across these sectors and not from the limited Western concept of classes.

While there is no specific research on Samoa and water safety skills, recent studies internationally have focused on ethnic and racial minority groups and water safety skills (Irwin et al., 2010; Moran, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008; Moran & Wilcox, 2013; Quan et al., 2006). Within the Pacific, Moran's work is closer to home and is focused on extensive research on swimming behaviours within New Zealand (Moran, 2006a; 2006b; 2007). Specifically, Moran's (2007) research focused on water safety knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of young *Pasifika* youth in New Zealand. His research opened a new portal into understanding more about *Pasifika's* knowledge, attitude and behaviours regarding swimming and water safety. His study on *Pasifika* high school students and their self-perceptions of

swimming and water safety ability significantly contributed to this field. The students' self-reporting answers indicated that 27% believed they could not swim 25 m or less, and 73% believed they could not swim 100 m or more. Moran (2006a) concluded that the *Pasifika* students came from lower socio-economic areas and hence attended a lower decile school, affecting their opportunities to acquire water skills due to cost. Moran's (2006a, 2007) findings aligned well with Mael, 1995; Quan et al., 2006; Smith & Brenner, 1995, which all indicated ethnic minorities self-reported having low swimming abilities and little competence in water safety skills.

Berukoff and Hill (2010) focused on Hispanic students and swimming in another self-reporting study. Their focus was on the swimming performances of Hispanic students using the Swimming Self-Efficacy scale (Starek & McCullagh, 1999). Surveys, including the Swimming Self-efficacy scale, followed up the swim tests, the perception of drowning risk survey (McCool et al., 2008) and questions addressing fear of drowning, swimming opportunities, body image and athletic skill. Berukoff and Hill (2010) found that self-efficacy strongly predicted swimming performance, as supported by previous self-efficacy research (Hepler & Chase, 2008; Treasure et al., 1996). Moreover, Berukoff and Hill (2010) found that fear was a significant psychological influence that negatively impacted the swimmers to perform basic swimming tasks. Equally, there is scope to build on the work of Berukoff and Hill (2010) to include socio-economic variables, which directly impacted the overall access, skill and self-perceived comfort of swimming as found in Moran (2007).

Qualitative research using a Pasifika world lens to explore a deeper understanding of swimming engagement will contribute to this field of study. The quantitative research employed a self-reporting questionnaire, as seen in Berukoff and Hill (2010) and Moran (2007), which has inherent limitations such as limited responses and validity of answers (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007) though Walsham (1995) attests, "it can be argued that interviews are an important data source since they enable researchers to step back and examine the interpretations of their fellow participants in some detail" (p. 78). Although Moran's work represents some of the first recorded evidence of *Pasifika* student abilities in swimming and water safety, Moran (2007) concluded that qualitative analysis is further needed to "understand what New Zealand *Pasifika* youth know, think and do about their water safety" (p. 167). The study indicated that 30% of the 204 *Pasifika* students who participated were born in their home Pacific Island country. The study exposes the need for further research on native-born *Pasifika* students, their knowledge, perceived skills and attitudes towards water activities and safety.

Although Moran's (2006, 2007, 2008, 2010) research overall focuses heavily on drowning prevention and the correlation between socio-economic factors influencing drowning occurrences, there is scope to investigate beyond the socio-economic implications of access to aquatic opportunities and experiences. My research will extend Moran's findings and investigate whether these emerging factors are present in Samoa, specifically with Samoan youth who live in Samoa.

As discussed above, from a Western perspective, socio-economic status is a defining variable with ethnic minorities and swimming abilities. Alternatively, in the Samoan culture, more intangible yet significant variables give weight to a person's status within family, village and country. For example, the concept of *vā* also underscores hierarchical relations in Samoa culture. A complete set of protocols based on deference and respect which must be observed between persons of different and unequal status, most visible in everyday life in parent/adult-child, titled-untitled relations, which determine the mode in which space is occupied, the order in which food is consumed and in which verbal interaction is permitted (Schoeffel, 1984, 1987; Meleisea, 1995).

Spirituality / Social Roles

The spaces in which people engage with swimming has yielded some important findings. From a Western perspective, the concept of relational space in a swimming context is touched upon by Scott (2009). Scott (2009) focuses on the social order constructs in a swimming pool environment and space discourse. The local social world of a swimming pool operates using the norms and routines of the swimmers. Using a Negotiated Order Theory (NOT) lens, Scott (2009) claimed that swimmers constantly evaluate and re-evaluate their social roles and positions at a swimming pool due to shared space. This research has concluded that the cultural environment surrounding the swimming spaces and structural pools constrains participation in swimming and physical activity.

In Samoa, the swimming spaces, such as the swimming pool, freshwater spring pools and village seafront areas, are essential considerations of influence on swimming in Samoa. Freshwater spring pools are an epicentre of many local village activities throughout many coastal villages on the two main islands of Upolu and Savaii. There has yet to be research on the swimming spaces within Samoa though Macpherson and Macpherson's (2017) research on water usage in the Pacific touches upon the spiritual, religious and cultural contexts that define natural water spaces, such as freshwater pools in Samoa. Macpherson and Macpherson (2017) notes that spring pools found throughout Samoa were not traditionally used for vigorous activities, prioritising respectful code of conduct, separation of sexes, and ensuring modest behaviour and language when using village pools. The pools were used for healing (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2017, p. 88) and for medicinal purposes such as skin healing (tattoos, wound infections, and other skin remedies). Freshwater pools have yet to be used as a site for competitive swimming activities. Instead, the cultural protocols within each village dictate the use of the freshwater pools. As discussed in the history chapter, missionaries introduced modesty by bringing new behaviours to the natural spring pool setting (Suaalii-Sauni et al., 2014).

> Freshwater pools played an important role in the social organisation of the families and villages that lived around them as village pools were a central element of daily life because, in most villages, all had to go to springs or wells at some point in their day to bathe, collect

> water or wash clothes. Because these visits often took place during low tide, springs became important meeting places for village (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2017, p. 90).

Unlike the *malae* (field), which is used for play, sport, recreation and community activities (Schuster et al 2018), the use of freshwater pools, the sea and the rivers may not be seen as sporting or recreational areas as much as seen as functional, spiritual and traditional areas used within the Samoan daily life.

Additionally, socio-cultural norms, such as spiritual beliefs, are known constraints to swimming. Some scholars have suggested that ethnic minorities are at a disadvantage in acquiring swimming skills due to spiritual beliefs (Quan et al., 2006); cultural protocols (Hastings et al., 2006); and personal, familial and cultural belief and attitudes such as fate, spirits, unawareness of water danger, avoidance of the water, and overestimation of skills (Giles, 2005; Golob et al., 2013; Moran, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Quan et al., 2006). Previously signalled literature by Quan et al. (2006) research on Vietnamese immigrants demonstrated this correlative constraint. Woodward (1988) emphasised that racial and cultural implications may "complicate models of structural constraints" (in Ross et al., 2014, p. 220) as not all barriers can be removed. Similarly, Shinew, Floyd and Parry (2004) signalled the importance of understanding the relationship between race or culture and constraints. They highlighted the need to understand how leisure socialisation patterns can stem from cultural value systems and social norms (Floyd & Shinew, 1999; Hastings, Zahran & Cable, 2006; Ross et al., 2014; Wiltse, 2007).

While no scholarly work has addressed the interconnection between spiritual beliefs and swimming in Samoa, it is critical to highlight that Samoa has a strong relationship with *Aitu,* or spirits, which may inherently play a role in long-held belief systems regarding the safety of the water, engagement with the water and formal swimming. Macpherson and Macpherson's (2017) Samoan-based research on the traditional use of water and the findings of Giles (2005) and Quan et al. (2006) on spiritual belief systems interfering with water skills can directly contribute to environmental and cultural barriers to engaging in swimming. My research intends to unearth the constraining and enabling factors within the environmental context of Samoa, including the urban and rural settings village and the natural and built swimming spaces.

Time / Space / Cultural Commitments

From a Pacific perspective, I question if there can be successful negotiation between cultural roles, relationship protocols and physical spaces to accommodate uninhibited sport participation. There needs to be specific research on swimming and concepts of space (relational or time) though Sauni (2009) provided a sound theoretical framework to underpin Pacific involvement in sport and

recreation. He expanded on the concept of space (time) available and the cultural obligations and expectations that use this space (time) for Pacific populations, as these cultural obligations can enable or restrict participation in sports and recreation.

This work was expanded upon by Gordon, Sauni, Tuagalu and Hodis's (2010) research on Pacific communities in New Zealand and their engagement with sport. Drawing on a theoretical framework advanced by Sauni (2009), the findings compared the concept of the space (time) available and the differing cultural obligations and expectations that fill up that finite space (time) for *Pasifika*. In their study, New Zealand *Pasifika* revealed that the space (time) available for participation in sport and recreation has cultural implications. Gordon et al. (2010) found that family commitments, cultural obligations and work stole time from the participants and their desire to play sports. This was reflected Sauni's (2009) findings that the competing factors in the *Pasifika* space, such as family, religion, and cultural practices, interfere with sport participation.

In these studies, time is drawn from a Pacific perspective which makes a strong argument for conducting research within an indigenous paradigm. As Gordon et al. (2010) posits, "Sauni's theoretical framework around the concept of space (time) available for sport and recreation and the influence of cultural obligations in filling this space." It is critical to understand the value of relationships and the demands of space (time) that participants have with family, work, religion, and culture. These are essential factors in understanding another culture, such as the *fa'aSamoa* (Sauni, 2011). Furthermore, Tupuola (2006) attests that Pacific and non-Pacific researchers need to consider the participants' culture The unique framing of space and time are barriers to sports and recreation participation for Pacific communities.

The Samoan family and physical activity were further explored in another research study, albeit in a New Zealand context (Gordon et al., 2013). Gordon, Sauni and Tuagalu's (2013) research on barriers and enablers of sport and physical activity in *Pasifika* communities in New Zealand established a consistent theme of family or community involvement. Gordon et al. (2013) confirmed that "coming together for a 'relaxed' common purpose was a significant finding concerning positive sport and recreation experiences" (p. 4) and presented a protective factor to enable sport participation. Although this research was limited by its positioning in New Zealand communities, a Samoan-based study by Khoo, Adair and Schulenkorf (2014) on cricket found similar results. Their study on the sport of cricket in Samoa explained that participants enjoyed the social inclusion aspect of cricket, confirming the significance of family. Both studies supported the finding that sport was highly inclusive as it catered for all fitness levels, disabilities, and ages, breaking down gender barriers within Samoa (Khoo et al., 2014).

Likened to some of Kwauk's (2016) findings, Tuagalu (2009) discovered faith, family, and culture as barriers to personal physical activity instead of being motivators. Tuagalu's (2009) survey explored "perceptions about physical activity, health, barriers to physical activity, sources of encouragement and demographic trends" (p. 46). Individual barriers to physical activity in Samoa have pointed to culture, family commitments, church obligations, social customs, and social expectations (Heard et al., 2017; Horton, 2014; Tuagalu, 2011). Not only were individual barriers found within Samoa-based research, but barriers within sport development initiatives indicated that lack of knowledge, lack of expertise, limited resources, and inadequate support (Khoo, Schulenkorf, & Adair, 2014; Kwauk, 2016; Rasmussen, 2010; Schuster et al., 2018;) were common findings.

Tuagalu (2011) researched barriers and access to physical activity in Samoa. Specifically, he addressed the issue of locally placed research. A total of 801 surveys were completed by respondents aged between 13 and 50. The survey included questions that explored perceptions about physical activity, health, barriers to physical activity, sources of encouragement and demographic trends. While Tuagalu (2011) found similar barriers such as family (Horton, 2014; Lakisa et al., 2014; Panapa & Phillips, 2014; Schaaf, 2006), religious activities (Lakisa et al., 2014; Tiatia, 2008) and environmental factors such as church and family commitments (Lakisa et al., 2014), the defining difference between Tuagalu (2011) and the other studies is the study's context.

Participants in Tuagalu (2011) stated that family constraints such as family duties, roles and responsibilities, as well as environmental constraints such as village curfew were barriers to physical activity. These barriers are unique to the Samoan culture and Samoa's locality, which may also impact participation in competitive swimming. While acknowledging that the unique cultural underpinnings may be a primary constraint on the development of swimming in Samoa, Tuagalu's (2011), as well as Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) research injects the importance of locality in Samoan research.

Sport for Development / Challenges / Samoa

While there is a repository of literature on youth sport participation models outside of the Pacific region, there is a paucity of literature specific to Pacific regional sport development and youth sport participation. In contrast, most of the literature on sport and development in the Pacific takes a Sport for Development (SFD) perspective due to the bilateral funding provided from external government donors and international development organizations. Although not specific to swimming in the Pacific, SFD has made significant strides over the past fifteen years (Levermore & Beacom, 2009; Schulenkorf & Adair, 2014). It is an emerging research field investigating the use of sports programs and activities to achieve non-sport outcomes. The concept of SFD is distinct from sport development as SFD research often focuses on greater social, economic, social, cultural, educational, and political benefits, to name a few, for communities or society as a whole.

SDF works from the premise that sports have the potential to reach marginalized groups (Coakley, 2002, 2011; Kwauk, 2014; Stewart-Withers & Brook, 2009), build relationships (Sherry et al., 2017; Kwauk, 2014) and lead to outcomes such as improved social cohesion and health practices (Richards et al., 2016, 2022; Kwauk, 2014; Khoo et al., 2014; Schulenkorf & Adair, 2014). From an indigenous perspective, the research shows that sports can empower youth, women, communities, and other disadvantaged groups and create policy space to advocate social change (Stewart-Withers, 2009). There has been a recent wave of SFD work within the Pacific region, primarily driven by bilateral funding agreements between Australia and the Pacific Islands or through the sports development initiatives within the United Nations' focus on achieving millennium development goals via the vehicle of sports engagement (Wanner, 2021). While the regional projects, initiatives, and relevant research are not investigating the enablers and inhibitors to swimming participation, the literature within the SFD nexus may offer insight into what has been achieved thus far within the region.

Extensive SFD research by Sherry, Schulenkorf, Seal, Nicholson and Hoye (2017) focusing on netball offers insights into the challenges within the sporting community in Samoa. Using a three-tiered lens, Sherry et al. (2017) emphasize issues such as gender inequality, cultural inhibitors, the absence of male support, and the lack of village support for female engagement in sport. These, in addition to other findings, such as access to facilities, limited infrastructure, lack of curriculum rollout, and limited awareness of healthy behaviours are echoed in Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) findings on girls and rural sports engagement. However, Sherry et al. (2017) research findings offered insight into a micro-level constraint regarding priority conflict. The netball project, intended to be an SFD tool to increase overall health practices and knowledge, was used to focus solely on high-performance outcomes and elite performance progression. The federation's focus on performance outcomes both regionally and internationally was thwarted by the SFD's aims and intentions. This finding alone highlights an inherent conflict between funding agencies pushing the SFD versus a sport development focus. SFD has emerged as the leading framework for sport in the region with little regard for sport development models or frameworks. Given the context of SFD focus, Sherry et al.'s (2017) work supports Hartmann and Kwauk's (2011) research findings which ask the larger question of whether sport Saman communities that are propped up with SFD frameworks can "truly facilitate structural and sustainable change" (Sherry et al., 2017, p. 313).

Adding to the literature was Khoo, Schulenkorf, and Adair's (2014) work that focused on understanding the opportunities and challenges of using cricket as an SFD tool in Samoa. The findings showed that the most important outcomes of the programme were gender equity, social cohesion, health awareness, and travel opportunities (Khoo et al., 2014). However, the research concluded that the barriers of resource limitations, stakeholder relationships, cultural context, and programme monitoring remained significant barriers to extending the programme (Khoo et al., 2014). Again, while the programme affected change and benefit for the communities involved, the inherent

barriers of funding, communication, bilateral agreements, and ever-present cultural issues determined the short-lived viability of the programme. Other SFD projects using netball to increase health outcomes such as mental and physical well-being in rural Samoan women (Keane et al., 2017; Richards et al., 2016, 2022) also reinforced previous findings that interpersonal (communication knowledge) skills and environmental (access, transport) factors all play into participating in SFD programmes within Samoa and the region (Keane et al., 2017, Richards et al., 2022; Schulenkorf et al., 2022). Stewart-Withers and Brook (2009) offered an additional finding using Rugby League in Samoa within a SFD space, revealing that sports could be an engine or driver of development in such areas as crime prevention, health promotion, and alleviating family violence. The critical shortcoming of most SFD research is its short-term funding models, focused on non-sport social outcomes and the vocalized need for indigenous researchers to lead further sport and development research in the Pacific Island region (Hapeta et al., 2019; Keane et al., 2017; Sherry et al., 2017). The literature highlights how the SFD model has influenced sport development initiatives within the Pacific, though it leaves a temporary impression on sport participation and growth.

Beyond the SFD framework research, is another growing body of research that examines Pacific Island sports from a larger, global perspective, linking culture, global hegemonies, transnational, commodification, remittance, and gender constraints (Uperesa, 2014; Kwauk, 2014; Stewart-Withers & Hapeta, 2020; Uperesa & Mountjoy, 2014; Molnar & Kanemasu, 2014; Kanemasu et al., 2019). Work by Uperesa (2014) on the genealogy of gridiron, targeting the historical and economic influences within Samoa, has provided a timely platform for emerging research to investigate how sports have opened a passageway for island-based athletes to achieve employment by participating in sports. Uperesa's (2014) detailed work on the motivations behind football players to participate in the sport showed the realistic transformation of the sport leading to international opportunities. While the research addresses a professional sports pathway, it offers findings that could be similar to participation in swimming, such as grassroots engagement, family support, increased awareness of sports' impact on family economics, and playing beyond the local game.

While the scope of sport development research within the Pacific primarily focuses on SFD initiatives and professional sport development pathways, both offer insight into the challenges, the cost, the contributions and the growth potential within local communities. There is a clear gap within the literature on Pacific sport development research, specifically on the factors that enable and limit participation, underlining the need for more research on contemporary, non-mainstream sports like swimming.

Parent Influence / Motivations / Staying in Sport

Reviewing the international research involving children and sport, Shields and Synnot (2016) notes the importance of accounting for the dynamic and connected relationship between parent and child regarding physical activity and sport participation. The momentum of this research began in North America resulting in foundational findings in the area of leisure studies. The impact of the parent on the child's sporting interest, performance and outcome has been found in scholarly work over forty years (Dukes & Coakley, 2002; Greendorfer, 1977; Snyder & Spreitzer, 1973). Parents have been found to influence children's pre-adolescent years and positively influence their child's participation in a sport through socialisation (Greendorfer, 1977; Light et al., 2013).

In addition to the perceived structural barriers to children to participate as factors such as lack of time, family resources, coaching fees, travel costs, equipment and facility access (Chafetz & Kotarba, 1995; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Hellstedt, 1995; Ross et al., 2014), the parent plays a more significant role that influences participation in sport. In a positive light, the level of the parent's commitment to the child's sport participation has an even more far-reaching impact than the more commonly voiced structural barriers of time, money, and resources.

Dukes and Coakley's (2002) research surveyed over 1200 households of competitive swimmers to ascertain the factors involved in the parental commitment to their child and swimming. They found three factors influenced parental commitment: family affluence, prioritising swimming and the belief that swimming enhances the child's life. While parental commitment correlated positively with a child remaining in a sport, adverse outcomes were also found. In this study, demanding schedules, loss of autonomy and parental pressure were negative consequences of parent commitment (Dukes & Coakley, 2002). Further, staying in sports due to parental pressure was a common theme in multiple studies (Côté & Hay, 2002; Dukes & Coakley, 2002; Lindstrom Bremer, 2012).

Leisure experiences are learned within the family (Shaw & Dawson, 2001) as the beliefs and feelings of a parent outwardly can influence the child (Amelia, 2012). In addition, parent belief systems influence children's sports and recreation activities. In a recent study, Amelia (2012) illustrated that parents significantly influence a child's ability to learn how to swim, and a child will trust a parent when getting into the water as the parent is projecting positive emotions with the water. Conversely, if a parent express fear or concern regarding the water, the child can learn to be afraid of the water (Amelia, 2012; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Alternatively, if a parent is involved with their children's swimming programme, it will help build relationships, enhance trust and dispel negative water experiences for both the parent and the child (Amelia, 2012).

Ross, Irwin, Irwin, Martin and Ryan (2014) found that African-American parents' belief systems influenced the likelihood of their children learning to swim. The discriminatory history for African-Americans and access to pools have a continued stronghold on families and their lack of engagement in swimming. The racial discrimination of White Only pools led to making this a white sport (Hoolihan, 2008; Wiltse, 2007). The study pointed out that parents placed a low value on swimming, had difficulties overcoming the legacy of fear, and prioritised other sports, thus negatively impacting the parent's decision to have their children participate in swimming (Ross et al., 2014). Pharr, Irwin, Layne and Irwin's (2018) findings on predictors of swimming abilities were consistent with the Ross et al. (2014) study, which showed that race and ethnicity, water-safety knowledge and fear are driving elements. Their work along with Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009) and Shaw and Dawson (2001) highlight the importance of understanding parents' role in shaping young people's engagement in swimming, sport and physical activities. The strength of the parental commitment to the child's sport could influence a child to remain in or leave a sport (Dukes & Coakley, 2002).

Berukoff and Hill (2010) extended on Harold, Eccles, Yoon, Aberbach, and Freedman-Doan's (1991) findings that gender is a factor in early swimming proficiency. The research concluded that parents influenced children during the formative years by providing opportunities or discouraging involvement in activities. Also, parents chose to be more involved in their son's sports due to perceived interests (Berukoff & Hill, 2010). The parents' focus on supporting their son's sporting activities versus their daughters echoes the previous literature review specific to Samoa. Both Kwauk's (2014a) research on boys and Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) research on the rural gender inequity element creates additional challenges for female participation, especially with the cultural constraints in Samoa.

Similar to the international findings linking parent support with child sports engagement is the research on Pacific and Samoan communities, as canvassed above. Gordon et al. (2010) and Gordon, Sauni and Tuagalu (2013) indicate that family, respect for parents and the value of relationships were vital factors in the Samoa sports research. Presently, there is no research to address this gap in the literature that explores parent and child swimming experiences in Samoa which may or may not have relational tensions such as gender discrimination, sibling cultural practices, and preferential support of male sport participation. There needs to be more literature on parental influence on Samoan swimmers. It is essential for research to consider the Samoan context and explore parental/family perspectives and the impact this has on children and youth participation.

Child / Athlete Engagement / Motivations

Another important element is the consideration of the child. Given that my research focuses on the barriers and enablers for children and youth to participate in swimming, it is critical to understand the

literature using the perspective of the child as a participant in the research. As Light et al. (2013) expresses, "both from a participation and performance perspective, understanding what attracts children to sport and keeps them involved needs more research attention" (p. 550).

Kwauk (2014b) provided solid foundational research contributing to the education, sport, and development nexus. Her work focused on sports as an alternative for male Samoans to pursue sports as an education and a career for transnational contracts. She raised issues such as competing authorities, sports seen as a time-waster, and education as the 'ticket' to move beyond the shores of Samoa. Kwauk's (2014b) groundbreaking ethnographic Samoa-based dissertation provides insight into Samoan youth and rugby. The research focussed on sport as a development tool, ultimately leading to paid careers. She presented evidence on barriers to international rugby careers for aspiring young Samoans and found barriers of marginality, including gender, location, and socio-economic status (Kwauk, 2016).

In England-based research on children and sport experiences, McCarthy and Jones (2007) revealed differences in sports interest and enthusiasm between boys and girls. Like Kwauk's (2016) findings with Samoan boys, McCarthy and Jones (2007) found the English boys to have a stronger affiliation with their sport which reinforced the concepts of sport and socialisation of male identity, masculinity, social recognition of their sport competence (McCarthy & Jones, 2007). These findings resonate with Kwauk's (2016) study of Samoan males and their drive to pursue rugby for personal and familial gain and Schuster and Schoeffel's (2018) findings of the socialisation of children into sport, particularly favouring boys than young girls in Samoa.

Beyond relational constraints and enablers, Fraser-Thomas, Côté, and Deakin's (2008) research focuses on what motivates child and youth sports participation. North America, Europe, and Australia led the research on children's perspectives on swimming (Crane & Temple, 2015) and what motivates them to remain in the sport. Comparatively, some Pacific sports research has applied motivation theories (Keung, 2018, 2019; Marsters, 2017; Marsters & Tiatia-Seath, 2019) although the focus was on elite Pacific athletes' motivations, not on children or youth.

Although most studies centre on North America and Europe, it is still essential to consider the existing literature to shed insight on the motivations of children engaging in sports. Crane and Temple's (2015) systematic review of why children drop out of sports brought some findings to the forefront of child sports research. Their review of 43 studies regarding leisure constraints found that 'fun' was the leading motivator for children to continue participating in sports, making new friends, and being part of a team. Additionally, children were motivated to stay in sports if skill improvement and new play opportunities were present. Likewise, the review of studies concluded that children's interest in competing (Gould, Feltz & Weiss, 1985), skills testing opportunities (Sirard, Pfeiffer & Pate, 2006),

and skill improvement (Gould et al., 1985) were other intrinsic motivators to remain in sport were revealed. McCarthy and Jones's (2007) qualitative study on children's sports and the concept of enjoyment yielded additional findings. Completed surveys from 152 young sports athletes addressed two questions: "How fun is the sport for you?" and "How much do you like your sport?" Their research emphasised three findings regarding a child's age, gender and sport choice. They found that as a child aged, they enjoyed sports more, contrasting with two studies using a participation inventory survey for young swimmers. These two studies, namely, Gould et al. (1985) and Salguero, Gonzalez-Boto and Tuero (2003) concluded that swimmers found it challenging to continue to swim when they exited the pre-teenage bracket and entered the adolescent age brackets.

Just five of the 43 studies reviewed in Crane and Temple's (2015) research addressed the sport of swimming, most of which were quantitative. Two studies used a participation inventory survey for young swimmers. They had similar findings where swimmers found it challenging to continue to swim when they exited the pre-teenage bracket and entered the adolescent age bracket. Lack of pleasure and general uninterest in the sport halted the successful transition (Gould et al., 1985; Salguero et al., 2003). Specifically, concerning adolescents, competence or being good enough, were found to be a strong determiner in staying or dropping out of the sport (Crane & Temple, 2015), as well as being bored or having no friends in the sport (Basterfield et al., 2015). The results indicated that the children were not overly concerned with factors outside interpersonal constraints; however, structural factors such as transportation, costs or equipment were recurrent in the Basterfield et al. (2015) study on barriers to sport involvement. However, none of the studies focussed on specific cultural demands as a reason for quitting the sport.

To date, there remains an area for research to understand the motivations of participants who engage in competitive swimming in Samoa. Therefore, turning to regional literature on what sports motivate Samoan athletes may address some relevant findings.

Sport / Identity

As canvassed in Chapter 2, there is a historical relationship between swimming and the Samoan seas long before rugby became culturally ingrained. However, it would be remiss not to highlight the growing academic findings associated with rugby union and their affiliates, such as rugby league, 7's and gridiron. Since rugby's mid-twentieth century introduction, rugby remains the most played sport in Samoa (Rasmussen, 2010; Schuster, 2020). The most researched area in Pacific sports and Pacific athletes have focused on the elite professional Pacific athlete in the field of rugby, NRL, and NFL, which reflects its place and reputation in the Pacific Islands (Keung, 2018; Lakisa et al., 2014; Marsters, 2017; Molnar & Kanemasu, 2014; Panapa & Phillips, 2014; Schaaf, 2006). The findings

from this repository of Pacific rugby-specific research may offer additional areas where research on minor sports, such as competitive swimming in Samoa, is needed.

There is an impressive set of scholarly findings elucidating rugby's popularity being due to prowess (Clément, 2014); flair (Clément, 2014); a warrior image (Clément, 2014; Hokowhitu, 2003a; Tengan & Markham, 2009; Uperesa, 2010; Uperesa, 2014, Uperesa & Mountjoy, 2014); international success (Besnier, 2012; Besnier, 2014; Clément, 2014); being "fast-paced, powerful, and dynamic" (Clément, 2014, p. 371). The dominant sport in Samoa of rugby presently shapes young Pasifika youth with an all-encompassing identity (Schaaf, 2006). As aforementioned, the central feature of the *fa'aSamoa* is *aiga* (family) and identity nurtured within this space for young Samoans. As purported in the literature, the gravitation towards team sports is aligned with the Samoan collectivist culture. McCarthy and Jones' (2007) research supported this notion of team sports that found children involved in team sports had higher levels of enjoyment than their individual sports counterparts. Factors such as ego, socialisation of a particular sport, and demonstrated skill superiority (McCarthy & Jones, 2007) may give team sports the upper hand over individual sports in attracting children's participation. Tuagalu (2009), Gordon et al. (2010), and Heard et al. (2017) all found that non-enjoyment was a barrier to participation. Nevertheless, McCarthy and Jones (2007) and Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009) delved deeper into understanding why children were not enjoying participating in sports. Their studies revealed issues around pride and shame, lack of competitive preparedness and loss of motivation. Issues such as lack of resources, identity issues, and parental influence were found in similar research (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Gould et al., 1985; Wall & Côté, 2007).

Schaaf's (2006) findings align with Marsters's (2017) findings on the public persona of rugby. Furthermore, Schaaf (2006) highlights the cultural underpinning of "hero worshipping" (p. 43), emphasising the importance of admiration with the hierarchies in the *fa'aSamoa*. Furthermore, this emphasizes that the codes of rugby play a formative and expressive role in moulding young athletes' identities because of the publicity and value placed on rugby in New Zealand (Price, 2007; Marsters, 2017). Identity and pursuing a public image are more prominent among young Pacific rugby players as rugby is heavily entrenched in Pacific communities (Horton, 2014; Schaaf, 2006). Recently, the hero-worshipping of rugby was heightened with the ecstatic reception in early November 2022 by Samoans of news that Samoa has made the finals of the world rugby league championships; the processions in Samoa, flying of flags on cars wherever there are Samoan communities, and the darker side of violent conflicts between young Samoan and Tongan men in Auckland (The Guardian, 2022). Rugby and Gridiron might be contested as a reification of the epitomes of Polynesian masculinity. However, there remains to be research investigating the public identity of a Samoan athlete engaged in an individual sport which may have different findings to the identities formed through rugby and

league. There needs to be more research exploring the concept of an athlete's concept of identity and engagement with the sport of swimming in Samoa.

Interestingly, the first wave of research focused on the socio-cultural aspects of Pasifika athletes in various high-profile sports. Regional research on rugby, NRL, and Gridiron has focussed mainly on elite athletes' motivations for mental health, development, commodification and embodiment of the sport (Keung, 2018; Lakisa et al., 2014; Molnar & Kanemasu, 2014; Marsters, 2017; Panapa & Phillips, 2014; Schaaf, 2006). Lakisa et al (2014) found that faith, family and culture are protective factors that encourage Pacific athletes to continue to succeed in their respective sports. Conversely, these same factors put immense pressure on the young athlete, as in Panapa and Phillips (2014) and Schaaf (2006). Moreover, Marsters' (2017) research revealed significant findings that Pacific NRL athletes had an array of risk factors including but not limited to family pressure, lack of life balance, burnout, negative Pacific stereotyping, transitioning difficulties, hypervisibility, performance issues and alcohol misuse. In his Pacific-specific sports research, Marsters (2017) found that resilience and family were ultimately protective factors to keeping them playing the sport. While his participants were professional players based in New Zealand, they had varying reasons for staying in the sport. Nonetheless, the intricate dynamics of the family, faith and financial remittance played protective and supportive roles for the athlete. Marsters (2017) attests that schools, clubs, and organisations were identified as critical sources of support for young Pacific athletes (Horton, 2014; Panapa & Phillips, 2014; Price, 2007; Schaaf, 2006), further indicating that research within Samoa must include all these variables as the interplay between culture, the environment and the family impacts the individual.

To date, there needs to be more research to address an understanding of how swimming is viewed in Samoa. International literature purports swimming has been described as "relaxing" (Scott, 2009, p. 129); exercise (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2006); mundane, routinised practice (Chambliss, 1989); "self-disciplined" (Scott, 2009, p. 129). Tuagalu's (2011) landmark research on physical activity barriers in Samoa concluded that 'discomfort' and 'boring' were terms applied to why people in Samoa did not engage in physical activity about activities such as swimming, walking and jogging, emphasising that physical activity is mundane. Arguably, there is a need for researching sports such as swimming as it is described as individual, linear, non-contact, and non-combative, which are terms that are not necessarily congruent with the cultural structure in Samoa. Similarly, other physical sports such as American football, rugby league, boxing and weightlifting have a proven cultural fit with the Samoan value system of communal engagement, strength, power and hegemony.

Finally, a search of studies focussing on the perception of swimming was detailed in Dixon and Bixler's (2007) research that examined the self-efficacy of young male adults in terms of swimming competency. The study focussed on examining how the 45 participants defined "swimming". It analysed three questions: (a) Do you know how to swim? (b) What is your definition of swimming?

(c) What does it mean when someone says they know how to swim? Interestingly, 42 of the 45 participants stated they knew how to swim. The findings concluded that the participants defined *swimming* as not panicking, rudimentary skills, basic skills, advanced skills, covering a distance, rescue skills and the ability to swim in multiple settings. Even though the study ultimately demonstrated the variation and degree of competency within each grouping, the answers indicated a lack of fluent understanding of what “swimming” is.

There needs to be more fluency with the term as in Samoa, swimming language and what it means to others has yet to be explored. This research intends to explore the participant's understanding of the term 'swimming' as there may be bias within the language. *"Alu taele"* means to go to the river or the sea and bathe. "Bathe in the water" is the direct translation. *"A'au"* means to swim, and the intransitive and archaic context means to move from a high to a low place or to float (Milner, 1966). The variability of the term and the presupposed definitions may have an inherent influence on fully understanding the sport of formal swimming in Samoa. The concept and the understanding of what the sport of “swimming” is has not been researched to date and may lend insight into the development of competitive swimming in Samoa.

Cultural Constraints / Sport

Overall, *Pasifika*-focussed research on constraints and enablers of physical activity participation is a growing area of research. Access to sports pathways (Kwauk, 2016), social visibility issues (Garth & Hardin, 2019), traditional use of pools (Macpherson & Macpherson, 2017), relational space (Gordon et al., 2010; Schuster & Schoeffel, 2018), space and time (Gordon et al., 2010), movement perceptions (Gordon et al., 2010; Heard et al., 2017; Tuagalu, 2011) and gender norms (Schuster & Schoeffel, 2018) have each been established as barriers to engagement in physical activity. These findings are similar to those in the broader, more specific international literature on swimming constraints.

While the *Pasifika*-sport research has been growing since the early 2000s, the international field of leisure constraints had a head start. For over 30 years, leisure constraints research has attempted to understand the barriers to people's leisure experiences and "more specifically, the reasons why people do not participate in certain activities" (Ross et al., 2014, p. 220). Early studies focussed on structural barriers such as financial ability, access, and time (Jackson, 1991; Ross et al., 2014; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). This research focussed predominantly on identifying the barriers to remove them. In some ways, the earlier research style over-simplified things as it assumed that if barriers were identified, they could be removed, allowing people to engage in the activity. However, not all barriers can be categorised as structural issues.

The literature has compelling scholarly contributions to racial or cultural constraints, specifically swimming participation in the United States. Scholars have researched the swimming gap between African Americans and White Americans (Irwin et al., 2010; Norwood, 2010; Waller & Norwood, 2009). They found that many barriers were present and affected the swimming participation of black Americans (Jackson, 2005), such as hair issues (Norwood, 2010). Specifically, Norwood's (2010) research focussed on the nuanced relationship between black female hair and their concern about getting their hair wet in swim classes. She found that considerable cost and time investment for styling African American females' hair posed a barrier to engaging in swimming lessons as they could not get their hair wet. Other findings regarding African Americans were misinterpretations of buoyancy (Irwin et al., 2009; Waller & Norwood, 2011). This study signalled that instructors assumed that blacks were negatively buoyant. Although a myth and like many other racist tropes, this assumption was found to be perpetuated by media, coaches and parents (Irwin et al., 2009).

As found in Garth and Hardin (2019), Schuster and Schoeffel (2018) and Gordon et al. (2010) research, international research concluded similar results. Specifically, social inclusion and constraints (Houlihan, 2008; Waller & Norwood, 2011), limited family resources (Edelman, 2006) and the cost of swimming (Delva, Johnston & O'Malley, 2007) were found to be the common barriers to swimming participation. All these findings impacted participants' access to pools, opportunities, and swimming experiences. The glaring difference between research based in the US and other ethnic groups is the racial segregation that African Americans encountered which effectively banned them from using swimming pools as they were seen as diseased, dirty and inferior (

Furthermore, Waller and Bemiller (2018) asserted “public swimming pools remain a salient marker of the social division in American society” (p. 2). Swimming pools presented racially tense settings due to proximity of bodies within the water, shared space, and the physical/visual intimacy water provokes (Wiltse 2007 p. 233). While Samoa did not have racial discord in terms of access to the Aquatic center or other swimming places within the country, the structure itself carries the legacy of swimming being a “white only sport” due to the ever-present racial tensions, discrimination and segration (Waller and Bemiller, 2018) that have permanently marred the history of swimming in the USA and world-wide.

Most previous research was born from the study of Irwin et al. (2009) finding that 60% of African American children cannot swim. This research indicated that disparities in access, schooling, finances, facilities, and equipment are socio-economic issues (Irwin et al., 2009) which was also highlighted in research of Schuster and Schoeffel (2018) and Schuster et al. (2018) on physical activity and sports in Samoa.

Even though the study of Irwin et al. (2009) was far-reaching and included high numbers for reliable statistical analysis, the survey tool was open for interpretation by the respondent. The results may be inaccurately reported in self-reporting data collection methods as "self-reporting faces the twin dangers of over modesty and self-aggrandisement, and it is challenging to steer a middle path between these two extremes" (Walsham, 1995, p. 78). Thus, this was new research for swimming participation, and the findings helped to understand the issues in swimming affecting ethnic minorities. Irwin et al (2009) proposed "further in-depth analysis of these findings" (p. 22) so as to improve overall participation and address the analysis using empirical research such as observation, interviews and narratives.

Across international research, cultural constraints (Chick & Dong, 2005; Ross et al., 2014) and family financial priorities (Shields & Synnot, 2016, p. 8) are barriers to swimming participation. In addition, Waller and Norwood (2009) highlighted how socialisation shapes participants' orientation to the culture of swimming and argue that "historically, African Americans as a cultural minority group have been conditioned by tradition and cultural mores not to participate in swimming and other water sports" (Waller & Norwood, 2011, p. 455). As Waller and Norwood (2009) attested, long-term generational beliefs, family history of swimming and traditional conditioning affected the perceptions of low swimming competence (Waller & Norwood, 2009). Likewise, other belief systems, such as the fear of drowning, are influenced by family, parents, culture, race, and social privilege (Ross et al., 2014; Shaw & Dawson, 2001). In comparison, there is a need to research whether competitive swimming in Samoa would have similar findings as found in the cultural constraints research (Chick & Dong, 2005; Ross et al., 2014; Shaw & Dawson, 2001; Waller & Norwood, 2011).

Summary

This literature review has drawn attention to the constraints and challenges in participation in sports, physical activity, and swimming from international and regional positioning. It has highlighted the current local and regional landscape regarding the *fa'aSamoa* and the individual and collective factors influencing involvement and cultural nuances unique to the region and Samoa. The literature addressed the relationship between barriers to sport and physical activity, including the influence of space, relational space and time within the Pacific. Additionally, this chapter revealed the challenges children and youth encounter when participating and continuing to pursue sporting activities with the influences of parents, family, peers, and environmental factors. Little is known about swimming as a youth sport pursuit within Samoa.

As signalled above, most of the previous scholarly work falls into two domains: socio-cultural disparities that affect swimming participation predominantly in African American communities and ethnic minorities or quantitative research indicating socio-economic barriers to swimming and water

safety with some focus on ethnic minorities. Golob, Giles and Rich (2013) acknowledge that non-Western cultures and societies may have different beliefs and attitudes towards water safety than those living in Western countries (Giles, 2005; Golob et al., 2013; Moran, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Quan et al., 2006). It has been argued that drownings and high-risk water engagement may be due to the failure of water safety education programs as they "do not account for differences in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours toward water safety that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities" (Golob et al., p. 42). The gamut of international research findings has indicated that constraints to swimming participation, especially in ethnic minority groups, encompass socio-cultural, geographic, gender and class factors. In contrast, the *Pasifika*-specific literature explicates significant factors, including family, culture, and spiritual practices, as enablers and constraints to sport and physical activity. However, Samoa's culture and geographic placement are distinctive, which demands specific research in this area. Thus, the intention of this study is to understand the constraints and enablers of swimming within Samoa as swimming research within the Pacific has yet to claim an academic foothold.

Justification for the research

This research aims to contribute in four distinct ways, via scholarship contribution, policy enactment, sport sustainability and contextual sport model application.

Contribution to Academic Literature

First, from a scholarly perspective, there is a paucity of literature addressing swimming participation and indigenous communities. This research looks to contribute original work in swimming development within Samoa, using a qualitative *Pasifika* methodology that has not been used frequently in the field of sports research for the Pacific. This research aims to provide an understanding of socio-cultural contexts that impact youth participating in swimming and has the potential to address a present gap in the literature regarding minor sport development and participation beyond a quantitative framework that mainly addresses socio-demographic challenges.

Support for policy implementation

Secondly, the significance of my study will address the gap in National policy enactment. While there is a rise in anticipated sport policy development through the National Sports Framework for Sports (2018-2028), there is a gap in addressing how sport participation (and development) manifests. According to Light, Harvey and Memmert (2013), "increasing participation in sport forms a core objective across a range of government policies in most developed countries" (p. 550) as seen in Samoa. This is evident in policies that focus on the benefits of regular and sustained participation in sport (including swimming) for health and the development of children and young people (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Light et al., 2013). While much research and thus institutional policy has

focussed on the benefits of regular and sustained participation in sport for health and the development of children and young people (see, e.g., Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005), there is minimal research on how engagement in sport is acquired and sustained on a regular basis.

The Government of Samoa has committed to a strategic development plan, which includes participation of sport. However, sport participation is used as a vehicle to reach intended outcomes such as health promotion (Samoa Development Strategy (SDS); decreasing non-communicable diseases (Ministry of Health Policy); achieving maximum health (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture Policy, 2010). Recently, sports, such as swimming, are regarded as enhancing regional and international sporting excellence (Government of Samoa, Sports Framework, 2018-2028) and acknowledged within the government HPE curriculum. The National Sport in Education Policy (NSEP) came onto the scene in 2018 and focusses on giving school children every opportunity to becoming physically literate and proficient in sports skills (Government of Samoa, NSEP, 2018-2023). The purpose of the NSEP is "to provide an integrated and systematic approach alongside the National Sports Framework (NSF) to the development of sports, physical activity and HPE curriculum in Samoa" (p. 3). It uses sports to teach fundamental skills and to support students on the athlete development pathway. Within the NSEP, swimming is earmarked for school sports development. The NSEP calls for swimming lessons and water safety for school communities over a ten-year period.

With the intention of Government Sport in Education policy becoming enacted to address swimming lessons and water safety for the greater school communities, this research will assist in contributing to a plan of action to support the Sport in Education policy on swimming competencies. While all these policies have the potential to increase participation in swimming, without research to help understand the factors that constrain and enable participation in swimming, it will remain challenging to create sustainable programmes.

Sustainable sport pathways for minor sports

Thirdly, this research can contribute to understanding non-mainstream types of sport, specifically, as there is minimal research on how engagement in sport is acquired and sustained regularly (Light et al., 2013). Swimming has been dismissed as a career-focused sport as it aligns with the narrow postulate that even if swim lessons and pool access becomes affordable, why would there be an investment in this skill when it is unlikely to pay off in high school or college (Smith, 2009, p. 27). *Pasifika* findings confirm that athletes are motivated by financial stability for families, remittance, and getting paid to play (Horton, 2012, 2014; Keung, 2018, 2019; Marsters, 2017; Marsters & Tiatia-Seath, 2019; Rodriguez & McDonald, 2013). Playing a sport for financial gain is a reality for *Pasifika* sportspeople (Kwauk, 2016; Marsters, 2017; Marsters & Tiatia-Seath, 2019). By understanding the barriers beyond socio-economic constraints in minor sport development, such as swimming, the links to policy rollout,

curriculum design, and community engagement can be appropriately addressed. The National Olympic Committee services 34 National sports federations in Samoa, most of which offer non-financial pathways. These organizations may benefit from understanding factors that enable or constrain communities from becoming involved in non-mainstream sports. Therefore, addressing the development of a sport that has no direct financial remuneration can contribute to not only swimming but other non-financial, independent sports.

Realistic Sport Development model for swimming

Finally, the research will provide an opportunity to contribute to developing a sustainable sporting model for swimming in Samoa. Currently, the Samoa Swimming Federation has a skeletal corporate strategy but lacks the rich data to support and guide intended outcomes. Garnering research, specifically on the constraining and enabling factors in swimming development, will contribute directly to the strategic plan as well as a comprehensive action plan for the Federation and the National Olympic Committee. The research may also inform stakeholders, such as swim clubs, swim schools and competitive leagues, on ways to negotiate the underlying factors inhibiting swim development within their respective communities.

Linking all the findings should assist in creating a framework for best practices in competitive swim development for swimmers, teachers, coaches, and community in Samoa. This research sets out to understand what barriers exist in Samoa that inhibit individuals from engaging in competitive swimming. Also, it looks to uncover the factors which enable or inhibit further competitive swimming engagement once individuals are participating in competitive swimming.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

Water is the most perfect traveller because when it travels
it becomes the path itself

Mehmet Murat ildan

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and methods used to answer the research question at the heart of this research—what have individuals experienced that enabled or constrained their engagement with competitive swimming in Samoa? In focussing on answering the overarching research questions, this project is housed in a Pacific Research Methodology (PRM) and uses a Samoan conceptual, methodological proverbial framework called *Talanoa ile i'a* to assist with the formulation, collection, and analysis of data. This research project adopts a qualitative approach that seeks to understand the constraints and enablers of participating in competitive swimming in Samoa. Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, "attempting to make sense of or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). A qualitative approach is multidisciplinary (Denzin, 2007) and used to study phenomena such as sports participation. Moreover, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) advocate using multiple methodologies in qualitative research as it has the potential to help us "get a better understanding of the subject at hand" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5). Building upon Denzin and Lincoln's work in the qualitative research field, Smith and Sparkes (2016) herald that "supporting work produced in different paradigms and encourages innovative methodologies within a multidisciplinary framework" (p. 4).

As the research aims to critically examine the factors facilitating and inhibiting participation in swimming in Samoa, it specifically seeks to understand how individuals experienced the phenomenon of swimming. Within this chapter, I explain how my positionality, location, and philosophical worldview of truth led me to use Pacific research methodologies in a respectful and appropriate manner.

The research reported in this chapter has been presented at the following conference:

Schuster, S. (2021) *Navigating Talanoa Methodology as a non-Samoan speaker: Diffusing the Binary Discord,* Samoa Language Week University of Waikato, Graduate Research Panel, 2 June 2021

Methodology

Statement of Research Questions

This research aims to critically examine the factors facilitating and inhibiting participation in swimming in Samoa. Specifically, it aims to understand how individuals and organisations experience the phenomenon of swimming. The overarching research question in this study asks what barriers and enablers individuals have experienced with the engagement of competitive swimming in Samoa.

The Map: Finding my way back home

Although I have mentioned it before, I needed to recognise myself within the chosen methodological approach for this research project. Being physically positioned outside Samoa for the entire PhD programme led me to design a methodological map to help me return home. The way home can be different for everyone. Some may take the fast, direct approach, flying quickly over the vast Pacific Ocean linking New Zealand and Samoa using a concise, Western theory to map the trajectory and have clear signposts. Others may explore the people (Samoans) versus the place (Samoa), which would produce a map locating Samoan participants within the present geography in New Zealand and leaving the journey's focus to Samoa for another time altogether.

As aforementioned, I poured over the tools at my disposal, considering Western theories such as Leisure Constraints theory (Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey, 1991; Jackson et al., 1993), Cultural Studies Theory (Hargreaves & McDonald, 2000; Jarvie & Maguire, 1994;) and even grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). However, the more I read, the more programmed my map became. The map looked like a cruise ship itinerary, with predetermined stops, inbound tours, and presentations. Decidedly, I paused and reverted to my research question to find another starting point.

As I was interested in the phenomenon of competitive swimming participation, I studied the meaning of phenomenology, which essentially is 'giving voice' to the views of the research partners and 'making sense' of what is being said (Larkin & Thompson, 2011). Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), known as the Godfather of phenomenology, pushed to the fore the concept realities. Eagleton (1983) emphasized Husserl's standpoint that "realities are thus treated as pure phenomena and the only absolute data from where to begin" (p. 55). Husserl named his philosophical method 'phenomenology', the science of pure 'phenomena' (Eagleton, 1983, p. 55). Following in Husserl's footsteps, Heidegger (1889 - 1976), a student of Husserl, pursued the concept of being there and the dialogue between the person and the world. Ultimately, phenomenological research aims to describe and as Groenewald (2004) explicates, "the aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts" (p. 44). Interpretive phenomenology moves to a further boundary of phenomenology as it is trying to

understand the meaning of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) as it is a "lived" experience. "In the interpretive phenomenology method of research, investigators identify a phenomenon (a reality or experience) that can be described as people 'live' the experience" (Ivey, 2013, p. 27) and searches for in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon through a reflection of one's own experience.

However, traditional Western phenomenological epistemology usually sets up to "ask questions about people's understandings, experiences and sense-making activities, and we situate these questions within specific contexts, rather than between them" (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 47). Western phenomenological studies typically focus on one homogenous group when exploring a phenomenon. This is seen phenomenological research on swimming participation where the research is focussed on singular perspectives. For example, understanding barriers to swimming may be limited by asking only one group, such as high school students (Berukoff & Hill, 2010), parent groups (Ross et al, 2014) or swimmers (Salguero et al., 2003). Each group's contribution to the phenomenon is critical thus approaching research from one perspective ignores the interconnectedness of those involved with the phenomenon, be it as a family member, a community, a school, or a policy group. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) further explain that a one-dimensional focus considers only the person's relationship with the world and not the person's relationship with others within the world.

Since I was still not comfortable hanging my research on Western theories, I stepped fully into understanding Pacific research paradigm models. Pacific research is aligned with collective responsibilities and cultural ownership (Sauni, 2011). Sauni (2011) emphasizes "Pacific research is both in contrast to and complementary with Western research models" (p. 54) and there is "the necessity to take into consideration the culture of participants and to incorporate their culture into the methodological framework and written text should be embraced by Pasifika researchers and non-Pasifika researchers" (p. 55).

This growing academic field in Pacific methodology has created a dynamic and diverse repository of Pacific epistemological frameworks. Most have evolved from the three main fields of health, education and social work. Education models within PRM use the elements of *fa'aSamoa* to guide the models such as Samu's (2007) *Pou tu* which draws on *alofa* (love and commitment), *tautua* (service), and *fa'aaloalo* (respect and dignity) to guide the methodology. The *Teu le va* (Airini et al., 2010), an education model, centres on the space between research participants and the research in question. The *Ula* (Sauni, 2011) research model is an education theoretical framework that draws on the aspects of the Samoan culture through the symbolic elements of a garland. The flowers of the *ula* represent aspects of the Samoan culture emphasizing that all parts must be considered for effective engagement.

In the area of health models, *Fonofale* (Pulotu-Endermann, 1995) and the *Fa'afaletui* (Tamasese et al., 1997) are leading models within the health sector which draw on connections between culture, symbolism, and collective thought. These conceptual frameworks focus on addressing research pertaining to mental health (Pulotu-Endermann, 1995; Tamasese et al., 1997), strengthening clinical competencies (Pulotu-Endermann, et al, 2007) and participant well-being within a collective community (Seiuli, 2016).

Social work research using PRM has grown significantly since the early 2000s seeing work expressed in models such as *Lalaga* (Mulitalo-Lauta , 2000), *Talatalaga a Aiga* (Masoe & So'o, 2011), *Talanoa ile i'a* (Faleolo, 2009) and the *So'otaga* (Faletolu , 2010). The focus of these social work models draw attention to the talanoa, dialogue, interconnection and the *fa'aSamoa* for effective participant engagement.

The models are culturally aligned, symbolic and offer both Pacific and non-Pacific researchers contextual frameworks inclusive of principles and values of the *fa'aSamoa*. Applying Pacific models to research have proven to be effective. PRM have raised the knowledge of other cultures (Tupuola, 2006), are intellectual and legitimate approaches (Tupuola, 1993), must take into consideration the culture of the research participant (Sauni, 2011), and culturally inclusive research can yield more meaningful results for the Pacific population (Sauni, 2011). Pasifika research demands research practices to draw on cultural, social, spiritual, emotional and linguistic tenets that must be acknowledged within Pacific epistemiology (Faleolo, 2009, 2013; Gunther et al., 2009; Tamasese, 2002; Tamasese et al., 2005; Tuafuti, 2011).

Denzin, Lincoln and Smith's (2008) work challenged the status quo in their proactive dialogue to develop a framework for critical indigenous methodologies. They attest that indigenous research "must be ethical, performative, healing, transformative, decolonizing, and participatory" (Denzin et al., 2008, p 3). Denzin et al. (2008) further outline the core of critical indigenous research:

> Critical indigenous inquiry begins with the concerns of indigenous people. It is assessed in terms of the benefits it creates for them. The work must represent indigenous persons honestly, without distortion or stereotype, and the research should honor indigenous knowledge, customs, and rituals. It should not be judged in terms of neocolonial paradigms. Finally, researchers should be accountable to indigenous persons. (p. 3)

I resonated with their words, nevertheless, I still considered using both Western and Pacific methodologies, conceptualizing how parts of Western methodologies could support my research project. Consequently, I hesitated with concern that Western theories would elbow their way to centre stage, pushing the Pacific methodologies into supporting actor roles. I resonated with Harris (2006), who explained that sociological theories have strong currents of managing and controlling versus empowering or emancipating, which "marginalises the voice of the researched" (p 155). More to

point, Harris (2006) stated that "social life is so complex, diversified, contradictory and rapidly changing, that it is impossible to develop any theory that transcends a particular time, place and culture" (p 155). The words of Denzin et al. (2008) pricked on my conscious that I would not do justice for Samoa as they argue the research methodology “must meet people's perceived needs. It must resist efforts to confine inquiry to a single paradigm or interpretive strategy” (p 3).

Therefore, I decided not to work with Western and Pacific methodologies in tandem but rather allow PRM to evolve fully through every stage of the methodological research process. I aligned myself with Ferris-Leary (2013), who proposed that using Western theories for Pacific research was, at best, ill-fitting (Ferris-Leary, 2013). She further explained that "the researcher may have made what they think are legitimate attempts, by framing their research in indigenous terms, and may come to believe they are being appropriate in other ways, but remain trapped in an over-arching Western model, informed as it is by Western theoretical and cultural agendas." (Ferris-Leary, 2013, p. 89). She articulated my sentiments, so I consciously decided that I would not allow Western theories and methodologies to steer my approach.

The following section will explain each part of the methodology and the design is depicted below.

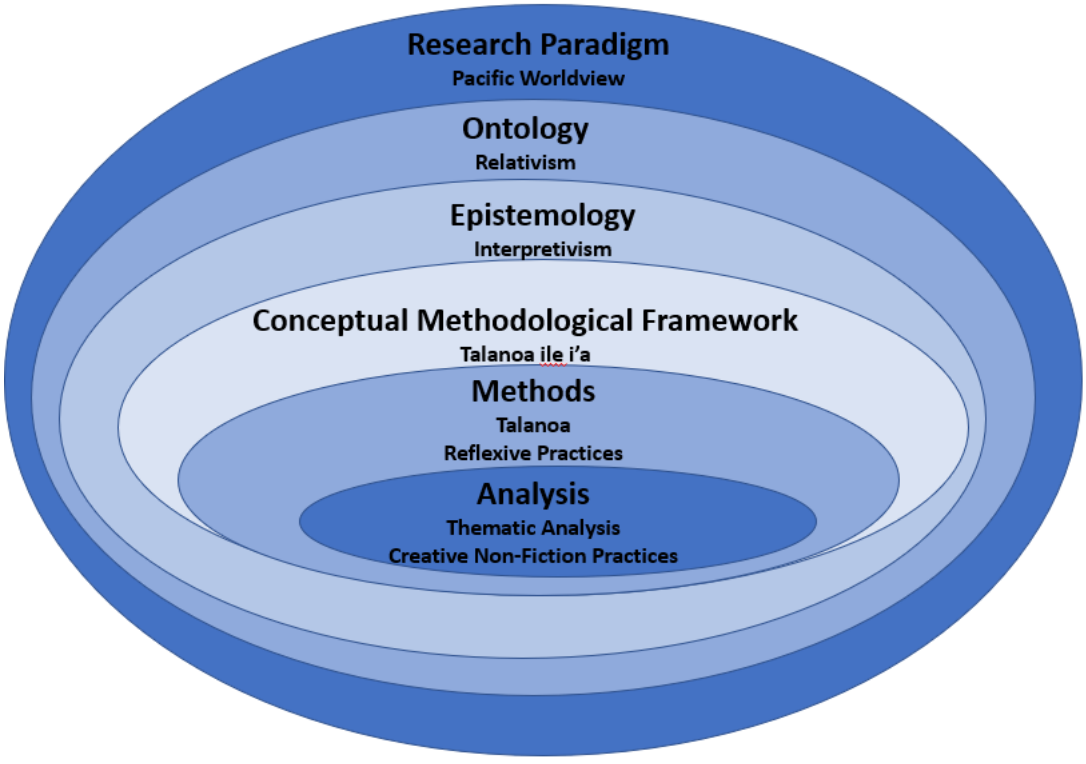

Figure 1 Concentrical Research Methodology
S. Schuster

Pasifika world lens and knowledge processes

There were three reasons why I used a Samoan world lens. Firstly, to reiterate what Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019) express, the PRM is more authentic, respectful, and meaningful to Pacific communities and has substantially contributed over the past decades to guide those working from and with Pacific communities. I wanted to ensure the research was using an ethically sound framework by which more profound sensitivities such as safety, dignity, voice, representation, and reciprocity are considered (Stewart-Withers, Sewabu, & Richardson 2017).

Secondly, I addressed the research through a Samoan lens, critical to ensure that "Pacific thought" (Huffer & Qalo, 2004; Sanga, 2004) was respectfully considered, engaged, and heard. The *fa'aSamoa* has its own valid knowledge systems through their values, beliefs and ways of knowing (Du Plessis & Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2009). Sanga (2004) explains that indigenous Pacific research sees knowledge as relativist and inseparable from the people's context and social realities. What we perceive to be true is shaped by our beliefs, values, lived experiences, and the context in which we are located, all of which are prone to change over time (Gadamer, 2013). In *Pasifika* indigenous methodologies, the reality is "subjective to the context and the people, inclusive of social, spiritual, and cultural spheres" (Stewart- et al., 2017, p. 58). In the *fa'aSamoa*, oral tradition is highly valued, and history has been passed down from generation through oral narratives (Glasgow & Rameka, 2017). Therefore, knowledge can be viewed as co-constructed and framed in relation to multiple realities. The way to explain, know and understand it is to interact with the people through storytelling, sharing and discussing the issue or problem. Thus, the participants' stories were prioritized through this PRM lens. I wanted to ensure their voices were not considered solo vernacular but a chorus resonating with profound themes and relational ideas.

Thirdly, the PRM mirrored my conceptual vision for this research project because of shared values between the *fa'aSamoa* and me. Critical components of PRM encompass the shared cultural values: cultural values of relationships, metaphorical meanings, relational space, respect, community, and family (Huffer & Qalo, 2004; Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019; Sanga, 2004; Stewart-Withers, et al., 2017). Other common values in the PRM, such as holistic or spiritual worldviews, emphasise the acceptance of religious and supernatural occurrences (Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019). Sanga (2004) theorised that the ontology of indigenous Pacific research is subjective, contextual, experiential, accepting of spiritual and cultural beliefs, spatially and chronologically situated, and above all, changing and accepting of other realities. Using metaphors, proverbs, imagery, and concepts of space and time is essential.

Current *Pasifika* methodology uses symbols such as a woven mat or *fale* (Samoan house with traditionally with no walls) to represent collective knowledge (Tamasese et al., 1997; Tamasese, et al

2005) or holistic symbols such as the entire construct of a *fale* (posts, foundation, roof) to give meaning to health which incorporates culture, family, physical, spiritual, and other dimensions (Pulotu-Endemann & Tu'itahi, 2009). *Ula* (flower garlands, *fales*, woven mats and kava bowls also have significant meaning in highlighting key ideas such as inclusion, indigenous well-being, and reciprocity in the fields of education, health, and community engagement (Faletolu, 2010; Pulotu-Endermann, 1995; Sauni, 2011Tamasese et al., 1997). Samoan epistemology is often shared through language and metaphors (Tamasese et al 1997; Tamasese et al., 2005; Sanga, 2004). Using metaphors, proverbs, and imagery reinforces how much time and effort is needed to complete the work. *Talanoa,* meetings, discussions, sharing and time dedicated to weaving a mat, threading an *ula* or building a *fale* symbolising the collective voice and effort is needed to ensure complete construction.

Finally, the Samoan paradigm favoured a non-linear and holistic approach (Stewart-Withers et al., 2017) that addressed the relationship between the people, the environment, and all the essential socio-cultural and socio-historical contexts within it (Meo-Sewabu, 2014; Sanga & Reynolds, 2017).

The Conceptual Framework: The Talanoa ile i'a

I revisited my initial research proposal, which mapped the journey using a Samoan proverb, namely, the *Talanoa ile i'a*. This framework is used mainly in the social work field, but uniquely includes the child in the research framework. This allows the child's voice to be captured and included in the research to ensure a full picture is represented. The framework easily supported the concept of travelling with many participants and learning about their experiences with competitive swimming, specifically as it relates to Samoa. Using a Samoan framework also fell in step with indigenous research methodology advocacy. The PRM I selected allowed the space to research this phenomenon from multiple perspectives who have experienced swimming. Even more, the PRM demanded my methodological map to be designed with cultural appropriateness, temporality, and ethical positioning. Using the proverbial framework of the *Talanoa ile i'a* is phenomenological analysis in its most authentic state. There is no need to amplify this phenomenological exploration with Western terms. In this case, I was researching the constraining and enabling factors for swimming participation in Samoa, inclusive of a child's perspective thus supporting direct participant involvement (Ravulo, 2016). I was interested in hearing and learning about the participants' experience with swimming in Samoa, confirming that indigenous proverbial conceptual frameworks and storytelling are best suited for methodological design. So, I took a navigator's approach, adopting a PRM, which subsequently framed the plan for this research project.

The *Talanoa ile i'a* is a model that was taken from the origins of a Samoan proverb by Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi (Tamasese et al., 2005) where the model uses perspectives of a phenomenon from three angles: from the top of the mountain, from the top of the tree and from the person within

the canoe to get a holistic, complete picture. This model is found in the work of Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave (1997) and Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave and Bush (2005). The parable by Tui Atua is explained:

> *In Samoan culture, there are three perspectives: the perspective of the person at the top of the mountain, the perspective of the person at the top of the tree, the perspective of the person in the canoe who is close to the fish. In any big problem, the three perspectives are equally necessary. The person, fishing in the canoe, may not have the long view of the person at the top of the tree, but they are closer to the school of fish (Tui Atua, cited in Tamasese et al., 2005, p. 301).*

According to Tui Atua, these three perspectives are necessary to form a complete picture. Specifically, *o le faautaga i tumutumu o le mauga* (the perspective from the top of the mountain), *o le faautaga i tumutumu o le la'au* (the perspective from the top of the tree), and *o le faautaga o le pii ama* (the perspective of the person in the canoe).

The *Talanoa ile i'a model* was expanded by Faleolo (2009, 2013) as he claimed that the proverb lacked the *o le faautaga o le i'a*, the perspective of the fish, in which case was the child's perspective, an integral piece when undertaking to piece together a complete picture of any phenomena. His addition to the proverb opened new spaces for young people to be recognized in the *fa'aSamoa*. The *Talanoa ile i'a* is about:

> *...honouring and creating a pathway for the lesser known to become known, acknowledged and institutionalised...the fish or Samoan young people, and their experiences. So in order to find out what are the important issues for Samoan young people we simply ask them. We talk 'to' them and not 'around' them...The Samoan young people are the authority, they are the experts (Faleolo, 2013, p. 118).*

Prout and James (1997) reinforce this placement of the child as it "emphasises that children are active social agents who shape the structures and processes around them and whose social relationships are worthy of study in their own right" (Morrow, 2001 in Prout & James, 2007, p. 256). The model now houses four perspectives, including the person (fish) (Faleolo, 2009, 2013). In support of Faleolo's position and addressing any research that involves the child or youth as a participant, Kellett (2011) asserts that "it is a key belief that children must be part of the methodology as they observe with different eyes, ask different questions, have different concerns and immediate access to a peer culture where adults are outsiders" (p. 10). *Talanoa ile i'a* has been used as a social work model to create space for children and young people (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Coxon, 2014). This space allows them to participate in a process to ensure their voice is included in the whole picture. Faleolo (2013) argues

that the importance of the model emphasises that there is “no single version of truth [that] is total” (p.116).

Further explanation of this Samoan framework and how it houses the research map, plan, and structure, is offered through Faleolo (2009) and Dunlop-Bennett (2019), who clearly explain that *Talanoa ile i’a* can provide a multiperspectival understanding of the phenomenon in question. It is a community-based participatory approach (Dunlop-Bennett, 2019), and the conceptual framework can be likened to some elements found within Western theoretical frameworks, such as Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory (1979, 2005) and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1962, 1978), both which draw on the layers of environmental systems, such as micro, meso and macro systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005). Further, this Pacific conceptual framework echoes C Wright Mills's (1959) sentiments when he wrote, "neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both" (Mills, 1959, p. 3). Individual stories coupled with historical and cultural elements of Samoan society are required to connect the multiple views and truths of the phenomenon in question.

This methodology has yet to be applied to fields outside wellness, health, child health and social work though participation in sports parallels social work as it deals with an individual, expectations and burdens, negotiations, relationships, and motivations. Sports may improve health and well-being, mitigate the problems of poverty, and directly impact social issues such as exclusion and isolation (Lawson, 2005). This model has yet to be used for understanding swimming participation in Samoa, but the model lends a multifaceted approach to studying this phenomenon through various focal points.

For this study, the metaphorical perspectives of the mountain, tree, canoe, and fish consisted of the perspectives of many to get a complete story. For instance, the perspective of the mountaintop is the swimming management, sports federations, and government ministries. The view from the treetops is the community leaders and principals involved with swimming programmes. The perspective from within the canoe is the parents, swim teachers and coaches involved with swimming, and the fish are those who swim, the school children, the club participants, and the individuals engaged in swimming. This proverbial Samoan framework aligned well with the qualitative methodology of interpretive phenomenology.

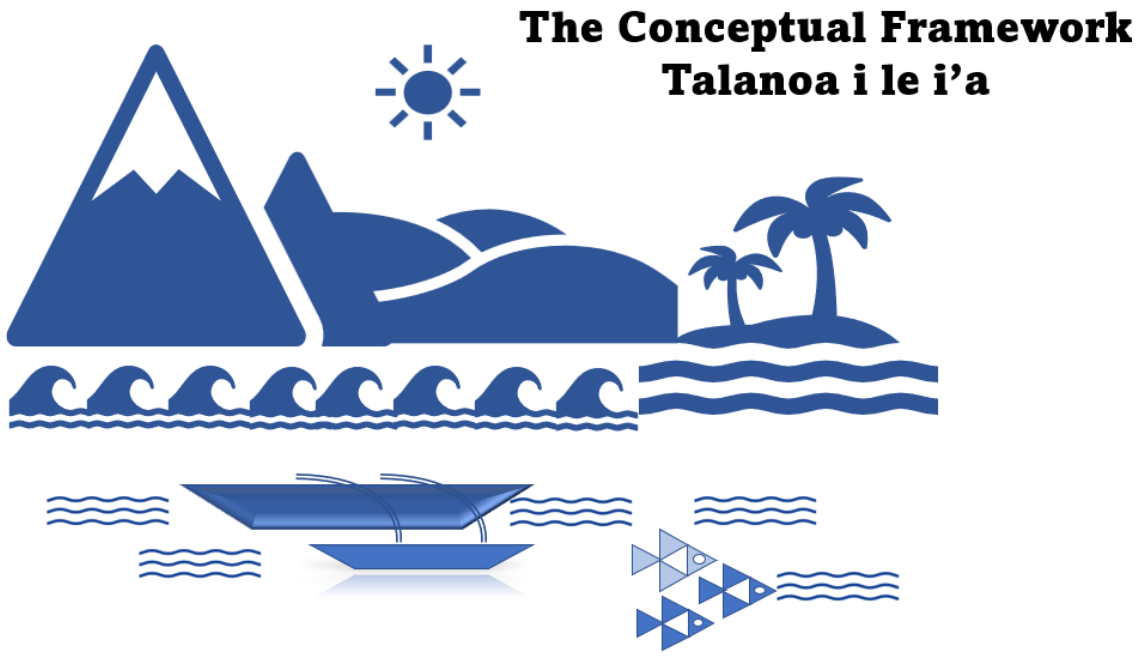

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework Talanoa ile i'a
S. Schuster

Travelling through the framework

In PRM, research processes are valued as much as results. Within the process, it is critical to focus on the concepts of attunement, relationality and space when engaging in PRM. Therefore, I opted for a bricolage design, pulling on a few concepts to build my map, ensuring that the journey was valued as much as the destination. The choice of movement is an important element in this methodology.

My first point of consideration was the location of the research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2000) assert that researchers must be able to place their research in the social, geographical, and historical context. Also, sociologically informed research needs to embrace reflexivity and subjectiveness. Understanding that I am in the research, travelling subjectively and reflexively through the journey allowed me to develop my imagination. Imagination, in a sociological and methodological sense, asks for biography, history and location to be considered and reconsidered. It asks for the researcher to have heightened awareness of the interconnections between researcher, participant, story, time, geography, location, and culture. I set out on this journey to get an understanding of people's experiences with swimming in Samoa, keeping in mind that my aim of this research is to "gather an 'authentic understanding' of people's experiences (Silverman, 1998 in Harris, 2006, p 167). The journey was interpretive and reflexive and relied on knowing Samoa's geography, history, culture, and context.

Metaphorically, I initially envisioned a canoe to move throughout my research project. As poetic as this sounded, I knew that it was disingenuous. Let me digress for a moment. In 1993 I trained with the *Va'ai Lau Foe* Canoe Club. I woke at 4:30 am, travelled to the Apia seawall and paddled with five other women across the harbour. I was not too fond of it. Honestly, I despised it. The sport demanded that I keep timing with the others; if I slipped, they would know. It was a relentless type of training with my arms likened to rubber while my lungs searched for air. Every morning, I longingly looked at the water when the eastern sun rose across the Apia harbour, wanting to be in the water, not on the water. Therefore, honouring myself symbolically, I chose the sea to transport me through this research process, as in swimming in the sea. I swam through rough waters, headwinds, cross currents, and rare moments of calm. It allowed me to float in the data and sink into the stories. It carried me along the way, allowing space for my participants to join me. It allowed me to travel in lesser-known waters to piece the history of swimming in Samoa together. It also took me to unexpected places, such as stories and memories of the past, both mine and the participants, sharing a space of recollection that influenced their views and values of swimming. The sea gave me a sense of voyage, of travel, of returning home, an impression that I could travel back to where I have lived for 30 years, although closed borders in New Zealand bounded me.

Multiple perspectives within the Talanoa ile i'a

The multiperspectival research approach "retains a commitment to idiographic data collection and analysis but extends this by combining two or more focal perspectives, permitting us to consider the relational, intersubjective, and microsocial dimensions of a given phenomenon" (Larkin, Shaw & Flowers, 2019, p. 192). This concept fits well with the *Talanoa ile i'a* model, where multiple perspectives are considered when researching a phenomenon. This approach invited participants to recall past events of their lived experiences. These insights yielded how the experiences are causal influences on their engagement with swimming. Concerning this research's ontological and epistemological stance, the multiperspectival design helps reinforce a cultural value within the Samoan *worldview*. Samoans value the social institution of one's family, culture, and community (Pala'amo, 2017; Poasa, Mallinckrodt, & Suzuki, 2000). Samoa is a collectivist society that values the inclusion of family and village, not just from an individual perspective (Pala'amo, 2017). Similarly, Larkin et al. (2019) assert that families are naturally forming groups, as are teams, who can offer multiple perspectives on a phenomenon that can contribute to the overarching research question.

Garnering multiple perspectives in sport participation research is essential because barriers and facilitators to participation can differ (Kellett, 2011). Recently, there has been a movement to include children within the research models (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Porter, Townsend & Hampshire, 2012; Wyness, 2013; Ergler, 2017) and the field of social work has gained momentum in placing the child within the research (Ergler, 2017). Dunlop-Bennett, Bryant-Tokalau and Dowell (2019) applied

an indigenous approach to understanding the wellness perspective of *Pasifika* children living in New Zealand. Dunlop-Bennett (2019) used the *Talanoa ile i'a* approach, which "reinforced the value of including children in research on issues that involve them and for research to be credible, it must include the voices of those that know, live, and breathe the phenomena" (p. 112). Although this model is designed for social work, it offers another way to include and value perspectives within research (Faleolo, 2009). In recent research on children with disabilities and perceptions of barriers to physical activity, attaining multiple perspectives of all stakeholders within leisure constraints was a strength of the study design (Shields et al., 2012). The findings indicated that children with disabilities focused on personal factors, parents attended to domestic issues, and stakeholders focused on social, policy, and programme factors (Shields et al., 2012). Steinhardt, Ullenhag, Jahnsen, and Dolva (2020) revealed that several factors could be facilitators and barriers, depending on the individual and the situation. The findings gave shape and meaning from multiple viewpoints and provided meaningful conclusions. In Samoa, a framework such as the *Talanoa ile i'a,* will contribute to a growing body of Pacific-driven research in the field of sport development.

The Talanoa within the Talanoa ile i'a

Using the *Talanoa ile i'a* implicitly requires that the method of *talanoa* be applied to the research methodology. Vaioleti (2006) states that *talanoa* can be a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether formal or informal (p. 26). *Talanoa* naturalist inquiry characteristics are suited for interpretive paradigms such as the *Pasifika* worldview (Stewart-Withers et al., 2017). While the *talanoa* scholarly concept stemmed from a Tongan perspective, Vaioleti (2006) signals that *talanoa* in Samoa is a "practice of multi-level and multi-layered critical discussions and free conversations" (p. 24). The *talanoa* refers to a conversation (Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014) or dialogue (Halapua, 2003), characterised by empathy (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2012), reciprocal respect/deference (Vaai, 2014) and valuing of the relational space (Anae, 2010, 2016). Gordon et al. (2010) use of *talanoa* revealed that "they feel this process is aligned with all the other safe processes of engaging in Pacific discussions and consultations and leads to their having a more meaningful role in the research process" (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 3). Stewart-Withers et al (2017) addressed the position and use of *Talanoa* to conduct relevant, ethically sound, and respectful research in cross-cultural and cultural sport management. Prescott (2008) purports that the dynamic within the *talanoa* process demands an active, central role of both the participant and the researcher. "*Talanoa* is a two-way process. Therefore, the researcher must play an active role in the *talanoa*. Researchers must be prepared to share their experiences and stories as part of the *talanoa* philosophy of openness, sharing and mutual respect." (Prescott, 2008, p. 139).

Sensitivities towards the personal talanoa stories: Story sharing and storytelling

As aforementioned, in addition to reflexivity, I used the Pacific method of *talanoa* to learn about the phenomenon of swimming in Samoa. Using the *talanoa* method is a way of communicating between researcher and participant that creates a space that nurtures discussions, knowledge sharing, storytelling and meaning-making in an authentic indigenous context. While *talanoa* means "talking about nothing in particular" (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 23), when used correctly, *talanoa* becomes "a cultural synthesis of the information, stories, emotions and theorising to produce relevant knowledge and possibilities for addressing Pacific issues" (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 21). Most importantly, was the acute understanding of Vaioleti's (2013) assertation that the "participants are entrenched in their worlds, and the researcher is the one that must travel there" (p. 206). The discussions can be wide-ranging with no boundaries when talking about a chosen subject and should not be mistaken for semi-structured interviews as within *talanoa* "there are no restrictions on contributions from any perspective and participants are free to choose how they wish to talanoa about the subject" (Vaka et al., 2016, p. 538). The flow of the *talanoa* transcripts in storytelling form is presented below. I intend to present the stories using this conversational style between the participant and the researcher, emphasising the relational elements.

During the research, I signalled to those unfamiliar with this qualitative concept that *talanoa* differed from unstructured interviews. *Talanoa* is a method and a methodology, and it was the core of the research process and the content. Using *talanoa* within a proverbial Samoan framework revealed my positionality, epistemology, ontology, and overall stance on how I see myself, my research, and worldview.

Tensions using a multiperspectival Pacific research approach

"What you see and what you hear depends a great deal on where you are standing. It also depends on what sort of person you are."
C.S. Lewis, The Magician's Nephew

Positionality

Although I was swimming through the process, engaged with every aspect of research, I am mindful that this is only one approach. In qualitative research, I am aware that Western researchers of traditional phenomenology, namely Husserl (1962), Heidegger (1985) and Merleau-Ponty (2004) believed that it was an ongoing concern of phenomenology where the researcher "does not bracket their biases or prior engagement with the question under study" (Reiners, 2012). Husserl's (1962) belief was that researchers could remove themselves wholly from the study process and allow the

phenomenon to take shape. However, Heidegger (1985) argued that this is impossible for the researcher to do. Husserl (1962) contested that researchers need to "bracket their beliefs and biases early in the research process to allow readers to understand their positions" (Tufford & Newman, 2010, p. 4). Creswell and Miller (2000) describe it as “bracketing or suspending those researcher biases as the study proceeds and individuals reflect on the social, cultural, and historical forces that shape their interpretation” (p. 127). Gearing (2004) explains that bracketing needs to acknowledge the internal (researcher) beliefs, external (phenomenon) theories, or sometimes a combination of both. Internal suppositions are the researcher's knowledge, history, culture, experiences, and values based on their academic and scientific ideas, and external suppositions are based on the phenomenon being researched (Gearing, 2004). Gearing (2004) emphasises that "a researcher needs to articulate clearly what, if any, internal and/or external suppositions are to be bracketed out in the investigation" (p. 1434). Bracketing is used to prevent adverse effects on research due to researcher preconceptions. Tufford and Newman (2010) explain that "given the sometimes-close relationship between the researcher and the research topic that may both precede and develop during the process of qualitative research, bracketing is also a method to protect the researcher from the cumulative effects of examining what may be emotionally challenging material" (p. 2).

While bracketing has been used for sensitive research studies as found in social work and mental health, there was no logical place for bracketing in this research as bracketing would require that I take on a natural "outsider" positioning for this research study. I agreed with McNarry, Allen-Collinson and Evans (2019), who asked the question, "how can we somehow 'stand aside from' our socio-cultural situatedness?" (p. 7). The researcher must be explicitly reflexive in practice (Tufford & Newman, 2010) as this recognises that the researcher cannot be fully disengaged or detached from the study and will become part of the research process (McNarry et al., 2019). Cresswell and Poth (2007) suggest that researchers should clearly explain their position, as in taking an interpretivist approach to phenomenology, it is near impossible "to become separate from the text" (p. 62).

For this research project, I decided that I would not be separate but involved and co-construct understandings with the participant. The fact that I could not separate myself from the research was a critical element within this methodology. I am a Samoan citizen who has lived in Samoa for almost 30 years, married a Samoan High Chief, and we have four children, all of whom are engaged in swimming in Samoa. In addition to my relational attachments to Samoa, I am the National Swim coach for the country and am intimately involved with swimming at all levels, from development to elite.

I embraced an insider-outsider positioning in the research. I took an emic approach and positioned myself inside the study or metaphorically within the *Talanoa ile i’a framework*. I will position myself inside the research or metaphorically, inside the fishbowl, become more involved in the research, and

take an insider's view. Emic relativism invites the researcher inside the fishbowl. Hence, the research takes on connotations of being involved, interacting to discover meanings, and digging deep to understand what is going on. The emic approach may create ripples or waves with the researcher's presence within the epistemological stance. However, the researcher can engage and talk with research participants from that position. This type of researcher would not be separate from the person, sees themselves involved, and co-constructs understandings with the participant.

I journeyed to the top of the mountain with some participants, allowing us to unravel and explore the phenomenon and experiences of swimming through a historical lens. Other encounters had my participant and me scaling the coconut tree to seek another view of swimming; other moments had me standing on the shoreline, paddling in the canoe, and swimming in the water with the other participants. I viewed myself as an individual with *a priori* or intimate knowledge of the community and its members (Merton, 1972). My emic position was congruent with the *Pasifika* methodology (Einarsdóttir, Rounds & Su, 2010). Berry (1999) contests "that the emic approach permits an understanding of the way in which a language or culture is constructed, not as a series of miscellaneous parts, but as a working whole" (p. 41). The emic approach also helps to understand participants in the position of their daily lives, behaviour, and beliefs (Berry, 1999). Emic relativism invites the researcher into the water and onto the land. Hence, the research takes on connotations of being involved, interacting to discover meanings, and digging deep to understand what is occurring. Merton (1972) defines the insider as an individual possessing a priori intimate knowledge of the community and its members. I stand confidently with emic researchers who believe that research best plays out with the culture being comprehensively understood (Morris, Leung, Ames & Lickel, 1999).

Having said this, I moved along this insider-outsider continuum to take an 'outside' position to allow the cultural values of space, hierarchy, status, humility, and relationality to take centre stage. *Vā* is an integral element in Samoan relationships, and it is an essence that must be respected and adhered to, to maintain cultural protocols within the *fa'aSamoa* (Anae, 2010, 2016). Although I am *Faletua* (wife of a High Chief) and hold other roles within the community, I respected the boundaries and cultural protocols that put me in an 'outside' position within this research study. Also, I could not adopt my participants' views as I have had different personal experiences as a competitive swimmer and coach. I ensured their narratives were told and understood. Although I am part of the community, I am not privy to all the undercurrents, nuances, and subcultures my participants encounter (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), which reinforces my 'outsider' positioning within the research study.

Reflexive practices

In qualitative research, the researcher must acknowledge and take responsibility for their positionality within the research and consider the impact that the setting, the participants, the questions asked, the data collected, and the interpretation of that data might have on the research process (Berger, 2015).

Due to my personal and professional involvement in swimming in Samoa, I used reflexive practices throughout the data collection. Berger (2015) explains that reflexivity is an active, ongoing process that facilitates the researcher on many levels: with self, with the participants, and with the data. Reflexivity has two essential parts. One part is understanding the researcher's positionality. The second part is a continued analysis of how this positionality affects the research processes and outcomes. I engaged in continued reflexivity during the research process, which assisted in mitigating unintentional bias, partiality, or prejudice. I maintained a process of reflexive journalling and engaging in dialogue to express personal bias, experiences and past knowledge that may influence the study. Also, I kept a journal during the data collection to temper biases or preconceived notions. Finally, within the research, I read and reread my writings to evaluate myself concerning the findings. This process of actively engaging with interpretations and continual questioning (Hertz, 1997) was critical in ensuring trustworthiness and transparency. Reflective practices heightened my responses, alerted me of my position, and challenged my perspectives throughout the research process. Most importantly, it helped me locate and relocate my position from the inside-outside stance.

Another issue I wrestled with was the unintended dance between studying a phenomenon and tempering my own experiences with the phenomenon. Depending on the lens used for research, I am endeared to the familiar qualitative terms of autoethnography and phenomenology. While both are qualitative approaches, the former focuses on researching individual experiences, while the latter focuses on researching the collective experiences within a culture. There is a shared space between both qualitative approaches. Autoethnographic exploration must be addressed due to the nature of this project. My 30 years in Samoa developing the swimming programme, living within the culture, and living life gave me an understanding of the phenomenon of swimming and the people. Within my work, I used personal experience to assist me in understanding the phenomenon in question. Wells (2021) draws on Jones, Adams and Ellis (2016) and describes this process as a "characteristic that binds all autoethnographic work is the use of personal experience to examine or critique cultural experience" (p.102). I took this approach as it suited the PRM approach. Exploring my personal experiences was a necessary component of the *talanoa* process. The data collection was carried out through *talanoa,* shared stories between researcher and participant, and the stories lent insight into the individual's personal experiences, the researcher's reflections and the swimming phenomenon. One could not exist without the other. Early sociologists, such as Mills (1959), attest that individual experiences and history must be understood, echoed in the Samoan proverb *Talanoa ile i'a*

(Tamasese, 2005; Faleolo, 2009) that nothing can be resolved without taking all perspectives into account. The individual participant perspectives, reflexive personal accounts, and meta perspectives such as historical, socio-cultural, and socio-political perspectives must be considered. As Samoa is an established collectivist culture, the data, too, is collectivist by nature. The data is not about an individual's singular experiences with swimming but how these personal experiences fed into the history, development, and challenges of swimming in Samoa. The shared space of autoethnography and phenomenology is likened to the shared space where the river meets the sea. Both are bodies of water with the concepts of place, time, and persons attached. Both have currents, undertows, rhythms, and engagement. However, they have distinct features: salty and fresh; one flows in many directions and the other in a singular course; both are homes to the people who use them. Nevertheless, where they meet, where warm sea currents intermingle with the cool mountain rivers, is where the research methodology lies.

Acceptance as self and researcher

At the beginning of this research project, my movements were like a child playing hopscotch, jumping from one place to another, from attempted detachment to complete immersion in the research aim. From the very start, I grappled with the concept of my voice. It was not until I critically studied reflexive practices that I became convinced that my position and voice should not be self-censored but woven within the methodological approach of the research. McPhail (2004) echoes my inner thoughts by explaining that "reflexivity is one of the central elements of ethnographic activity and “signifies the researcher's part in the social world that is being investigated” (p. 227). McPhail (2004) reinforces Hodgson’s (2000) view that a “subjects' responses to the presence of the researcher, and the researcher's response to the context, are as valuable as any other aspect of the study” (Hodgson 2000, p. 3 in McPhail 2004, p.227). Mitra (2010) expands on this by querying the dichotomous flaw "of doing research and being the researcher" as they co-exist intimately (Mitra 2010, p. 1). Ngunjiri, Hernandez and Chang (2010) express that autoethnographic practices need to be openly vulnerable and create an open relationship with the research participants as it will bridge the connection "between self and others across socio-cultural differences and motivate them to work toward cross-cultural coalition building" (p. 52). Nurturing the space between participant and researcher aligns well with the PRM concept of *Vā,* the relational space, which is critical when using PRM. Therefore, this research unfolded as a personal journey of self-discovery, positionality, and exploring a phenomenological issue with passion. This hybrid approach allowed me the flexibility to offer a rich narrative account of the phenomenon of swimming within Samoa; it did not aim to verify a singular theory to the research question.

The methodologies that built this map were rooted in Pacific paradigms yet drew on my ability to use my life experiences and imagination as the fuel to embody the whole Pacific research experience from

conception, collection, coalescence, and co-construction of stories. The use of reflexivity, autoethnographic practices and phenomenology, coupled with the conceptual Pacific research framework of the *Talanoa ile i'a,* align with my interpretivist epistemological stance in this research. I became a storyteller through this research process as I am fully aware that my life and research were deeply intertwined. Mills (1959) claims that researchers should avoid defining their work by themselves. Mitra's (2010) argument claims that keeping oneself separate from research is a false dichotomy as the two are connected (Harris, 2006; Mitra, 2010). Harris (2006) offers further insight explaining that researchers have their socio-cultural history, stories, and research methods. Mills's (1959) work is based on the approach of not drawing on one theoretical model but having researchers reflect on their location and processes within the research (Edwards & Usher, 1996). Reflexive practices ensure that my intellectual autobiography is recorded, analysed, and placed within the research process.

This methodological journey was circuitous. I resonated with the *Talanoa ile i'a* framework from the beginning, yet I travelled far to return to this starting point. Through this journey, I substantiate that the methodologies I have chosen are aligned well with the theoretical underpinnings of this research, and the framework provided a platform for the participants and myself to explore the phenomenological concepts of competitive swimming in Samoa. Furthermore, using reflexivity combined with Pacific research methods helped me understand that my membership in Samoa Swimming and Samoa was essential to the research process. Embracing the continual movement of my positionality revealed a profound reflective epiphany of my internal struggles and shortcomings within the intersectionality of the codified sport of swimming and the Samoan culture and society. My insider lens allowed me to see additional layers to their stories as the *talanoa* created a reflexive process between participant and researcher. The *talanoa* experiences stirred up old and new conversations adding to our archive of stories on swimming in Samoa. As Smith (2007) asserts, "The aim should not be to relive the past but rather learn anew from it in the light of the present" (p. 5). The dissertation presents these memories, showing my hand, exposing my cards, and revealing my thoughts, pursuits, and mistakes to the reader.

Methods

The research participants

For my research project, I aimed to involve 20 – 30 participants. The selection was based on having membership in the competitive swimming pathway in Samoa, be it from any of the development levels, as a swimmer, parent, coach educator, administrator, or a regional administrator. Purposive sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was used to select participants representing different participant groups, swimming history, and geographical locations and connections within Samoa. I invited

participants from organisations and groups currently or previously engaged with swimming in Samoa, as their knowledge, experiences, and reflections on the development of the sport specific to swimming are directly relevant to this research.

Due to the COVID pandemic and both the New Zealand and Samoa border restrictions, the selection of my participants was not altered, as I was able to use virtual platforms if they were based overseas, and for those who were based in New Zealand, our interaction was in person under government protocols. While returning to Samoa, as intended, would have allowed a more extensive scope and participant number in the data collection process, the 2020 – 2022 State of Emergency border closures in Samoa reinforced to me that the research could not take place in Samoa. However, the participants purposely selected for this study reflected those who had personal, professional and authentic relationships with the phenomenon of swimming and competitive swimming within Samoa.

All in all, the study captured 32 participants, and each identified with at least one role within the competitive swimming fraternity. Most participants identified themselves as having multiple roles, such as parent, coach, coach, and administrator. Only the swimmers identified with only being 'a swimmer' and not having dual roles.

There was a total of nine swimmers, 13 parents, five coaches and five administrators. Although listed within a specific participant groups, there was overlap of each participant's perspective because of having multiple roles which added to the richness of the *talanoa* sessions.

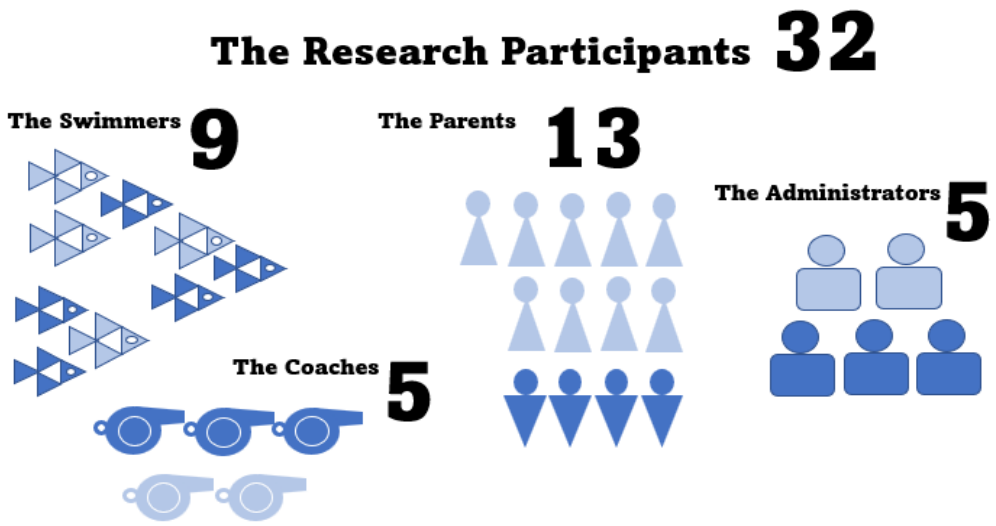

Figure 3 The Research Participants
S. Schuster

Participant selection criteria

The swimmers selected were within the Samoa Swimming Federation, either past or present, and had affiliations with the sport and organisation for at least five years. Their age ranged from nine to 23 years, and their experiences within the swimming programme ranged from development to elite. All the swimmers currently live or have lived in Samoa.

The parents selected met similar criteria to the swimmers. Their affiliation to the Samoa swimming organisation had a minimum of five years. Their child swam or continues to swim for the organisation, and the parent identified as Samoan and from Samoa.

The coaches selected for the research project were those involved with coaching Samoan swimmers in the past or currently in Samoa and overseas. Each coach who participated in the study had at least ten years of swim coaching experience in Samoa or with Samoan swimmers.

The administrators selected were affiliated with either the National Federation of swimming in Samoa or the regional affiliation of swimming within Oceania. As with parents and swimmers, their membership in the federation had to exceed at least five years. The administrators selected each had over 20 years of experience in the sport of swimming development either for Samoa or the region.

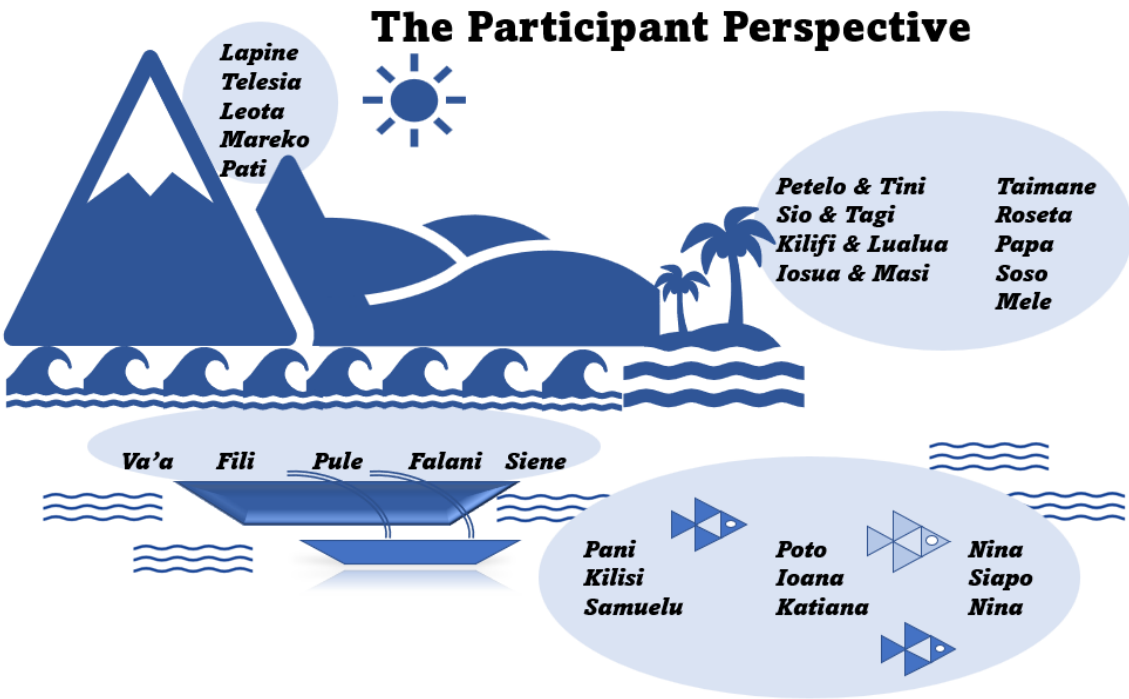

Figure 4 The Research Participants within the Talanoa ile i'a Framework
S. Schuster

Snapshot of the Participants (Pseudonyms used)

Mele and Ioana Uila (Mother and daughter)

Mele Uila, the mother of Ioana, was born and raised in Samoa in both urban and rural homes. She moved overseas for other university and work opportunities when Ioana was in primary school. The family is committed to the family-run business in Samoa. Ioana has been a competitive swimmer since age 12. Ioana swims for Samoa regionally and internationally and has experience training in Samoa and for overseas-based clubs in New Zealand.

Petelo and Tini Ataono

The Ataono family were all born, schooled and raised in Samoa. The mother, Tini, was raised in an urban village, while the father, Petelo, spent his childhood in a rural coastal village. In Samoa, both parents held government positions for over ten years. Mid-career, the family moved to New Zealand, where their children continued to school and swim. Their son, Mana, is the first in his family to swim competitively. They have direct ties and involvement with Samoa, with most of their extended family still living on the island.

Kilifi, Lualua, Siapo, Lala and Nina Taleni

Kilifi is the head of the Taleni household. In his formative years, he was raised in rural Samoa on cattle farms and attended university in Australia. The mother, Lualua, grew up in peri-urban Apia, completing her schooling until attending university overseas. The children, Siapo, Lala and Nina, were schooled in Apia and swam for local swim clubs during primary school for six years. Due to the Kilifi's profession in regional, bilateral aid and economic development, they currently reside overseas but remain affiliated with Samoa Swimming Federation and represent Samoa regionally and internationally. At the same time, the children continue train at a local club in Australia.

Sio, Tagi and Kitiana Meamata

The mother, Tagi, and father, Sio, have been involved with competitive swimming since their daughter, Kitiana, was 9. Sio was raised in Fiji, while the Tagi was raised in Samoa and New Zealand. Competitive sports have been a mainstay in their family though both parents did not have a competitive sport in their childhoods when growing up and schooling in Fiji and Samoa. Kitiana, a university student, swims for Samoa and trains both in Samoa and New Zealand. Both parents work full-time though they continue to straddle their present-day life in Auckland with commitments to Fiji and Samoa to support extended family commitments and engagement with Samoa swimming.

Taimane, Samuelu and Poto Va'alele

Taimane is the mother of son, Samuelu and daughter, Poto, and have been participating in formal swimming in Samoa since 2007. All four of her children have represented Samoa in sports, including swimming, triathlon and football though Samuelu and Poto remained in the elite sport pathway for over 14 years. Taimane is an educator with a government ministry. She had opportunities to school overseas during her childhood, but most of her schooling was in Samoa. Her husband was raised in Australia but has lived all his adult life in Samoa, running various grassroots companies. The children were born and raised in Samoa, only temporarily leaving for university education in NZ and Australia. Samuelu and Poto continue to represent Samoa regionally and internationally, having been on the competitive scene since 2007.

Pani Pose

Pani is a national-level swimmer who comes from a half European/half Samoan family. His mother comes from a strong competitive swimming background in the USA, and the father has no swimming experience from his upbringing and schooling in Samoa. The family have been involved with swimming since the establishment of the Tuanaimato Aquatic Centre in Apia. All of Pani's education was in Samoa only moving to the USA to study at university. Pani and two of his siblings have represented Samoa swimming locally, regionally and internationally from 2012 to the present day. Pani continues to compete for Samoa, coaches swimming both in Samoa and the USA and represent the Samoa Athlete's Commission for the National Olympic Committee.

Roseta Tavita

Roseta is the main advocate for her children's involvement with competitive swimming. Born in Samoa and schooled in both Samoa and New Zealand, she has no swimming experience but believes it is important for her children to be skilled in this sport. Roseta is an educator at a tertiary institution in Samoa and a professional researcher for vulnerable and marginalised communities in Samoa. Her children, Fina and Siaosi, have been participating in swimming since their return to the island in 2010.

Papa Vau

Papa is a professional businesswoman who splits her time between Auckland and Samoa. She was born, raised and schooled in Apia. Her children were raised in Samoa and New Zealand, and the family has firm commitments to their extended family on the island. Her youngest son, Pita, represents Samoa locally and nationally.

Iosua and Masi Tasi

The parents, Iosua and Masi, raised their children in Samoa during primary school. The children are members of Samoa Swimming in the athlete development pathway, training, competing and travelling with Samoa Swimming regionally and internationally. Both parents are heavily involved with Samoa sports, including triathlon, open water, competitive swimming and basketball. They currently reside in New Zealand to care for elderly parents while their children continue to train and compete in New Zealand clubs and the Samoa swimming regional circuit.

Soso and Kilisi Maalili

The parent is a current swim coach and swim administrator living in New Zealand. Having been born, raised and schooled in Apia, she has no history of formal swimming. Her son, Kilisi, has been a competitive swimmer for over ten years. He swims for Samoa, and their family ties draw them to Samoa consistently.

Va'a Mene

As a child, Coach Va'a was raised in Samoa who returned to the island mid-career as a businessman. He established village-based swimming programmes in Samoa, leading to a strong membership of rural-based swimmers with the Samoa Swimming Federation for over ten years.

Fili Uso

Coach Fili is an educator and sport developer for the Samoa school system. She has been involved in developing the swimming federation and grassroots competitive swimming since 2007. Her four children have been part of the Samoa Swimming organisation and represent Samoa locally, regionally and internationally. All her children were born and raised in Samoa, leaving the island only for tertiary education.

Falani Malaki

Falani has been coaching throughout the Polynesian region including Australia, New Zealand and the Cook Islands. His 30-year career has focussed on club development, age-national and elite swimmer pathways. He currently spends his time between the Cook Islands running development swimming programmes and New Zealand.

Telesia Valu

A health professional by training, Telesia is a sports administrator for Samoa Swimming, the National Olympic Committee, and the international federation since 2007. She is an Indigenous Māori raised in NZ and married to a Samoan which led her to a 25-year career in Samoa developing sports and administration for sports and education.

Pule and Siene Saipini

Coach Pule was a national coach for the Northern Pacific Island region for thirty years and continues present-day involvement with the regional swimming organisation, Oceania Swimming Association. His work with the international federation to develop swimming in the Pacific Islands has been ongoing since the 1990s. His wife, Siene, has been coaching high school swimming for over 30 years in Polynesia and Micronesia. She is a trained teacher and coaches swimming, water polo and paddling.

Mareko Iti

Mareko has been the Sports Facilities manager in Samoa for the past 15 years. He oversees all day-to-day facility operations, manages facility repairs and coordinates the aquatic centre usage schedules.

Leota Taua

A businessman now based in Auckland, Leota was born and raised in a peri-urban village and lived most of his life in Samoa. He supports his family and village, dividing his time between Samoa and New Zealand. Leota has extensive experience with sport development issues in Samoa.

Pati Lava

Pati served as a sports administrator with Samoa Swimming for 15 years from early 1990 to 2015. She continues to assist with swimming as an administrator, team manager and funding coordinator. She is presently retired and lives in both New Zealand and Samoa.

Lapine Masina

Lapine's career in elite sport development spans over 40 years in Samoa with his direct work with the Samoa National Olympic Committee, Samoa Swimming Federation, Ministry of Education and Pacific Games Council. He is retired and splits his time between the USA and Samoa.

The research tools

As previously described, I used the *talanoa method* to collect data. As the *talanoa is* a culturally appropriate data collection method, it also aligns with Pacific worldviews (Vaioleti, 2014). *Talanoa* can be considered conversations (Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014) or dialogue (Halapua, 2003). It also has elements of empathy (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2012), reciprocal respect (Suaalii-Sauni, Fuamatu, Va'ai, Whaitiri, & Filipo, 2014) and valuing of the relational space (Anae, 2010, 2016). As most of my participants were Samoan or have lived in Samoa for a lengthy period, they are familiar with the *talanoa* method of storytelling, sharing and discussing ideas and concerns.

The initial *talanoa* session with participants focused on their personal and professional experiences with competitive swimming in Samoa. In line with the *talanoa* methodology, the overarching question "Tell me about your experience with swimming in Samoa" led the conversation. The critical foci drawn from the *talanoa* session were the barriers to swimming, motivations to being a member, successful negotiations to barriers, priority and values of swimming, enablers to competitive swimming, overcoming constraint issues, and influencing and motivational factors on continuing. As part of the data collection process, permission was obtained from each participant to voice record the session (See Appendix B). All participants agreed to be voice recorded and chose to use predominantly English as the language during the session. After the session, I transcribed the session, and the participant was emailed the *talanoa* transcription with the request to peruse and check.

If needed, a second *talanoa* session was used only for clarification from the first session. The follow-up created a space for discussion of thematic co-construction to validate emerging themes, a feature of the *talanoa* that helps co-construct meaning with the participant. Finally, the second *talanoa* session allowed the researcher and participant to have closure and end the interaction professionally and respectfully.

Due to logistics, dynamics and availability, small group *talanoa* sessions were used. Small group sessions entailed hosting either a swimmer and parent for an in-person *talanoa* session or hosting an e-*talanoa* session via Zoom and having children and parents present in the Zoom session. Fa'avae, Faleolo et al. (2022) established that *e-talanoa* is a valid way to extend the *vā* between researchers and participants. All small group sessions were followed up with individual one-on-one sessions with parents and children separately to confirm the transcripts and follow-up questions. Small group engagement is adequate and is often used as a project's starting point because they are a means for exploring how participants will talk about events, objects, and phenomena (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). These methods encourage group interaction which builds upon relationships.

The research environment

The people, places and spaces

To draw out the participant's specific experiences with swimming, I used one-on-one *talanoa* sessions and small group *talanoa* sessions to capture their perspectives. Some settings included more than one participant for both the in-person and online *talanoa* sessions due to time constraints but mainly to provoke conversation around the *talanoa* questions. It was done on a case-by-case consideration with approval from all participants to engage in this type of *talanoa* process. In total, 31 *talanoa* sessions were conducted, with nine having at least two people engaged with the researcher. Of the original 31*talanoa* sessions, nine additional *talanoa* sessions were completed with individuals. A second *talanoa* session was completed to reconfirm notes, clarity, and voice. The average *talanoa* session lasted 90 minutes, with some sessions lasting two hours.

I knew there were two polarised research positions regarding small groups and phenomenology. One viewpoint is that engaging with more than one person at a time is incongruent with this type of methodology (Webb & Kevern, 2001). Researchers argue that phenomenology is the participant's lived experience, shared individually with the researcher (Webb & Kevern, 2001). They attest that a small group cannot be effective with phenomenology since experiences are shared in a group setting. Alternatively, some researchers advocate that having more than one participant in the session can extend the phenomenological narratives by encouraging conversations and allowing thought-provoking discussions (Côté-Arsenault & Morrison-Beedy, 2001). There must be a fit between the research question and small groups within phenomenological research. This fit will then provide a safe environment to elaborate shared ideas, enhance trustworthiness, prove transparency, and raise the credibility of the research (Côté-Arsenault & Morrison-Beedy, 2001; Jasper, 1996; Kooken, Haase & Russell, 2007). Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2008) concluded that this concept is congruent with phenomenology research approaches and can preserve the integrity of personal lived experiences if the researcher is well grounded in these research tools.

The cultural space and some considerations

Before the *talanoa* sessions, each participant was given the participant information sheet and the consent form (Appendix C and D). This form was signed and emailed to me before the *talanoa* session or given when we met in person. All *talanoa* sessions began with a prayer in person or on a Zoom platform. In-person, I met with the participants at a location of their choice, such as a restaurant, hall, outdoor setting, or home. Along with prayer, food was part of the *talanoa* session, either a shared meal, cup of tea or both. The payment of these meals also followed cultural protocol in that I paid for most of the shared meals. My participants paid for the meals due to practising cultural

deference, respect, and hierarchy. Some participants viewed my status as a student as an opportunity to pay for our meal, as students have a lower status than working professionals. Some participants paid for the meal as a sign of cultural respect regarding my contribution to scholarly work for Samoa and their appreciation for the research. I paid for the meals with my participants, with whom I was viewed as an equal, such as *talanoa* sessions with coaches. Also, I paid for the meals with my swimmers as that is the appropriate protocol. Other times, I hosted small groups in my home and prepared a shared meal for everyone as the situation called for that setting. To clarify, some participants travelled to Hamilton for sports competitions and had allowed time in their competition schedule to *talanoa* for the research. Hosting them allowed a space for me to offer a shared meal and a quiet setting to *talanoa* together.

Hosting visitors allowed *asiga*, a valued cultural practice in the *fa'aSamoa*. Visitors who travel to your home village, town or area are given food, monetary support, or other in-kind gifts. This *asiga* is a sign that the visiting family, sports team, or club have extended family nearby and is given items to help them during their stay. I provided this shared meal six times during my data collection as swimmers and parents came to Hamilton. Although it seems convoluted, it is a cultural practice that I understand, allowing deference, respect, and gratitude to dictate the delicate nuances of culture, power, hierarchy, and acceptance. When I used the Zoom platform, a meal was not shared, but the space allowed for conversation with a cup of tea during the e-*talanoa* session. However, a gift in kind was provided through my husband, who remains in Samoa. He provided monetary or food gifts as a token of appreciation for their contribution to my study. Reciprocity extends beyond the margins of the research space to ensure that relationships are nurtured and culturally nourished.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Human Ethics Research Committee (HERC) at the University of Waikato. Specific ethical considerations guided my research as I considered how my research may have signalled a potential power imbalance during data collection. As a researcher, I needed to be constantly mindful of the power balance between the research participant and me (Finlay, 2002). Firstly, my involvement with swim and water safety curriculum development for schools impacted how participants felt about sharing information. I lessened this imbalance by explaining that the research aimed to understand swimming from multiple perspectives, enabling and inhibiting. I explained that any information they had regarding swimming was helpful for my research. Thus any negative stories or commentary on swimming, and their experiences, were valued.

Secondly, Samoa is a small country, and those involved in swimming are highly visible. As only a few schools and villages are involved with swimming, I ensured anonymity and confidentiality were maintained. I safeguarded participants' identities using pseudonyms to replace names and places of

employment and refer to positions generically, such as Sports Administrator, Coach, Government Official, and Ministerial Employee. Nevertheless, while every effort will be made to protect the anonymity of all participants, this could not be guaranteed as experiences and details in the data may be recognisable to other individuals in the same organisation. I discussed the inclusion of recognisable data (e.g., events and details) with the participants and ensured they were comfortable with including such data. I took the time to explain that their stories will not be personally identifiable, and the data is confidential until the completed dissertation is published. I explained that I was more interested in their stories' content than their specific identities. With the intention of the study to improve competitive swimming both in policy and practice, the participants responded positively to the invitation to participate and to assist in the project's outcomes.

A third ethical consideration is that some participants are my past and current swimmers. Again, the balance of power was monitored to ensure the participants could speak freely due to the coach: swimmer relationship. I was acutely aware of these relationships and was careful to lessen any unease my participants may have felt. Allowing them to participate in small group *talanoa* sessions balanced the power. It opened the dialogue as they were in small groups with a long history of swimming together.

Finally, as this study also involves children and youth, I was aware of the child protection protocols and policies within the SSF. Since I could not return to Samoa, I did not approach schools, so I did not need to negotiate my role within the school context. The children that were included in my study knew me in the capacity of Head Coach and family friend. I acknowledged my researcher role and conducted all interviews and small groups with responsible, ethical behaviour. I realise that relationships could be presented as complicated in research when children are involved in the research process as Einarsdóttir (2007) asserts that "children are potentially more vulnerable to unequal power relationships with the adult researcher than other groups. Unequal power can exist in terms of age, status, competency, and experience" (p. 204). This unequal power is inevitable within the *fa'aSamoa* as Huffer (2007) emphasizes that although "children who, even though they are greatly loved and honoured in many ways, are not seen as holders of authority" (p. 7). Huffer further states that:

> Pacific societies do not generally put a high premium on civil equality (as opposed to economic equality and social balance which have traditionally been valued). Hence placing children on an equal plane with adults as civil actors (which is how many in the region interpret the message of children's rights) is often seen as going against culture, and disrupting the bond between elders and children/youth. (Huffer, 2007, p. 7)

Therefore, understanding the child's perspective is critical as the unbalanced power cannot be removed but lessened (Mayall, 2000) emphasising the delicate nature of research with young participants in a Samoan context.

Equally importantly, I attended to the cultural respect-based protocols (Galuvao, 2018), which were critical to the success of my research. Accordingly, I identified two related aspects that I used in my research. My initial contact with my participants was via email, and I used letters to request permission formally and provide information letters and Participant Consent Forms. I used parent consent forms with the child participant to allow their children to participate in the small group *talanoa* sessions. The information letter and participant consent form provided information on the research participant's rights in line with the ethical requirements of the University of Waikato Research Ethics Guidelines.

Analysis

Thematic Analysis

As I had collected a large amount of data from various participants who represented multiple perspectives, I leaned towards a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is used to identify, analyse and report themes within the data. However, I struggled with the term 'report' as this term did not resonate with Pacific methodology. I kept my bias towards this word at abeyance and forced myself to stay the course and work with the data before me. I wanted to jump the queue many times and get to the end but had to harness myself to data analysis which became a very uncomfortable season in my PhD process. Patience has always been an elusive companion, only showing up when I needed the support to stay put and not propel too quickly through data analysis. Although Rangiwai et al. (2021) claim that thematic analysis can be "lost in translation" (p. 4) and thus can only work if the researcher and the participant speak the same indigenous language, I argue that thematic analysis can showcase the uniqueness of the PRM and the nuanced relationships within the collective stories should the researcher be housed within the methodology, as I am. Fa'avae et al. (2022) expand on this through their cross-cultural research within the Pacific communities. They profess that thematic analysis can accentuate the voices and the stories and show the inherent interconnectivity (Fa'avae et al., 2022). Other academics have recently used thematic analysis within their PRM (Tunufa'i, 2013; Vaka et al., 2016) while simultaneously drawing on the Pacific way to coalesce themes within the talanoa sessions (Fonua, 2005; Halapua, 2003; Hassall, 2005; Ka'ili, 2008). With swimming at the centre of the study and my participant’s personal experiences, I am better able to draw connections between the themes that emerge during our interactions.

Yin's Analysis Process Model (2015)

As I used Yin's (2015) process model to guide the steps within my data analysis, I methodically, almost painstakingly, moved through five distinct phases within data analysis. With all my data, I began the compiling stage. I reviewed all the transcripts, ensured they were accurate and transcribed them completely. I also collected all my fieldwork research notes, journals, and personal entries. This inductive approach to transcript categorisation and coding allowed key themes to be identified without a specific, pre-existing framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I continued to read and view the data set to identify broad themes, then followed this process to review and identify sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

My initial approach was quite an old-school approach. I printed all transcripts, read them line by line and colour-coded data blocks within each transcript. I soon ran out of colours with this approach and coloured ink. My following approach was to create mind maps of the data. Armed with more coloured markers, pens, and highlighters, I attacked my table-sized butcher paper with a flair. I drew out quotes, emerging themes, and concepts in many transcripts. I went through all 31 cases, listening, reading, and writing a giant mind map. In all, I completed ten pages of colourfully coded data. The data revealed insights, connections, and surprises. However, I soon realised the coloured marker would fade, leaving only remnants of this exploratory exposition. With markers, butcher paper and printed material pushed aside, I revisited each e-file of the *talanoa* sessions. I was encouraged by my supervisor to embrace NVivo software. With reluctance, I downloaded the software, accessed professional training, and soon realised the value of the software. As a coach, I rely on my manager to organise the data of my programmes, whereas NVivo proved to be an essential data manager on my research journey.

The process was straightforward and allowed me to unpack the data using cases and codes for the data. I had 31 cases, some as individual voices and others as multiple voices in the interviews. The NVivo data management software allowed me to tidy up the transcription and automatically label the data under a pseudonym. Once all the transcripts were entered, I began reading the transcripts and listening to the transcripts in depth. I immersed myself in the *talanoa* sessions, almost reliving the experience, to draw on the participants' information and stories. I was aware that I spent much time dissembling the data as I chose to dissemble the data twice in hard copy and once in soft copy using NVivo. Dissembling the data three times allowed me to ensure that I was hearing the stories and analysing the data. However, in my quest to understand the nature of swimming participation in Samoa, I had to acknowledge that my research may be unfinished, as so much more could be revealed. Every time I listened to a transcript, reread a transcript and followed an inductive approach to data reassembly, the data revealed layers of information that did not just inform but told stories that I did not expect. Therefore, within the data analysis process, I had to harness my initial interpretations

(Smith & Osborn, 2007) to ensure I did not direct the analysis with my prejudice. I followed the path set out by Smith and Osborn (2007) who emphasized that prioritizing data and reducing the data is challenging as themes "are not selected purely on the basis of their prevalence within the data. Other factors, including the richness of the particular passages that highlight the themes and how the theme helps illuminate other aspects" (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012, p. 74)

Moving into phase 3 and reassembling the data was a difficult journey. As *talanoa* is directly translated as storytelling, I realised that much of my data housed stories, not just short responses to questions. I took time to unpack the stories while retaining the essence and values associated with the stories. I then slowly created codes (themes) and sub-codes (sub-themes) and placed relevant transcript sections within each code. Significant overlaps for some data were placed in multiple codes and subcodes as many themes, concepts and stories connected. Fifteen principal codes were created, each with a minimum of 3 sub-codes and a maximum of 23 sub-codes. Codes were combined, collapsed, and expanded over a long data analysis process. Five codes continued to grow within the data analysis phase. Namely, influences on a swimmer, negotiations, cultural tensions, tensions to stay in swimming and influences to continue in swimming, were the five codes that pushed to the front, demanding more consideration.

Codes

Name	Files	References
Organizational tensions	1	1
Views of children swim	1	3
Why children are in swi	3	6
Replicating overseas sw	6	13
View of water	8	15
View of Samoa	5	16
Village swimmer	1	21
Facility tensions	9	31
Aims and Goals	3	33
Human Resource tensio	7	43
Memories	13	48
Reactions to water	12	55
Influences to participat	16	67
SSF	10	67
Influences on swimmer	6	100
Negotiations	17	132
Cultural tensions	17	252
Tensions to staying in s	20	265
Influences to remain in	17	431

Figure 5 Principle Codes
S. Schuster

Data analysis was an iterative process that involved staying within the data to ensure that I was understanding and connecting the phenomenon of swimming experiences of each of the participants. I spent a long time mentally parked in each section's codes, subcodes and content. I struggled at this juncture for a variety of reasons. While I understood the data, I needed to learn how to present data so that it would retain its essence, the lived experiences and the variety of voices and perspectives within the codes and subcodes. The context of this data was as important as the data itself. Realising the importance of context and the Samoan value of oral traditions and storytelling led me to use Creative Non-fiction practices to present, analyse and represent the data.

Creative Non-fiction Practices and Storytelling

One of the most appropriate methods of research with indigenous participants is the use of narrative and storytelling (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; O'Regan, 2006; Smith, 1999; Thaman, 2002). As Samoan culture is an oral culture, storytelling empowers the participants as they ultimately choose what to tell, what not to tell and how the story is told (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). I became an attentive listener to their collective stories realising that this was an organic process within the Pacific *worldview*. Moving from *talanoa* to writing in a storied format is consistent with the methodological map for this research. The stories that were constructed originated from my analysis process, which was guided by three main questions (Mutch, 2005):

- What was essential to my participants in the stories that they shared?
- What themes reoccurred in their stories?
- What was the relationship between these themes and their swimming journeys?

While many themes emerged from my data, I saw a way to create collective stories to represent the most compelling themes through creative non-fiction practices. I reconstructed the stories to weave multiple voices and perspectives to bring the reader into the writing. Bishop and Glynn (1999) claim that storytelling is the preferred method of knowledge sharing within indigenous cultures and communities. Storytelling was the foundation of the *talanoa* sessions leading to the analysis presented in story form.

According to Yin (2015), description is an inductive strategy that can be considered a significant type of interpretation. I chose to use a descriptive framework to interpret the data as it accommodates the richness of the data (Geertz, 1973, 1983 in Yin 2015, p. 227). Yin (2015) further explains the benefit of a descriptive framework as it shifts the focus onto the participants and their stories rather than the focus on the researcher. This exploration of understanding social conditions (Yin, 2015) supports the *Talanoa i le i 'a* conceptual framework as it seeks to harness the participants' perspectives, the place, and the phenomenon.

This creative practice approach is supported within the PRM framework. Lilomaiava-Doktor's (2020) research explains that storytelling can convey a cultural perspective in narrative form. She draws on Cameron's (2012) work that explains that storytelling should draw on personal experiences and locations within the presented narrative. Lilomaiava-Doktor's (2020) research on the cultural significance of storytelling on Samoan understandings of place is inherent within the culture. It is beneficial for incorporating the cultural perspective into research on Indigenous understandings of land and place (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2020, p. 123). Lekoko (2017) attests that “story-telling is a vehicle for assessing and interpreting events, experiences, and concepts” (p. 84) which links the past and present to the future. Specifically with creative non-fiction practices, "academics have long explored novel means of sharing the experiences of research participants to enhance understanding" (Vickers, 2010, p. 96). Creative non-fiction has claimed a qualitative analysis space that intends to inform through emotion, curiosity, and engagement by presenting multiple truths and perspectives (Rolfe, 2002; Rowland et al., 1990; Goodin, 2000; Harrold, 2005; Vickers, 2010). As Pacific methodologies embrace the voyaging metaphors, I join both Vickers (2010) and Tierney (2003), who argue that "qualitative research should be a voyage of creation and discovery" (Tierney 2003 in Vickers, 2010, p. 562).

My personal experiences in this thesis highlight my research investments to ensure I critically questioned the "intersecting power dynamics in cultural lives and individual experiences" (Iosefo et al. 2020, p. 2). I also was aware of my position as a non-indigenous researcher. Taking a narrative approach allowed me to share subjective and personal stories, both my own and my participants', which allowed me to understand my participants' social world. I aligned myself with the position of Iosefo et al. (2020) to ensure "non-indigenous auto ethnographers take responsibility for their role in 'decolonising' the work of the academy, and of knowledge creation overall” (Boyd, 2008; Holman Jones & Harris 2018 in Iosefo et al., 2020. p. 3). This reflection "offers a way of giving voice to personal experience to extend sociological understanding (Wall, 2008, p. 38). Ellis and Bochner (2000) articulate it well, stating that it is a way of writing that "displays multiple layers of consciousness connecting the personal to the cultural" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). In an autoethnographic fashion, Ngunjiri et al. (2010) explain that "vulnerability is part of what makes reading autoethnographic works so compelling, as researchers expose their pains, hurt, loss, grief, heartbreaks, and other emotions experienced as they travail through events in their lives" (p. 8).

The presented stories have been woven from the chorus of voices, themes, topics, and situations that claim centre stage in the data analysis. I had to make choices on which stories to tell, with the intent that the stories convey culturally safe and respectful design likened to Wells's (2021) work on non-fiction practices with indigenous participants in rural Australia who argues that this type of practice must show “indigenous worldviews, knowledges, and realities; honour social mores, emphasise the

social, historical, and political context of the shared experiences; and lastly, privilege the participant's voices and experiences" (p. 85). I use pseudonyms to disguise the voices and characters but apply Samoan concepts to enhance the central characters of the stories. I also used inanimate objects as main characters to personify the nuances found within the crevices of family life, relationships, and interpersonal dynamics. The inanimate objects allowed an additional perspective to be shared, which could house the more complicated issues attached to the stories.

Ultimately, I used stories to analyse the data and positioned myself as a 'storyteller'. I produced a story from the data, which provides a dynamic framework in which disconnected data elements can be linked and explained. Writing is considered a method of analysis (Richardson, 2000) which "brings a valuable analytical dimension to a project" (Smith et al., 2015, p 62). Creative practices allowed me to use various writing exemplars such as poetry, fictional legends, tales, and creative non-fiction. Coalescing raw data with my knowledge of the phenomenon (swimming) and knowledge of the context (Samoa) was an ideal formula for using this style of data analysis as "stories that could be true, derived from real events and feeling and conversations but are (presented as) fiction" (Clough, 2002). The stories are the centrepieces of the data analysis, and this style of writing also allowed me to use my own life experiences to relate to the participant's stories.

Within the writing process, I became aware of the claim of Smith et al.'s (2015) that "good creative non-fiction has theoretical benefits" (p 63). The stories can tell a theory and allow others to emerge from other possible theories, demonstrate multiple findings, and use a variety of theoretical positions due to the complexity of storying (Smith et al., 2015). As the research rests on relativism and multiple truths, stories can allow readers to experience different perspectives. As Smith et al. (2015) claim, "readers may be spurred to revisit the world from a different direction" (p. 63), thus assisting the reader in understanding others from a new perspective. Creative non-fiction opens the door for theoretical possibilities instead of offering only one entrance into the phenomenon being researched. This form of written analysis and presentation respects the PRM, as stories, oral history and relations are central to Samoan ideology. Further, using stories to analyse the data ensures that voice, emotion, and memory were used to represent the data ethically and in the correct context.

Summary and Reflections: West is not Best, putting a Pacific stake in the ground

While this study seeks to determine the factors which count as barriers and enablers to participating in this codified sport, I am cognizant that competitive codified swimming originates from a Western construct. However, in authentic Pacific tradition, decolonising research methodologies and practices were most appropriate for this Pacific research. Even as I tip my hat to the interpretive tradition, this research methodology is situated entirely in the Pacific worldview, encompassing the necessary tools, processes, and meanings such as reflexivity, *talanoa*, and storytelling. Sense-making is at the core of

PRM, and sense-making must be presented in the most authentic setting possible. There was no need to employ Western frameworks to understand a phenomenon in Samoa using co-constructed stories with Samoan participants.

Further, when using PRM, understanding the self, as the researcher and the presenter, is just as critical as understanding others. Pacific research methods and cultural protocols are also necessary for this project. To embrace PRM is to accept the messiness, as PRM may need to be more structured and methodically formulated than Western methodologies. PRM is clothed in post-modernism elements that support indigenous research movements. Dion-Buffalo and Mohaw (1992) argue that indigenous research should move away from Western constructs just as Pacific researchers and those researching within the Pacific need to move boldly away from Western approaches. Resisting the use of Western theories and applying PRM to communities and phenomena specific to non-Western research is vital to retain the voice of the participants, relay their stories and represent research findings useful for the intended communities. As a researcher in the Pacific, I could not afford to be complacent and avoid taking an assertive approach to using PRM. If I do not rightfully and effectively apply PRM, I only compound the rhetoric of continued marginalisation, which promotes Western superiority and rekindles colonialisation in research projects (Tuwe, 2016). I agree with Tuwe (2016) and his assertion that Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars must place value on Indigenous epistemologies. Therefore, I confidently claim the PRM I have applied to this research is valued, robust and paradigmatically fits with the research question, the location, the culture, and the people.

Chapter 5: Swimming in Samoa's Natural and Built Spaces

Water creates so much beauty, life and mystery

Fennel Hudson

Introduction

The findings begin with my reflexive account of recreation versus competitive sport through *Tana and the Stick*. It is written to house my perspective on the influences of geographic spaces on the development of a swimmer. My account stems from thirty years of swim coaching and teaching in Samoa, but I am nudged off the centre mark to embrace the differing perspectives of what swimming means to others, not only competitive swimmers.

Following *Tana and the Stick* are three stories shared by the participants to highlight the theme that swimming is seen as freedom and escape. *Pili's Playground* and *The River Calls* centre around the participants' memories of swimming in Samoa. It was found that those who had access to local water sources, had a liberating experience with swimming. Swimming was seen as an activity that is done without permission to escape the demands of chores at home, both in the urban and rural setting. It brings the child and childhood play to the centre of the story rather than sport performance pursuit. It also emphasizes that swimming has been seen in this playful, recreational light for some time now and has not been considered as a formal competitive sport. The final story, *The Sea Isn't For Me*, reveals that local settings influence the types of physical activities children engage in.

The second part of the chapter introduces the built environment of the Aquatic Centre and how the behaviours towards water and play have translated to the competitive swimming pool. The participants' stories led to the design of a *The Tale of Two Pools* to highlight how the Aquatic Centre has become a contested site which struggles with its own identity, purpose, aim and intention as it has become integrated into the urban landscape within Apia's sports facilities. The research findings indicate that the physical site is an important factor in understanding the issues that constrain and enable competitive swimming participation in Samoa. Using creative non-fiction practice, this story positions the Tuanaimato Aquatic Centre's two swimming pools as the central characters of the story to reveal the challenging relationship between the physical structure of the pool, the *fa'aSamoa* and the contemporary constructs of swimming code within built environment.

Tana and the Stick: Swimming is Fun

One day my 14-year-old son walked home from school and surprised me with profound insight upon his arrival at home. When I asked him how his day was, he responded with surprising depth. Tana replied, "You know what made me happy? I found this cool stick. I played with it. Whacked things along the way." Then with a deep sigh, he said, "Then my stick broke so my walk home became long again".

This is my youngest child who never engaged with formal after-school sports, much preferring playing basketball at the local parking lot or hanging out with friends. My three older children represented Samoa nationally for swimming and had a different pattern to their daily lives. Their schedules were dictated by the morning and afternoon training schedules. They rose before the sun, packed their uniforms, lunches and schoolwork and slept in the car on the way to training. After school, the bus would drop them off at the Aquatic Centre for the afternoon training sessions. Saturdays were the same except the afternoons welcomed free time.

My youngest child took a dislike for swim training immediately. I would diplomatically explain that he did not have the personality to train, to commit to the gruelling pace, to push through a steady stream of monotony day in and day out. Yet I knew that I lacked the patience to teach or coach my youngest in swimming due to the free spirit that dominated his movements. Family and friends would comment affectionately, though peppered with a tone of judgement, that Tana was an uninhibited child, with an *uluvale* nature as he pursued things with a touch of naughtiness.

His experiences are critical to this research as he was at the pool as much as his siblings. However, the hours he spent at the Aquatic Centre created a different story for him. The pool was his playground, enhancing his sense of freedom from the rules of school classrooms, from the *feau* (chores) at home and from the voices of authority. How Tana viewed the water was reflected in the research finding that, for some, swimming is seen as sense of freedom in Samoa. Admittedly, as a competitive coach my attention has focused on the competitive swimmer. However, a significant finding came from those who had different swimming experiences, like Tana, who offered invaluable insights which have served as a reminder for me to look deeper, gaze further and understand the perspectives of those who do not see competitive swimming in the same way as I do.

By taking a step back, I can see and hear the stories of the Tanas in Samoa. The ones who live in the moment and drink in their immediate world to suit their pleasures. The stories that follow are an important piece to understand the concept of swimming in Samoa, both urban and rural, and within the family and village dynamic.

Pili's Playground: Swimming is Freedom

Pili said, "In 1972, I first started my schooling at Salua Primary School on Manono Island, where my late mother is from. My 5-year-old self would run barefoot to school along the sandy beach in just a blue *i'e lavalava* with no shirt. That was the school uniform for boys." He pauses with an endearing look and laughs at the memory. He continues, "Manono Island is truly a paradise where the different colours of the sea, sand, coconut trees, breadfruit trees, other plants and flowers really show up on sunny days. At night, the rising full moon from the east, glittering over the waters is just magical. Some of my best memories in life are from this island".

As we continue to talanoa throughout the evening, Pili's memory takes on a life of its own.

Pili lives on an island. Not any island, but the best island in Samoa. Manono island. The blue waters are crystal clear; the sandy beaches are metres from his fale. His brothers and sisters are his constant companions. Every free moment is spent in the water. "Grab your se'evai kosokoso," Iti bellows as he runs through the dense bushes, looking for the opening to the beach. "I want to play rugby in the water- get your shoe- hurry up!"

Coming back to the present, Pili says, "I recall now that we must not have had a lot of money as we didn't have much, but any chance we had, we went to the sea to play games. My brothers and I played and played until we could hear the thundering voice of my father calling out for us to get home or else. I hate thinking about that "or else" as the sting of his hand across my face still burns in my memory."

"I told you to collect the firewood- not play around in the water again!" Pili's Tamā's words burst from his tense lips. I can see the spittle forming between his teeth. He must be angry this time. But it was all worth it. Our parents always knew we were in the water if we couldn't be found at the fale kuka grating the coconut or scraping the taro. I hated when I had to sasa le vao, my hands would get all blistered from holding the bush knife all day. I craved to play in the sea but knew the salt water would make my blisters hurt even more. That water was ours. We played there every day. I wouldn't call it swimming- just playing- and keeping cool.

Pili returns to the talanoa with me and concludes, "It is truly the most beautiful space - the sandy playground, our ancestral land where we all played as little kids having the time of our lives on school holidays. My favourite place of all, we're blessed to have our parents born there and grandparents footprints all over there."

The River Calls: Swimming is an Escape

Laki lives in a village called Sunken Road and that is all he thinks about on his walk home from school today. "Sunken Road, it sinks cuz it stinks and is sunken in with mud!" His brother Mane thinks it's funny. He always thinks everything I do it funny. "Let's go down to the river," whines Mane. I barely listen to Mane as he is such a maka nana, but he really did have a good idea. It is so hot today. My feet hurt because we had to stand in the school assembly all morning. The principal was really angry with us today and that assembly was so stupid. All I want is to go to the river and forget about it all. "Yep, manatu lelei, ma'ao, come, we go, Mane, let's go to the river". We trudge down the long, winding road to where the river pours from the base of the mountain, at the end of our long, sunken road. Hopefully those older boys won't be there but then again, I hope they are. They do the coolest tricks surfing on wood down the river. I know we are supposed to go home afterschool. The aufa'i is there. We must peel it and make the suka. Maybe we can bring back some firewood, so it looks like we were doing something useful. Ah, who cares. I don't want to go home. I know all those chores are there. They never go away. No one else does them- that is my and Mane's job. "Look at that river- it's flowing really fast today," delights Mane who steps over the fallen trees and pushes away the dense foliage which temporarily hinders the way to the river. The constant rain has fed this river to life, and we can't wait to get into it. Down the river we surfed and running back up the shoreline to have another go. My feet don't hurt anymore. School is a distant memory. I feel the rush of the river send me along on my piece of wood. The cool water, from the recent rain, washes over me. My school uniform lies lifeless under the pulu tree, neglected yet nagging me to get dressed again and return home. I ignore the uniform and turn back to the river, running along the edges, splashing in the shallows, forgetting the chores that await me at home. The sun is dipping lower. Mane and I are the only ones remaining. Just one more go. Just one more surf down the river, I say. Just one more before we must face the guaranteed hiding we are going to get from our parents. There will be no dinner tonight, some tea and crackers if we are lucky, but I don't care. We walk home, cool and refreshed. We can hear the church bells ringing in the distant announcing evening lotu. The river is gone. The sunken road with all its mud reappears seeping through our worn seavai and clinging to our clean feet. A sinking pit forms inside my stomach and by the slowing pace of my brother behind me, he knows what is coming. My parents are at the fale. The sting of a sasa is delivered across my cheek which tries to erase all the fun we had, but it never does as I know we will go again taeao.

The Sea Isn't For Me: Swimming is for Others

The bush is so dense that our fale is hidden in amongst the trees. Every day we have chores. Collect the wood, cut the wood, make the umu, cut the grass, pick up the rubbish, help make the evening meal. When we could, my sister Lupe and I would play in the forest, especially on the days we didn't go to school. We can't see the sami (sea) from our home, that is ok as the bush is our home. Sometimes we

would get to go on uncle's pikiapu (pick-up truck) when he travelled to our aiga on the south side of the island. We would love to sit in the back, taking in the sights, and endlessly giggle when we would see the palagis at the beach having their picnics and swimming in the sea. The sea wasn't ours to play in. It wasn't for us. If we did go to the beach, it was with our church where we would just splash around but the forest was ours.

Findings and Discussion

Most Samoan villages are organized along the coastal shoreline or inland near river sources, but there are villages that have moved farther inland away from natural water sources creating a different geographic lifestyle from their coastal counterparts. Some participants expressed that local geography played a big part in recreation. "We lived in the bush, far away from the rivers and the sea. We thought going to the coast and swimming was a waste of time as we had chores to do. Our food sources came from there and our chores were based on our surroundings as we couldn't access the sea anyways" (Roseta Tavita). Roseta recalls her own childhood saying that the sea and the beach were not for leisure as there is no such thing as leisure time and if you didn't live near the sea, there is no reason to be at the sea.

Living near the water did not guarantee swimming engagement either. Another participant who lived by the coast shared her experience from childhood. She added:

> Although we lived right next to the sea, we didn't know how to swim. We would just loll around in the water and that was only when we weren't doing chores. My brothers and sisters were the same. They couldn't swim and we didn't really know what swimming was. Hanging out in the sea was just something to do when we didn't have to do chores. (Lualua Taleni)

The participants shared a common discussion point that swimming is not seen as a sport for everyone. The participants maintained that swimming is perceived as a Western activity as they indicated elite, *palagi* (a person of Western descent), *afakasi* (Samoan with mixed/European descent) and 'others' were the people who swim in Samoa. One father explained that he did not participate in organized swimming in Fiji, where he was living as his family was on contract teaching in the early 1980s. He said those involved with swimming were rich and had European influence and reflected:

> We didn't join swimming. We played in the trees and the forest. Our parents didn't have the time or money to shuttle us to and from organized sports afterschool. We weren't raised that way. We weren't ferried around. We just had free time and played with friends after school. (Sio Meamata)

One participant shared that "swimming is a *palagi* sport because it's something that sits outside the general understanding of what sport is." She continued and said:

> It's a colonial thing as well. Although rugby and netball are British sports that were brought over through New Zealand and rugby when the British were here, these sports have a history with Samoa and Samoans and swimming does not (Roseta Tavita)

The experiences of my interlocuters also supported the findings from Chapter 2, that the water sources were accessed to support daily needs. Presently, the sea and rivers were used for fishing, collecting, cleaning and washing. One parent extended on the functional use of the water. “We had a large cattle farm. We used the river to clean off after tending or killing the cattle. It wasn’t for anything else, but to support our work life” (Kilifi Taleni). The children could use it for recreation, but the stories emphasize that either the water source was used for functional daily life or a reprieve from daily life. Another parent, who has worked professionally in Australia drew a further comparison on the differences of overseas beach and sea culture to Samoa saying:

> Maybe that is why people don't swim so much in Samoa; it's more than just a stretch in front of their house, an extension of their home perhaps. It’s a need to go wash off at the end of the day and cool off and then go back inside. Regarding my experiences with Sydney beach culture, people grow up on the beach. There really wasn’t anything else to do. You just go the beach, walk day or night. Swim. It was central to our everyday lives. See the difference to Samoa, it's so intertwined with land ownership and beach ownership. (Lualua Taleni)

Understanding water access, usage and function is central to understanding the perception of swimming in Samoa. It is not accepted as a site for exercise or training within the purview of the village as concluded in Garth and Hardin’s (2019) findings that exercise in public places is associated with discomfort. They explain that:

> The attention to sociality can also apply to other contexts, for instance in places like Samoa, where research often points to the lack of safe spaces for exercising and there is a stigma against public strenuous physical activity. Those that do engage in public exercise draw attention to themselves. (Garth & Hardin 2019, p. 6)

Fresh water pools, rivers, and the seas are functional places supporting daily chores and routines. Children, however, have used the sea, the beaches, and the rivers as a natural playground if it was part of their immediate geographic location. It is not commonplace for children, villages, or schools to travel with the intention of going to the beach for a swim (D. Rasmussen, personal communication, 12/03/22). Another participant spoke of her earlier memories of Samoa:

> The shallow waters were used to relieve oneself. Going for a swim was code for going to the toilet in the sea. In the 1960s and 1970s the shorelines were highly polluted, and we wouldn’t

> ever think to use the sea for exercise or swimming. It was basically the toilet. (P. Schoeffel, personal communication, 06/09/21)

These stories present important findings in the contemporary history and present-day Samoa in relation to swimming. Swimming, according to the findings, was for fun, recreation, play or avoidance of returning home to the awaiting chores. The participants shared that swimming was not considered a sport, but a playful pastime that took them away from the roles and responsibilities of the home or was solely perceived to be an activity for others.

The findings are significant as they present how swimming was viewed, the behaviours that are attached to this activity and how these elements translated to new swimming environments such as the built Aquatic Centre. The perception and practice of swimming as a recreational unstructured activity has impacted the development of competitive swimming participation in Samoa as these attitudes have now become attached to the built environment.

The following story, *The Tale of Two Pools,* is about the newly built Faleata Aquatic Centre in Tuanaimato, a peri-urban area of the capital of Apia. It is a physically significant complex built for the 2007 South Pacific Games. It was the first public swimming pool built in Samoa, funded by China Aid and remains the only government public pool to date (2022). As previously discussed in Chapter 2, the pool was built to ensure Samoa was successful in winning the bid to host the multisport regional event. The Aquatic Centre was completed in 2007 and has served as the main location for swimming development. However, the research findings highlighted considerable discussions regarding the pool structure, policies, access, maintenance and user behaviour. *The Tale of Two Pools* highlights how the Aquatic Centre has become a contested site which struggles with its own identity, purpose, aim and intention as it integrated into urban landscape within Apia's sports facilities.

The Tale of Two Pools: Swimming is Structured

The story isn't very ancient, but it needs to be told. Once there were two pools, named Fafo (outside) and Totonu (inside). Their names represented the spaces where they inhabited in their home.

Both lived in the largest house in Apia, one that could be seen from top of the mountains and top of the city buildings. It was a big home, with a fence that kept them protected. Fafo and Totonu's parents also employed a security guard, protecting them from those who wanted to visit. Fafo lived outdoors and Totonu lived indoors.

When their house was built, it was the envy of many, so the home was used for everything: competitions, beauty pageants, birthday parties, wedding receptions and government functions. Sometimes their home would close for renovations for long periods of time. The overseas workers would come for months removing tiles, fixing the leaks, draining their home, and leaving them empty.

Then the repairs would finish, the workers would leave, and the visitors would arrive, showcasing their talents and personalities throughout their home.

Totonu was the older brother. He loved rules, he loved his place inside the home. He demanded order, cleanliness, control. He was big and had a crispy coolness to him. Many knew of him, but he was unapproachable. He was demanding and frightened people as he was very unforgiving too. His parents insisted that his doors should be locked, and only opened when he was properly presentable. When people came to visit, everyone would walk inside to meet Totonu and would exclaim at all his magnificence. His clean lines, his smooth surface. He was the centrepiece and knew he commanded an audience when people would visit. There was a depth to Totonu that people admired but feared. But then the people would leave. They turned their back on Totonu and visited Fafo outside longer. Totunu scoffed at his outdoor brother, who lived in the hot sun, the pouring rain and the dust but still envied all the visitors Fafo would attract.

Fafo was the younger brother. He was smaller and had a shallow personality. He loved living outdoors, with the sun shining on him. Even the rain didn't bother him too much as he had friends visit him in any type of weather. He had the same rules as Totonu, but for some reason his parents didn't insist on the rules to be followed. Because he wasn't forced to live by rules, like his older brother, this seemed to attract many people. He had so many friends who visited him every day. They engaged with Fafo. They would bring their children and the school children would come by bus. Even the sports clubs would play with Fafo each afternoon too. Everyone preferred to visit Fafo so much more.

Totonu was jealous. He didn't understand why Fafo was so popular. Totonu viewed Fafo with a critical eye. His younger brother didn't seem bothered with rules. The rules that their parents set down. Fafo always turned a blind eye and allowed anyone to come visit him, wearing whatever they wanted, using Fafo anyway they pleased. Totonu didn't like it. He preferred order, proper attire, and being used only for what he offered, nothing more.

It's been 15 years now and Totonu has aged. While he is still open for visitors, he often has dead birds and nesting debris living with him. He realized that living indoors allowed creatures to nest in the rafters as he lay vulnerable below. He realized that when visitors came, they complained about the birds and how dirty it made him. But Fafo was dirty too because the people who came would wear their training clothes and play in his waters. Fafo's water was in a constant cloudy state.

When the children were brought to meet Totonu, he could feel their apprehension. Slowly the children would join him, but held onto him with a grip so strong, that he could feel it along his sides. They didn't stay long. Long enough to complain that Totonu was too cold, too big, too scary. He didn't like it when people said that about him. He could always hear Fafo laughing. The rough housing, the

groups of teenagers, the happy shrill of children. There was music and balls and play toys that Fafo offered. Totonu did not allow any of that. No toys, no playing, no horsing around, and definitely no street clothes.

Totonu only has a small group of friends. They like to visit him before sunrise and in the late afternoon. These friends love him and join in his coolness and calm. Sometimes in the early mornings, he can hear his friends arrive, but they don't come in. It is too dark for his friends to visit and his parents say it is too expensive to turn the lights on. His parents say that Totonu's friends can visit his brother outside. Totonu hears their frustration. His friends want to visit him, but it is too dark so they must stay outside. But Fafo is messy, turbulent, wavy and lacks focus. Totonu sadly says to himself "I can hear my friends outside when they bump into one another or cough and splutter. He purposely locks his lights so my friends can't turn on the lights. My friends have to use their car headlights to see where they are going when they visit Fafo!" Their movements echoing Totonu's dark morning home. Why am I here, Totonu cries? Why can't my friends visit me in the morning? Why do our parents treat us so differently? Fafo just smirks as he knows that he is the one the people want, the one the people enjoy. He lures them to him as there are no rules, no conditions, and no barriers for them to visit.

Findings and Discussion

Structural issues: Physical design of the pool

The Samoan government committed to building the sport facility infrastructure to host the 2007 South Pacific Games. With this considerable undertaking, the local sport administrators did not have a central voice in the design of the facilities. Speaking with the President of Swimming during that time, he explains that he didn't have much control over the design of the pool. "I didn't agree with the design, it didn't seem to fit with what our needs were. But we needed a pool and the Chinese agreed to build it. We got what we needed to host the games" (Lapine Masina). Mareko, a facility manager, voices frustration that "if the roof is dirty, then when it rains, it runs right into the pools. As for the birds, it is an ongoing issue trying to remove their nests as their droppings fall directly into the pool (indoor)" (Mareko Iti). Lack of forward thinking with the design has left the facility's staff a legacy of issues that are difficult in running the facility.

The participant's stories continued to turn back the physical site of the pool and how the status of the pool directly impacts the swim programmes. Coaches voiced their concerns regarding the hygiene of the pool:

> I don't want to put anyone in the pool until it is clean. We need them to keep up the pool. They are not maintaining the status of the pool inside. I explain that I want my school to use it

> on Fridays. They say, ok, maybe we will clean it up for you. That is a multi-million-dollar facility that is not being cared for, I just don't understand it, it is not being cared for and it is heart-breaking. (Fili Uso)

Another parent reflected on her concerns of the Faleata Aquatic Centre. She explained:

> Back in New Zealand, my sister caught hepatitis because the pools weren't clean and the public pools were known for not being very hygienic. That is when a lot of parents didn't send their kids to the swimming pool because they would get ill. When I visit Samoa's swimming pools, I feel just as dismayed and wonder why they aren't keeping up the facility? (Soso Maalili)

While the hygienic status of the pool was a contentious finding, it was necessary to look beyond the structural issues contributing to the questionable water quality and gaze at the intersection between the culture and the architecture of the newly built facility.

Cultural architecture and behaviours: front and back

In Samoan culture, there is a distinguishing demarcation between the front and back of home, lined to an architectural intention (Van der Ryn, 2016). Tcherkezoff (2019) emphasizes that in Samoa the "spatial organization of a house, that of all a family's land and of the village, always, and very markedly, valorises the front in relation to the back" (p. 3). In intentional Samoan spatial design, a house always faces the centre of the village, or the road, while the back of the house would be positioned towards the sea. While the aquatic centre does not boast an architectural model of a traditional fale, it still houses elements to produce a similar response to the uses and behaviours associated with the building. "Samoa is very structured in how they do things. The setting up of fales for family. The front of the house is the welcoming house. The untidy or things that shouldn't be seen, like a toilet, goes in the back fale- away from where we greet guests" (Iosua Tasi).

The pool has been designed similarly. The Aquatic Centre's front façade has a stature and formality which faces the main road of Faleata. The foyer, administrative offices and meeting rooms are located at the front of the Aquatic Centre. After the front offices, there is a small internal hallway leading to the indoor 50 m competition pool and dive pool outfitted with multiple springboards and diving platforms. Upper seating area is situated in stadium-like fashion. "It is an immense building. The facility itself is one of a kind in the Pacific region as it is the only indoor facility boasting an Olympic pool and dive well" (Telesia Valu).

Access to the pools, both inside and outside, which also has regulations, is aligned with the Samoan culture. Those who are housed in the administrative area in the front may access the indoor pool from the formal entry way. Also, dignitaries and overseas visitors may access the

indoor pool from the front of the Aquatic Centre. The public access to both the inside and the outside pool is gained through the back of the building. Pool users must travel to the rear of the building to access the outdoor pool, toilets, showers and the back doors leading into the indoor pool. This is likened to the culture of entering a home in Samoa as "in a house, people of high status enter from the front, those of low status from the back" (Tcherkezoff, 2019, p. 6). Another participant lent additional insight to the design of the pool, its architectural positioning and its significance to the culture where the front is valued, and the back is of lesser status. He explains that:

> In the village, our home faces the road resulting with our backs to the sea. We face our backs to ocean and in relationship to the culture, it's also a part of the architecture of the country. We face inwards not outwards. It is saying that we turn our back to that which is inferior. We turn our back to that which is secondary. (Iosua Tasi)

As emphasized in *The Tale of Two Pools*, most participants spoke of the unregulated behaviour at the pool. The casual behaviour is accepted, though only in the back, outdoor pool. One administrator frames it this way:

> Kids come to the pool and it's just all fun and games as they don't have that seriousness to understand. It is all horseplay. And that's part of the Samoan culture. Where we are uncomfortable humour comes in. Mucking around and being stupid and making fun of or taking the mickey out of people is very much a Samoan trait. (Telesia Valu)

Having the recreational pool at the back is consistent with cultural codes surrounding behaviour and space. "Roads, like *malae,* are places of social control and public attention" (Shore, 1982, p 50 in Van der Ryn, Micah 2016 p 122). Behaviour is controlled along the front, where families are seen versus the back.

Policies and protocols: lights off, shoes off, clothes on

Talanoa discussions revolved around the conflicting rules that existed at the Aquatic Centre. As depicted in the tale, the indoor pool rules followed strict code reflecting a Western approach to pool use. The indoor pool requires appropriate swim attire be worn, only used for swim training, no horseplay, no rough housing, no hanging on the ropes. While there is no designated lifeguard for the indoor pool, pool staff monitor the inside pool continuously to ensure rules are adhered to.

> Pool culture and swimming culture are very difficult things to teach. They (the children) wear clothes in the pool as it is allowed. Keeping covered up and wearing casual clothes in the outdoor pool has been allowed by the pool staff. It makes the pool so dirty. They come to the

> pool wearing their dirty training clothes and go straight in without a shower. I don't understand as it makes more work for the staff to clean the pool. (Fili Uso)

Another competitive swimmer mentioned a pool rule she finds confusing. "They (the pool staff) said we can't wear shoes on the deck. I don't understand it. I get it that the shoes are dirty, but everyone's feet are so dirty, what's the point?" (Ioana Uila). In the *fa'aSamoa,* it is cultural practice to remove shoes before entering a home and the pool staff have adopted the same practice when people step onto the outdoor pool deck. This presents a conflicting message of shoes off, but clothes on. The swimmer continued her thoughts and commented:

> It'll (the shoes) dirty the deck, but I know it is not culturally appropriate to wear shoes when entering the facility. Then again, they allow us to wear our dirty clothes in the water. How does this even make sense? (Ioana Uila)

Competing priorities: swimming versus culture

Research has shown that casual swimming cultures have emerged from artificial built facilities such as swimming pools (O'Neill, Jesse & Nadia Wagner, 2017) as pools were built to escape the mundanity of daily life (O'Neill et al., 2017) or to provide a cleaner bathing space when water quality in rivers and coastlines were heavily impacted by industrial pollution (Clarke, 2013). However, the Samoa Aquatic Centre was not built for these purposes; rather, it was built to win a bid to host competitive regional game. With the focus on the games, "long-term facility management plan was not prioritized" (Lapine Masina)

The facility is an extraordinary facility housing two 50-metre pools, a children's play pool and only regional dive well. The immensity of the facility opened opportunities for venue hiring for much needed capital, and as one Sport Administrator reflected:

> I remember after the 2007 South Pacific Games, we were building on the games momentum and increasing our enrolment for swimming. Then the government closed the facility as they renovated the entire place to host the 2007 Miss South Pacific Competition. They even built a runway platform across the entire indoor competition pool. I think it was the beginning of the end as from that point on, the facility is hired out for so many functions. (Telesia Vau)

Since 2007, the participants were able to recall major pool closures due to beauty pageants, the United Nations SIDS Conference, church conferences, Zumba classes, government functions and corporate parties. All these impacted swim developments just as much as China Aid pool renovations every three years to address structural anomalies such as pool leakage, mechanical faults, water systems, and soil resettlement, as explained by a senior sports administrator. Despite the disruptive venue closures, Samoa hosted competitive swimming events over a 12-year span including 2007 South

Pacific Games, 2010 Oceania Swimming Championships, 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games, 2019 Pacific Games affording multiple opportunities to showcase competitive swimming within the local community.

Summary

For the past 15 years, Samoa's world-class facilities are part of the growing per-urban landscape supporting sport and athlete development. While the aquatic centre is a relatively new structure and competitive swimming was formally introduced when the facility opened, the research findings revealed that the Aquatic Centre was significant to the overall development of the sport. Although Samoa does not have a rich history with swimming pools and competitive swimming like the United States (Wiltse, 2007), the findings indicated that the site of the pool has influenced the development of the sport remain underutilized for their intended purposes (swimming) due to the ongoing disruptions.

As presented in the story, the ongoing closures of the Aquatic Centre since it was established in 2007 have caused major disruptions to competitive swimming development. Just as sports administrators and national federations were not included in the consultations of the design of the facility, the schedule of pool rentals, closures, renovations and repairs were only mediated between government, China Aid agreements and private stakeholders. Sport federations were not included in discussions but received the direct impact of pool closures disrupting access and swim development. Within the 15 years it has been operating, the pool was closed up to 9 – 12 months during 2007 and 2008 to prepare the venue for the SPG and the pageant, 2010 for contracted repairs, 2013– 2014 for renovations to host the UN SIDS Conference, 2015 for further indoor pool repairs, 2018–2019 to renovate the facilities for the Pacific Games July 2019, closure of the pools in late 2019 due to the measles epidemic and a further ongoing closure from 2020 to 2022 due to the State of Emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic. This echoes Andreff and Szymanski (2006) findings regarding sport in developing countries and issues around facility upkeep:

> Since sport facilities are so rare, (there is) expected a large emphasis on maintenance. In fact, it is quite the contrary, sport facilities are often not maintained at all, due to insuperable financial costs. Therefore their use is reduced to a few exceptional events which in turn diminishes the number of local sport competitions. It also decreases the possible length of training time and hence the number of sport participants. In a vicious circle, with sport facilities being consequently under-utilised, their maintenance is felt to be neither useful nor necessary. (Andreff & Szymanski, 2006, p. 3)

A newly built facility, intended for competitive swimming, did not follow the usual dictates of pool-use policy, maintenance and access. More specifically, the use of pool illustrates a concrete example

of the clash between Western and Pacific ideologies. The new site did not adopt Western policy standards but allowed inherent cultural behaviours to translate into the new space. The indoor pool was held to a different policy standard than the outdoor pool. The indoor pool, with its singular purpose, is not a highly visited pool whereas the outdoor pool, which allows familiar behaviours such as horseplay, wearing casual attire and using the space for recreation has higher membership and usage. The outdoor pool imitates how youth play in the natural water spaces such as rivers, waterfalls and the sea. Engagement with water equates to playful experiences without conforming to Western rules of pool usage. As for acceptable attire, the pool treats the space like a village home. To be appropriately covered up and removing shoes before coming onto the deck is directly translated in *fa'aSamoa* on how to enter a home.

The participants spoke of their awareness of the conflict between Western and Pacific ideology of this swimming space. The participant talanoa sessions reflected on the ongoing access issues with the pool and their frustrations but the discussions moved beyond facility and access constraints as they considered the way the newly built environment adapted to the culture of the country.

The culture of this built space mirrors the culture of what is viewed as superior (the front) and inferior (the back), what behaviours are acceptable (at the back) versus the adoption of Western policy (for the indoor pool). It challenges the perception of what is important about the new facility, whether it is playful experiences at the back, welcoming guests at the front or developing an athlete, somewhere, literally in the middle.

Chapter 6: Understanding Fear and Finding Agency in Swimming

Overcoming what frightens you the most strengthens you the most.

Matshona Dhliwayo

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the unexpected stories of fear which surfaced during the data collection process. The chapter begins with my reflexive writing about experiencing my father's death in the middle of my doctoral studies. Through the grieving process, I was able to harness a new level of empathy and palpable understanding of my participants' experiences with drowning and fear of the water which is often compared to the physical and emotional responses to grief. *The Grieving Researcher* is a self-explorative piece that embraces Pacific Research Methodology (PRM) and tests the conceptual framework that is guiding the research. It is a journey of understanding my participants' earliest memories of swimming as much as it is understanding myself. It aims for verisimilitude; however, there are multiple truths when researching within the Pacific and Pacific communities.

Following my reflexive writing are four stories, *See You Back at the Shore*, *Over My Head*, *Do Babies Float Up* and *Swimming in School Spaces*, that stress the participants' fearful experiences with swimming. The findings reveal that factors preceding the fearful swimming encounter such as privilege, access, Western exposure, and traditional folklore influenced parents to seek formal swimming programmes for their children.

The Grieving Researcher is my reflexive writing in response to my father's death and analysis of grief as a metaphor to drowning. It is my intention that bringing my voice to the fore will extend the larger sociological understanding of how personal trauma can influence our perspectives, engagement, and agency.

The Grieving Researcher: Experiencing fear

I can't see
Grief blankets me, pressing me
Down into the darkness
A tangible pressure
I can't breathe
The water is
Black
Thick
I am tethered to
Foreign land
Foreign feelings
I am drowning
In fear
Fear to embrace my grief

I draw on CS Lewis' statement that "no one ever told me that grief felt so much like fear" (C.S. Lewis, A Grief Observed, p. 1). Co-constructed. Subjective. I cannot remove my voice nor should I. I am within this story. Fighting with fear, fear of the unknown, fear of being an imposter, fear of losing myself and my identity, and fear of grief from personal loss. I did not know how my life will exist without my father. I fought that fear, and the more I fought the more my panic heightened, and the physical sense of drowning occurred. I struggled to breathe as I would fight against the burgeoning feelings of grief that swell within me and sink lower into myself, not moving, not doing anything. Then I relented, more with a heaving sigh and guttural cry that it was time to let my salty tears mix with the water and allow my own acute grief to provide momentary insight into what it feels like to drown. I realize that to move through this journey, I had to allow my grief to guide me.

Since my father's death in June 2021, I have felt like I am drowning. I never had a visceral understanding to this word nor how it feels. It seems strange to admit this as I am a swim coach. I've been coaching and teaching in Samoa for 30 years, yet I never entertained the concept of fear of the water and what impact it has on a development sport. I never analysed how a child felt when getting into the pool. I never considered how fear could envelope them, wading in a foreign environment that I had assumed was natural to them. I did not understand their hesitancy to embrace a space that I had always felt safe and secure in. I did not understand any of this until I experienced my father's death. His death occurred exactly halfway through my doctoral studies. His death did not create a void in me, but rather an intense feeling of drowning. Drowning in emotional discourse and uncertainty.

Drowning within the vast distance between New Zealand and the United States – a distance so thick with jumbled memories colliding with present-day priorities. Questions swirled in my mind *'Do I return to be with my mother and grieve Dad's death in person?' 'Do I stay in New Zealand as a parent to three of my children and stay committed to my PhD studies?' 'Do I give up altogether and return home to Samoa and to my husband?'* As it was, I was tethered to New Zealand, anchored by immigration laws, and I was unable to travel home, be it the USA and Samoa. I have COVID to thank for that. This tether so taut that it pulled me down into a damp, heavy, claustrophobic environment of foreign waters. Water that was unfamiliar and uncomfortable. Flailing, but not moving anywhere. Crying, but all sound was muted. No light. No air. No peace. These waters enveloped me and pulled me down.

It was only through this experience that I wondered if my young participants had ever felt the same. Uncomfortable, scared, stuck, with a heaviness that could only be repelled if fought against while trying to rise from the bottom to breathe. Perhaps drowning in grief can be likened to drowning in water. It is human nature to resist the feeling of drowning. To fight against it, to battle it, to overcome it. Perhaps this was why so many children struggled in the beginning of the swim programme because that fear already existed. There was a fear of the water, but more precisely the fear of drowning that brought hesitancy and uncertainty into their swim lessons. Where did this fear come from? Why was it already indelibly marked upon some children's perspectives of the water?

I craved being in the water and under the water as it was quiet, fluid, and safe. Some parents would say, "When will you teach them to swim? We want them to swim like them" pointing to my squad training in the indoor 50 m pool. I would smile, assure them that their children would be taught the strokes and swim from one end to the other, but I needed them to love being in the water, not just swim on top of the water. I needed the children to enjoy the aesthetics of being under the water, to feel free and not scared, to feel weightless and not paralyzed, to feel empowered and not constrained.

The following are two stories, *See you Back at the Shore* and *Over My Head*, created from the research participants' stories about their experiences of swimming in Samoa during the 1970s to present day. Their stories surprised me as my focus has always been on elite swim development. While swimming is a new sport, it comes with its' own unique legacy linked to the parents' experiences which directly influenced their own children's involvement with swimming. Stepping back and listening intently to the parents' stories allowed me to learn about an important layer in the participants' history with swimming in Samoa and its influence on participation in swimming today.

See you Back at the Shore: First-hand Fear

I met with her at a favourite restaurant. After the extended lockdowns, it was refreshing to meet and reconnect after such a long absence. Our conservation flowed as much as the tea did at our table. When we finally approached the conversation on swimming, she took the helm and shared openly on her experiences with swimming.

"I needed my children to learn how to swim. This was non-negotiable. Maybe it was the way I was taught by my father back in Samoa. Though I never thought about the way my own experiences with the water influenced their experiences." Finau closes her eyes and draws a deep breath. "Let me tell you about that day, the day I nearly drowned".

Her story begins. "We were privileged in Samoa growing up. We were one of the few families who had a private vehicle. Oh, what an amazing concept it was. Dad would pile us all into the back of the car every Friday and Saturday, the wind blowing in my hair, the sun warming my skin. We were so lucky. The freedom the car brought and feeling so proud with my dad driving us all around to a te te ta'avale (a car ride)."

Finau presses further into the recesses of her memory, and squints at nothing in particular or possibly the memory. "Dogs. Washing the dogs. I remember now. After work on Fridays and on Saturdays, Dad would pack us into the car with our dogs and drive to Mulinu'u. You know Vailoa is a drive to the water? Our village was only on the outskirt of town, and I would love the drive to Mulinu'u where the road travelled alongside the sea. We would get near the end of the road and the car would pull as close to the shoreline as possible. The dogs, my siblings and I would tumble out of the car and get onto our chore of washing the dogs in the sea. Every Friday and every Saturday"

She stops her story. Finau tips her head to the side as if trying to hear a distant sound. Then she queries, mostly to herself, "I don't know how to swim. Why don't I know how to swim, I ask myself?"

Our conversation shifts. The waiter presents our food, and we pause to say grace. "Dear Lord, thank you for this provision and continued fellowship, please sanctify this food before us, In Jesus' name, Amen". Dinner begins. It's Indian butter chicken and palak paneer. The aroma of the curry, the coriander, and the chili float between our conversation. We are talking about Samoan politics again. We are wading in a constant stream of dialogue, ripples of the Samoan election dramas, the undercurrents of government affairs and our family connections. Mid-stream, Finau pauses and takes a deep breath in and shakes her head ever so slightly that cause her earrings to sway. She leans her body closer over the table and looks directly at me. She says in a hushed voice, "I only realize now why I don't swim, and the memory is so vivid".

She rushes her words that if we are getting swept up in a current, I would have to swim harder to keep up with her. Talking fast, she says, "You know that was my trip to the water. Every Friday afternoon after work mom and dad and a Saturday. So I ask myself why didn't I learn how to swim? I asked my son, why do you think I didn't learn how to swim back then? I think for swimming to have happened back then, it had to be brought over. Even though we are surrounded by water and people say, 'I can swim', they really can't do anything to save themselves". I am perplexed as her thoughts are disconnected, insightful, but there must be more. I wait patiently, hoping that Finau can grab her memory before it fades.

"You know, we sort of mimic it the way see people do on TV. Feet on the floor, feet on the ground- not over our heads". She frowns and seems agitated, like trying to look for a missing item, but not remembering the reason for the search. Finau repeats in a quiet whisper, "Why didn't I learn how to swim back then? I don't know". I pause. I wait. I, too, am expectant. Perhaps too expectant? Is there really a reason or was it just there wasn't an opportunity to learn. I tell myself that no story is still a story. I sigh and take a bite of my meal, though the flavours aren't so inviting. The first few bites are always the best. I digress, but admittedly those are the thoughts in my head.

Finau starts her story again and I lean in. "We were the probably privileged ones because we did have a car. We lived in town; we went to the premiere primary school. My Dad was schooled in New Zealand. We were already halfway there, on our way there, with how we were set up in Samoa." Half-way where, I ask myself? Did she say halfway and what does this have to do with swimming? Ah well, Suzie, just be quiet and just listen to the story.

Finau is still sharing her story when I refocus on her words "But my Dad, my father, he had this thing we had to learn. He said we had to teach ourselves how to swim. You know, self-taught. So, he took us out to Mulinu'u one Saturday. We didn't become swimmers. He just floated us out in Mulinuu beyond the reef in a dingy. Dropped us off and said, "'see you later back there,'" pointing to the shoreline. We all were dropped into the sea, and he returned to the shore in his dingy."

Finau pauses, remembering the day. She shakes her head vigorously and continues "I don't know how I got back to the shore. But that was it. That was my fear of the water. That was my teaching. I was scared. Did this make me into a swimmer?" Finau laughs. "My siblings all experienced the same thing. They are not good swimmers either."

She leans back in her chair, pursing her lips together, as if trying to connect the various dots that are scattering through her mind. "Back then the only swimming pools we had was at the Tusitala Hotel in Apia. Our village didn't even have a tidal freshwater spring pool so there was no chance to swim in the water even at our home. Swimming as a sport was not even an option, it didn't exist. My Dad just wanted us to learn how to swim. He grew up in Wellington and learned how to swim at school there. I

guess he wanted us to have the same skill but didn't know how to teach us. Dropping us off in the deep end of the ocean, literally, was what he believed to build our skill of swimming." Finau drinks from her cup, then concludes, "he only built the fear of swimming in me and that has been the driving force to get my children in swimming".

As the evening wore on, I was lost in thought regarding Finau's personal experiences as a child in Samoa and her father's attempts to teach her to swim. I was so engrossed in my own memories of my own father and the acute feeling of grief and fear likened to Finau's personal accounts of fear, that I was eager to revisit her story when our time together ended. However, instead of saying good-bye, Finau piped up and said, "did I ever tell you about my daughter who drowned?"

Over My Head: History Repeats

The mother's story

Finau sighs and says, "I don't think I ever told you the story about my daughter". My heart stops for a moment as I am not sure which daughter she is talking about. Did she lose her daughter? Is this about a daughter I never knew? Have I slipped into deep waters here in my talanoa session. No Suzie. It's ok. Keep treading water with Finau. She is sharing and allowing her stories to be revealed. Trust the process as she trusts you.

Finau recalls with a smile on her face: "You see, in middle school here in New Zealand, the good ones are allowed to swim in the deep water at the pools. As far the teacher can see, well my daughter must have fluked her way right through. The teacher's saw her as tall, athletic, able-bodied. I guess she was what they would call one of the "good ones". She laughs and I join in and hear myself saying to her, "oh yeah, that happens all the time in teaching swimming and sport– we already assume who the natural ones are". The collective laughter dies down and Finau continues. "Well, that particular day I didn't go to the school swimming field trip. I meant to come in the afternoon. But what did I get – I got a call that my daughter was hysterical in the pool and I dropped everything and went straight to the pool. I asked what happened. My daughter has no swimming experience whatsoever. She obviously went down…. and down….. and down." Every time Finau says "down" her voice emphasize the depth of the pool and the depth of her fear. She then says, "Pele was able get back up to the surface, but she was panicked. And the teacher said 'uh I thought she was a good swimmer.'" Finau pauses and says "my daughter said 'no!' I said no! I explained that Pele was only allowed to swim in shallow pool at school and her feet never leave the ground! And because she was a good runner, that is what she would do, run in the swim lanes with her feet on the floor".

The daughter's story

The water surrounds me
Feet on the floor
Never leaving
The floor secures me
I cannot float
What does that mean?
I step too far
I sink
Bubbles
Panic
There is no air

Tears prick behind Finau's eyes as she replays the memory and I remain quiet. Finau continues and explains, "So that day I dried her up, bundled her into the car and I didn't know there was a swim club there at the pool. I knew people went there for swimming. I just located the club and put her straight in. That was the start of our swimming journey."

Finau finishes her story by proclaiming in a clear voice, "I value swimming because of the fear I have. You put me near the water, and I know that I cannot swim. I never wanted my children to have the same fear that I have in the water. I want my kids to embrace the water and enjoy the water and have survival skills. This is the biggest driving force for me the fear."

Findings and Discussion

Fighting against the current

Finau is presented in this story as the central character just as the parent participants within this research took an essential role. The word *Finau* literally means to 'try your hardest, even if the odds are against you'. It also means 'advocate'. Applying this name to the central character encompasses the trait that all the parents shared within their *talanoa* sessions. Their stories told of their own struggles with swimming, growing up in Samoa and how their limited experiences tainted their view of swimming. However, because of their negative experiences, they advocated for their children to participate in a formal programme.

In Finau's story, privilege, Western modelling, her father's misguided intentions, and seeking refuge in the shoreline presented as strong themes. However, in Pele's story, while privilege and Western

modelling were also present, stereotyping and parent advocacy led to intentional pursuits to ensure history did not repeat itself.

Privilege brings access / Swimming is an imported concept

Finau noted her family's status and position within the Samoan community brought opportunities that others did not have access too. Private vehicles were not commonplace during that time, which allowed her father to introduce them to a larger world, even within Samoa. The private car was central to the story, as it afforded Finau's father access to the sea and he could acquaint her with the Western concept of swimming. Like most adult participants in the study, the father had been taught swimming overseas, but lacked the knowledge and pedagogical skills to teach his own children. Drawing on a 'throw them in and let them return to land' concept was the rudimentary strategy to engage his children in swimming. Contrary to international research findings (Pharr, Irwin, Layne & Irwin, 2018) where findings link fear as a barrier to accessing swimming for children, this research indicated that the fearful experiences led parents to locate swimming programmes for their children.

During data collection, a myriad of stories revealed the element that swimming was imported as they had not experienced any natural element of formal swimming in their own childhoods. The participants shared that they only just "looked at the beach and didn't swim" (Lualua Taleni) or their own parents were taught by the priests and missionaries (Soso Maalili). One parent reflected on her own experiences from both her father and the nuns:

> My father would take us to the spring pool, but he would just put us on his shoulders, and that was his way of teaching us how to swim. And we would drink all the water and that was fearful, so we just held onto his side, and that was his way of teaching us how to swim. There was no instruction of strokes or how to float. It wasn't until the nuns would come and pick us up during the school holidays and take us to the beach. They would teach us how to do starfish. And I guess that was our introduction to swimming. (Soso Maalili)

You look the part, so you should be able to swim

In Pele's story, the skill was not brought over to Samoa, but rather Pele was brought over to New Zealand. Migration to New Zealand is a valued pursuit for Samoan families who are looking to improve their family's socio-economic and educational opportunities (Koser & Laczko, 2010 in Moran & Willcox, 2013; Moran & Willcox, 2010). However, the expectation that new countries and new systems should offer all academic and life skills was a common topic within the research talanoa sessions. Participants admitted that the new life in overseas did not include school-based swim instruction, but a loosely offered sports day activity disguised as school swimming. This was determined in Button et al. (2019) research that water safety skill competency amongst New Zealand

primary students was low with "less than 50% deemed water confident" (Button et al, 2019, p. 8) as well as Moran's (2007) findings that Pacific students have a significant lack of swimming ability due to access, resources and opportunities. Research reveals that lack of exposure to pools and swimming programmes places an immigrant child in a vulnerable situation when engaging in swimming activities (Irwin, Drayer, Irwin, Ryan, & Southall, 2008) as only those with personal experiences with swimming pools understand depths and design (Ito, 2014). The unfamiliar environment coupled with the assumptions that the children are "athletic" compounds the issues even more, just as Pele was seen as "one of the good ones" and "able-bodied". The assumption that Polynesian children are naturally gifted athletes therefore should be naturally skilled at swimming was repeated within the research data.

Finau's story leaned on the findings in the study that those who wanted to pursue something outside of Samoa found ways to look at Western ways to do something. There was no opportunity locally to nurture swimming skills as it wasn't within their own environment. As with the larger context of swimming research, knowledge of how to swim and be safe in water is "difficult to access" with minority communities because of a lack of access to facilities and resources (Ito, 2014, p. 250). In the Samoan culture, many practices within the family and village are performed by mimicking or imitating the elder who is performing that duty. Agriculture skills, cooking techniques, weaving, fishing, planting, and other industrious activities occur daily. These daily observations lead to daily involvement in these activities rather than learning through instruction. This story indicates that there is a disconnect between learning a skill in formative setting (swimming learned at school) and sharing that skill with the younger generation within the family.

Critical Reflection

Privilege, land and discomfort

The connection between the land and the culture is a significant finding within the participants' stories as depicted in the story of Finau. The shoreline is presented as a safe haven. Land represents security for the fearful swimmer with the goal to return to as it is where the family is waiting. The swimming experience was not about co-existing with the sea/the water, but rather fighting it and returning to safety. In the story of Pele, it was her belief of "keeping her feet on the ground" assured her that she was "safe". Being planted or rooted firmly on the ground is a cultural value within Samoa. In the *fa'aSamoa*, having a foothold in the land and culture is priority as it is the land that defines who they are, where they have come from and whom they are linked to.

When writing Finau's and Pele's stories, the themes bobbed in front of me like buoys on rough water. Privilege, like both Finau and Pele, brought access to new experiences from overseas. My own privileged upbringing brought me access to new world experiences, leaving the USA and living in

Samoa. But I believed that I was always securely linked with my father wherever I was in the world. Finau, too, was securely linked to the shoreline, where her family waited for her. Pele was also rooted firmly on the ground, a place of security for her amid the discomfort of the water. In Samoa, the people are culturally linked to land, by way of title, ownership, status, and generational legacy. There is not the same impetus or connection between the sea and Samoan ownership as it is the land that brings a sense of security to them. Their initial swimming experiences coupled with the element of fear, had them seeking the land for security. I, too, sought my anchor in my father, when I found myself in unchartered, deep waters of grief.

Humour and Fear can co-exist

It would be remiss to present these findings on fear without unpacking another finding that accompanied every talanoa session, every shared story, and every admission. The element of humour coexisted with each story of fear. In Western culture, these two concepts are treated as binary and have dichotomous characteristics. Western beliefs would indicate that if one fears then how can one have humour in the same situation. However, using a Pacific lens offers additional insight into the meaning-making the participants have regarding swimming and learning swimming skills. *Do Babies Float Up?* aims to reveal the warm, hearty nature of the participants and the honest revelations they shared within the talanoa sessions despite their discomfort or their fearful experiences with the water.

Do Babies Float Up?

"I've always heard babies pop back up. At least that is what I thought."

Did she just say "pop up?" I lean back and wait for the story to unfold.

"Sorry, I am getting ahead of myself. I'm married to a European. We were forever going on tours which always required people to swim. We were forever going to the beach, in the rivers, boating to the outer islands, finding the waterfalls and the next best place to tour. We ran an inbound tour business in Samoa. Of course, you know having a husband like Mike, there was no way that the children were not going to get in the water. The kids went everywhere with us even when they were babies. There was no option. We were in the water constantly."

"So, back to the babies popping up. It really isn't true. That much I do know now. We were coming back from Namua island. The water between Namua Island and the shore of Aleipata is so smooth. The water is blue, clear and the floor of the sea looks like you could just grab it."

I smile and nod. Yes, that water is amazing and if anyone is going to swim, that is the place to do it, I think.

Ata continues, "I think she was only like a couple of months old and decided that I would drop her down into the sea."

My jaw drops open, she was talking about her wee baby. Well, I do know her eldest daughter survived as she was one of my national swimmers. The story has a good ending at least.

Ata continues, "You see, I just dropped her down into the sea because I had heard this thing well, you just drop a baby into the sea, I mean into the water, and they will float up."

My interest is quite piqued, "So what happened?"

Ata laughs, "She may have come up, but I think I panicked. I scooped her up. I really wasn't going to wait for her to come up. But that was enough for me to say, 'the kids are going to learn how to swim'."

Findings and Discussion

Talanoa and the fa'aSamoa are complex

Ata, in Samoan language means laugh. This story surfaced in one of the talanoa sessions and a few alterations were made to ensure anonymity. Presenting this story shares a Pacific perspective of how laughter and humour were ever present in the stories the participants shared. Samoan poet and author Sia Figiel (1996) known for her subversive humour and creative writing pushed the use of humour in the *fa'aSamoa* in her creative writing. In a review of Figiel's work in creative non-fiction, Cowling (2009) explains how humour is centered within the *fa'aSamoa*:

> Figiel typifies the subversive humour which is always present even on the most solemn of occasions in Pacific communities. It is humour that makes difficulties and oppressiveness bearable. Humour is an acceptable outlet for dissent when other forms of dissension, either within the family or the wider society, are discouraged if not forbidden. (p.38)

While the context of *See You Back at the Shore* and *Over My Head* drew on the raw emotion of fear of the water, the *talanoa* session leaned heavily on laughter rather than the gravity of the stories shared. Like Anesi's (2018) findings on special needs issues in Samoa, humour was used in the *talanoa* sessions to "create meaning, selfhood, relationships, society, and culture in the context of very adverse circumstances" (p. 738). The story of Ata presents the important undercurrent to all the talanoa sessions within the research study. When participants recalled their stories, their situations and their discomfort with swimming, the space was shared with laughter. Laughter in a cultural context does not have the same connotations as it does in Western society. The stories and shared conversations are laced with laughter to reveal the participant's insights into their own beliefs and meaning making. This is supported in Hardin's (2015) research who suggests that "humour and

comedy in Samoa often allow for ambiguities and contradictions to come to the fore of social negotiation" (p. 185). Ata's story was more of an admission or a confessional tale, that helped me understand my participants even more. Even though some have Western influence through marriage or overseas education, the participants still tested the waters by considering the veracity of Samoan myths that drifted as generational legacies within the families. Personal experiences of "throwing the child into the deep end", "putting the child into the river", "pulling them out by their hair", and "surviving the water and not swimming in the water" were all shared in the talanoa sessions. It was only when Ata realized the dire repercussions of her actions that fear propelled her to ignore the folklore, and "scoop up her child from the water" and consider swimming lessons. All the stories indicated that the participants were in a constant state of negotiation with themselves when turning towards the Western-styled swimming programmes and leaving the "sink or swim" methods behind. While they had a negative experience, they did not pursue formal swimming programmes until that negative experience encroached upon their own children.

Negotiations between Western and Traditional beliefs

Through embracing and responding to personal grief and the sense of drowning, I began to question the concept of fear of swimming. In doing so, I was aware of the significance that all my adult participants shared personal near-drowning experiences.

Interestingly, the research participants' stories of near-drowning experiences served as a catalyst to seek formal swimming programmes for their children. Additionally, the lack of skill propelled them to seek formal lessons which is contrary to international literature indicating that parents skilled in swimming directly led to the enrolment of their own children in swimming (Ito, 2014; Pharr et al, 2018). Within the data, another interesting finding surfaced, lending further insight into the motivations to enrol children into formal swimming. However, there were stories that were shared regarding the ongoing myths or local beliefs regarding swimming in the sea. These stories revealed that although parents enrolled their children into formal swimming lessons, they did so with the bold admission that they lacked the skills to teach them themselves.

In Samoa swimming has not been taught formally from generation to generation, rather viewed that learning to swim is a one-off occurrence. The larger result of this approach is that it embeds an inherent fear and an aversion to swimming. While fear was foregrounded as the driver to seek formal swimming, the background elements clearly pointed to these personal swimming experiences being a direct result from having the resources to access the water, previous exposure to Western constructs of formal swim instruction and carrying traditional beliefs about swimming alongside their Western experiences. While privilege seems to have provided opportunity, it was this privilege that fumbled in transferring the swimming skills effectively. As such the stories expose the surprising findings that privilege, access, legacy, and misguided good intentions led to fearful swimming experiences.

Critical Reflection: Reworking the Talanoa ile i'a conceptual framework

The perspective from the shoreline is critical when trying to research the phenomenon of swimming in Samoa. The shoreline, or land, serves as a beacon that the participants gravitated towards for safety, for connection and for security. Their negative experiences with the water and swimming were likened to physical awkwardness and discomfort clamouring for the shore. The *Talanoa ile i'a* framework does not include the view from the shoreline. However, the participants' journey from the water to the shoreline reveals that to return to the land, to be rooted in the ground, was their goal of swimming. Only when parents had experienced fighting the water and looking back over their experiences from the safety of the shore, could they see that they didn't want their children to have the same experiences. Rather than turning their back to the sea, they turned towards Western constructs to provide swimming instructions for their children. This critical reflection of the participants' experiences with swimming and fear of drowning further allowed them to see their actions as influenced by and embedded within broader social and cultural systems of power. This type of critical reflection is important to support agency to make change. Their vantage point from the shoreline also illustrates their present-day positioning. They are there, on the side line, edging close to the water but cannot engage as they lack the skills and confidence to do so. They are on the shoreline, remembering their own experiences and sharing their stories on why they enrolled their children in swimming. They didn't want same fearful event for their child and believed Western ways provided an opportunity they desired for their child.

I realize that to move through this journey, I had to experience fear. Like my participants, fear and the difficult memories of their own discomfort, their anxiety and their search for safe ground instigated their family's journey into formal competitive swimming. I, too, had to experience this complex emotion during my research and use it to propel me forward and use it to relate to my work and my participants.

Postscript: Agency and Formal Swimming Programmes

Since 2007, the Samoa Swimming Federation has built a solid athlete development pathway. Programmes for babies, toddlers, children, youth, and adults are on offer as well as water fitness, high- performance training and competition circuits. There are few drivers on the ground advocating for swim development, but those few have loud voices and effective impacts. While I believe, through my experience and the research findings, that the shoreline is a space that is occupied by many, especially those who have no swimming experiences or negative swimming experiences, there is another new space that the participants are stepping into. This was revealed in a talanoa session with a participant who is an executive educator and curriculum development specialist. Her story embraces the agency needed to start an entire school swim programme. Her story compliments the findings of

this chapter, as her view of swimming was tangled with her own legacy of fear, her determination to find freedom in swimming experiences for her students and the empowerment and humour she discovered when she committed to bring this sport to her school.

Swimming into School Spaces: Swimming is Formalized

Even while they teach, men learn.

Seneca the Younger, Roman Stoic philosopher

The wow moment at the 2007 Pacific Games

I had never witnessed competitive swimming before. It was 2007 and Samoa was hosting the South Pacific Games. I watched in awe the bodies of the Pacific Island swimmers, especially the Tongan swimmers, the Fijian swimmers and the Samoan swimmers. They made it look so easy, so fluid. I wanted that for my children, and for my students. I stifled the prickly feeling when I would watch our team. Yes, they are Samoans, but they didn't live here. They were from overseas, representing Samoa. Maybe their 'father' country didn't select them, so they turn to our "mother' country, but they are not really local. Always a contentious issue and one that I won't resolve today. I turn back towards the pool and envision my own students swimming like them. It can be done.

I know I can't swim like that; I only know the doggy paddle and a bit of floating. I came from the Samoan school of hard knocks. The "pull her up by her hair if she is drowning" school. I know I need to learn first and foremost. I contacted Suzie, a local American married to a distant relation and that was the first person to teach me how to swim.

Swimming Lessons Day one: "Suzie Shell Shock"

I called the first class of swimming "Suzie Shell Shock". The water blasted up my nostrils and I couldn't see through the murky water. I couldn't believe we spent the entire class under the water, turning in the water, sinking and floating. In between all of that, we kicked across the 12-meter width of the outdoor pool. How did 12 metres seem like 100 metres? After spluttering and rebalancing myself in the water, the lesson finally finished. I crawled out of the pool, took my shower and thought do I really want to keep doing this? I know I asked Suzie because I want to learn how to swim. Yes, I think this is important".

Swimming Lessons Week 5: "Only two remained"

I look longingly at the carpark hoping that more cars come around the back. It is only me and a young Australian volunteer left in the swimming class. Everyone else had fallen to the wayside. Maybe it was because they knew we were going into the indoor pool today. We followed Suzie into the

indoor pool, a scary sight for a non-swimmer. 8 lanes, no shallow water and it is so cold. She sings out to her senior swimmers and asks her son to demonstrate some basic movements. We watch him perfectly execute a rocket, an underwater dolphin and flutter kick. Easier said than done. I entered the water, gripping to the sides as my feet desperately sought the underwater ledge to secure my tiptoes. I flailed in the water, clunky, heavy with my breathing out of sync. I looked nothing like her swimmers. I looked nothing like a swimmer.

Swimming Lessons Week 8: Bubbles and basics

It's been eight weeks and I kind of know the basics of blowing bubbles and the movements in the water. I didn't give up and it's good that Suzie didn't give up either. How do I feel? Fully ignorant, but I keep that between me and Suzie.

School Swimming Lessons: The crazy idea becomes a reality

So, I had that crazy idea that I wanted my students to swim, like I saw at the Pacific Games. I took my lessons and now it was time to teach the students. At my school, we only had roughly about 20 students in total at that time. I had the Samoa Swimming staff and the Australian volunteer there to help us along the way. The way I see it, I have the students, I have the support, now I just have to teach them everything else. My idea was to get these kids not to be afraid of the water and get them floating. From there, we added the arms and the legs. We just did the whole process together along with the students.

School swimming carnival: Competitions kept them swimming

"I think what pulled the kids more into competitive swimming were the carnivals. Competing with the other swim club was the stimuli and helped us see competitive swimming in a serious way. There were some who didn't want to compete. But as you know, we are a very competitive people. We thrive on competition."

Talented swimmers at the school: now what?

In our training, we were taught what to look out for and how to correct basic things. We were still amateurs. We didn't have everything in place. We discovered that there are some students that had good talent. They have this natural ability in the water. I think that's one of the things that's the challenge was we don't have enough training for the teachers of swimming. Yeah, so it's hard to recognize those things. And that also took time to recognize and see potential and things like that because you need enough training for that, I think."

Findings and Discussion

Teachers have same barriers as swimmers

As with the story of Finau, who drew on her own agency to enrol her child into a swimming club, swim schools in Samoa drew on that same agency. The above stories provide a snapshot of how sports are introduced into the community or school programme. Witnessing the sport, desiring the skill for their own students and committing to learn the sport themselves are necessary components of the equation. As one parent explained:

> I kind of was the parent that wanted to learn more about the sport. And I used to turn up. And next thing, you know, I'm the president of the club, because I'm the only turns up to the meetings, you know, and so the new learn about the jobs on the committee, and you end up being the secretary, and treasurer, and finally a coach. (Masi Tasi)

Imposter syndrome is real

The story also highlights the difficulties in learning a sport that has no reference point, no personal experience and no baseline to work from. As the parents and teachers within the research talanoa sessions shared, they were completely ignorant to the sport and the comprehensive skills set needed to learn how to swim as well as learn how to teach swimming. A few participants shared their own vulnerability when they were involved with the clubs.

> I felt like a phony as a coach. I think, well, personally, I don't like swimming. I didn't like being in the water. I didn't like teaching swimming. There was that fear, you know, that barrier? What if I teach them the wrong thing? Or what if they drown? Or what if they don't know what I'm talking about? Because I don't know what I'm talking about! You see, that was the reality but then I had to learn. Now I have learned so much, I think 'piece of cake!' But if it is that simple why haven't we trained our people to understand that? That it is just water? (Soso Maalili)

Summary

Like Fili's pledge to start a school swim programme, the participants revealed that their commitment their children allowed them to overcome the discomfort of the sport. While it is literally 'just water' the elements needed to motivate teachers, principals, schools and parents to be proactive and drive the sport is not a common focus in Samoa. The participants agreed that mimicking the swimming movements was not easy, immersion in water was foreign and learning on the job alongside the children was challenging. Participation in swimming goes beyond the swimmer and must consider the individuals who will lead and coach this new sport. These swim teachers had the significant challenge

to teach a skill they were not comfortable, fluent or proficient in. The participants concluded swimming to be difficult, uncomfortable, painful and unfamiliar leading to the fear that they were not delivering it correctly and safely.

Chapter 7: The Samoan Swimmer in Rural and Urban Settings

O le tagata ma lona aiga, o le tagata ma lona fa'asinomaga

Every person belongs to a family and every family belongs to a person.

Samoan Proverb

Introduction

Chapter 7 now introduces the competitive swimmers as they merge into the Samoa's swimming spaces and places. In Samoa, competitive swim clubs are based both in the coastal village as well as the Faleata Aquatic Centre in town. The swimmers in both locations had a myriad of challenges and barriers to participating in competitive swimming. The themes that emerge tell a tale which prioritizes culture, family, school, church and village. The first story, *Can You Eat Swimming?*, houses the findings of the rural swimmer and swim programme set within a traditional village. The second story allows the reader to travel with the urban-based swimmer between pool and home.

The rural setting and negotiations within the village

For the past 10 years, a swim club has been a fixture in the village which is on the eastern side of the main island of Upolu. Key leaders were interested in the Samoan coach and manager's initiative to establish a swim club for their village. The club evolved over time leading to competitive opportunities in open water, triathlon, biathlon and indoor swimming. These stories provide three perspectives: one of the young village swimmers who was part of a village swim club; the second perspective from the coach, who started the village-based club and strongly believes that village-based programmes can be successful, even with swimming; the third perspective from the swimmer's swimming suit. The swimming suit provides the insights of the challenges the swimmer encounters when participating in swimming outside of the village setting. All stories provoke elements of contested issues with negotiating traditional roles and sport participation in village setting, redefining opportunity, the need for self-regulation and ownership, and local pride. They also explore the conflict some parents have with not understanding the sport but appreciating the attention their children receive from participating in the sport.

Can You Eat Swimming?

The perspective of Fa'alogogata (Not listening)

"There they are again", thinks Fa'alogogata. He squints out into the horizon and sees the other village kids swimming in the ocean. "Lelei and his Saina Swim coach are there, and everyone is training again", Fa'alogogata murmurs though he is the only one who hears the comment as he steps away from his fale. Fa'alogogata looks back over his shoulder and sees his father sleeping on his back in the front house. His tired body pressing into the stone floor. Slowly his father's chest rises and falls to the rhythm of his snores as a lavalava falls over his eyes in attempt to keep the sun from waking him. The baskets of freshly uprooted taro from their plantation sit expectantly at the back of the pikiupu, ready to take to market tomorrow. He can't see his Tinā. Maybe she is cleaning the church or washing the clothes under the pipe at the back of the house. It doesn't really matter, as his eyes dart to the back of the home confirming her whereabouts are unknown.

Fa'alogogata turns to the sea and decides to run for it. He makes a beeline straight for the shore, kicking off his jandals and throwing his lavalava to the rocky shore. "Wait for me- I'm coming!" he bellows out to the group in the water. Fa'alogogata does a variation of walking, running and swimming, to ensure his eyes are kept on the village swim club. A group of swimmers were standing in the chest high water listening to the coaches explain the set. He eagerly joins the training session.

"Where have you been, Fa'alogogata?" asks the coach. I knew he was going to ask as the last time he saw me was when he visited my house. He and the village rep came to my house asking my parents why I haven't been at training. My parents just shrugged their shoulders and didn't say much during their visit. I cast my eyes downwards and pretend I don't hear his question. "10x100s off my time" yells the coach. "Ready go!". I swim with the group, our arms and legs tangled together as we don't have any lane ropes or markers. It is just the open sea.

I glance back at the two coaches standing in the water and see them exchange a look of concern. They know. They know why I don't come. They probably heard my Tinā yelling at me after they left. "ai swimming, ai swimming, ai swimming. You can't eat swimming. Are you going to feed the family with that activity? Plant banana, taro…can you plant swimming? Will it give you food for the family? It's a waste of time; alu fai feau!" My ears burned at the memory as I know my coaches were within earshot. I just want to be here, but my parents don't approve for me to attend. The last time I swam I couldn't sit for a couple hours. As he swims further away from the shore, Fa'alogogata ponders, "Maybe I can get back before they find out I have gone."

The perspective of the village coach

"Ai swimming ai swimming! Is it going to feed you? No!", resounded an angry voice from the fale behind me. That was all I could hear from Fa'alogogata's Tinā as I and my assistant coach were walking away from his fale. I am lost in thought, frustrated, but not ready to give up. Today Fa'alogogata's Tinā was not in a favourable mood. She barely replied to anything Lelei was proposing about the upcoming triathlon in town, with only a slight shrug of her shoulders. I tried to get them to remember how proud the village was from the last competition. I can still feel the swell of pride we all had when the swimmers entered the Upolu to Savaii swim. 22km across the Apolima Strait and these kids did it. It was an amazing feat. I know the Federation was trying to get my team across to Fiji for a pool competition, but this is where the village wanted to support the swim club – for a local competition. I get it. It's about bragging rights and rightly so. Our village swimmers swam the Apolima Strait. Not many can claim that, and not many can even claim that they have taken the ferry across to the big island either. I am proud of these kids. They don't train like the Apia squads do. They train in the sea only a couple days a week because of their bigger commitment to their families. They train but I know some of the families still see it as a time-waster. I sigh and look out to the sea as we walk to the next family's home to discuss the upcoming triathlon.

Perspectives of Fa'alogogata's swimming suit

Arms and legs entangled together, the saltwater supporting us in the sea. So much laughter. I love it when Fa'alogogata joins the swim sets. His strong body cuts through the waves and glides along the other village boys. I remember the big swim to Savaii. I had never been so nervous yet so thrilled. We swam all day long, with our coaches pushing us along in their boat next to us. His body was crusted with saltwater, and I felt tight with all the salt in my fabric. I could hear his stomach growl from only eating fa'i during the race. All those bananas, Fa'alogogata was quite despondent with all those bananas. But we did it. Arriving on the shores of Savaii, the big island that so few of us from our village had ever visited before. The TV cameras, the photographers, the journalists. We were on TV that night and our coach showed us our pictures were in the newspaper. I see those memories every time I am inside Fa'alogogata's fale, taking pride of place, framed on the wall in the front room. What a day that was.

Most Saturdays I am left in the fale while Fa'alogogata goes to the plantation with his cousins. He is supposed to come get me for the afternoon training but sometimes he doesn't return. When he does, he is full of mud and sweat, shoulder to shoulder with his cousins batting a ball between them. On some special Saturdays, Fa'alogogata takes me to town, and we train in the swimming pool. I enjoy the travels, but it takes so long- three buses. Coach gives him pasese (bus fare), but not every week. The pool is so different. So smooth and so cool. But Fa'alogogata struggles, he is heavy and lumbers through the water. The coach at the pool makes him do so much work. We go back and forth and back

and forth. She doesn't like Fa'alogogata hanging on the lane ropes, but I can hear his heavy breathing and feel his taut muscles knotting in the cold waters. We tumble around a lot as the walls seem to perplex Fa'alogogata as we just don't get to come very often. When we do, Fa'alogogata usually gets in trouble when he goes home. It isn't really his fault that the trip takes so long, but he does seem to make a full day of it all, meeting friends at the market, finding a cousin to shout him a plate of food.

Findings and Discussion

The translation of *Fa'alogogata* means 'not listening'. There is a pervasive element to young Samoan boys who could identify with this name. His actions are not defiant, but his actions are contrary to the expectations of his parents and coaches. His actions align merely himself as the one who chooses not to listen in pursuit of activities that he feels like doing prioritized over what has asked of him. There is an element that I am trying to articulate. On one hand, *Fa'alogogata's* parents are not in favour of him joining swimming. This will be addressed further below. On the other hand, his coaches are encouraging and accommodating him to join swimming the best they know how. *Fa'alogogata* plays within the centre. He joins swimming when it suits him to escape chores or sees an opportunity to join the training to ensure he is still part of the team. Other times, he opts to pursue other recreational activities in lieu of swimming, his chores or in addition to his chores. The village coach explains it this way:

> The families didn't see the bigger picture. We obviously want to take the swimmers to another level. The younger girls showed real potential, but at the end of the day, you can't force them or push them any harder. Our club was there for them, but it was hard to get them to consistently engage. Half the time they were home doing chores, or we find out later that the boys were on the rugby field. (Va'a Mene)

Competing priorities in the village

Taimi o le tafao

Tafao is a concept in Samoa which means loosely, hanging out. Youth travel to town for a *tafao*. This can include gathering with other youth, walking through town, loitering at the market, or moving around without purpose. It is a *tafao*. In village life, *tafao* occur as an avoidance to *feau* or after *feau* are finished. Tafao are informal social gatherings with no intended purpose. The culture of *tafao* has seeped into the culture of sport, especially at the village level. As one community coach noted:

> On Saturday pool trainings, they trained with at the Aquatic Centre. Even my club would come into town and train. I said to them after the first time, it is their responsibility to make

> their way to the pool and home again. Well, they rarely turned up as it was too hard for them to travel but when they did, they made an entire day of it. (Va'a Mene).

In Schuster and Schoeffel (2018), there were similar findings of rural-based athletes using the travel to town as an excuse to *tafao*, meet up with boys (or girls), and avoid chores at home.

As for swimmers who did not travel to town for swim training, the village setting became a contested space for the young swimmers. Swim training draws them away from family, chores, routine, and the priorities of the *fa'aSamoa*. Like *Fa'alogogata* and living in a coastal village, his parents did not support his involvement in the local swim club as it prevented him from attending to daily chores. As the talanoa sessions highlighted:

> What should be done as a collective agency in the village for exercise and sport? The beach front will not be used for exercising. Cultural perceptions are still very strong in Samoa. The waterfront and coastal shore are not seen as a site for exercise in the village. This is not the norm, and we have a long way to go for this to be accepted." (Petelo Ataono)

Cost and access to pool is a barrier

Samoa is a different environment. We would be working. We would not have time to take him swimming. It is the perspective that only the afakasi or the well-off people would decide to send their kids to swimming

(Petelo Ataono)

As demonstrated in the story, accessing the town-based pool is time consuming and expensive. As one urban-based swimmer said:

> Even being based in Apia, the pool is on the outskirts of the city. Kids were totally dependent on their parents to get them there. If it didn't fit with the work schedule then the kids couldn't get there. It is even harder for village-based swimmers. (Pani Pose).

Two senior government administrators reminded me of this very concept and explained:

> We had our rural-based swimmers move to Apia. They lived with extended family or swim coaches as there was no village transport to get them in for morning trainings. It wasn't ideal but it was one thing we did for many years. (Pati Lava)

> Most sports kids do are field sports- rugby, netball even. This is easier than a pool, especially if the kids live in the village as really, they can only do the sports within the setting of the village or the youth groups or the local school. Swimming would not be done because these groups don't do it. (Petelo Ataono)

However, as much as decentralized village sports clubs can encourage growth within the sport, a swim administrator acknowledges that "the sports that are offered through these groups in the villages are done as a social thing and not as a development things, if it isn't a key sport like rugby" (Telesia Valu).

Swimming is seen as a time-waster

When a Samoan child comes home to their parents and says,

'I really love swimming',

the first question the parent will ask "Is there any money in it?" (Iosua Tasi)

As the participants talked about the relationship between swimming and wasting time, they came to the conclusion that swimming is perceived as a time-waster. One participant explained that "Parents say 'You're not good enough now? Why are we wasting our time putting you to training when you come? You have joined for two years, and still nothing?" This is common thought as there are only incremental improvements in swimming, not always evident in the times achieved at competitions. One parent participant who grew up in Samoa explained that there was an element of unrealistic expectations:

> I heard all the time from the rural based swimmers 'yeah I'll do a couple of weeks training, we're gonna go big (into the competition) and come back with medals'. I'm like, is this realistic as I soon learned that swimmers had to train a lot to get small results. (Kilifi Taleni)

Another parent noted:

> We say to our child, if you're not the top than why are you doing it (swimming)? Why are you in it? As the parents we don't understand how difficult it was to even make trials. Then we see them make the team, but so what. They aren't on top. Parents fear we won't get anything out of our child being on the team and it's not going to take him anywhere. So why do it? (Tagi Meamata)

A swimmer followed a similar tune, who recalled his Uncles and Aunties discouraging voices. His extended family reminded him there will come a time when swimming won't take him any further. The family reiterated that "They said I wouldn't have anything to do. I won't be able to support my family. I won't be able to do this and this and this" (Samuelu). He concluded that his family are really saying that he should drop swimming and just focus on my school and complete it. Another parent reflected and said:

> It is a common tune for Samoan parents to say 'I want my kid to be a lawyer; I want to be a doctor because I know all those careers'. It's a perception. So when it comes to sports, it really is the parents who push their kids into something the parent perceives to be valued or good (Petelo Ataono)

Additionally, "there is no way a traditional parent in the traditional context would be supportive of morning training, as an example, as there is no financial incentive" (Roseta Tavita). There is no financial return in this sport and incentives are far and few between. One community coach admits that he can offer nothing for youth to join. "We can't offer anything for our swimmers to join our club. It is very hard to incentivize this sport, especially at the village level" (Vaa Mene).

These insights resonate with Kwauk's (2016) findings where village matai (chiefs) have authority over the village families impacting sport, sport development and sport participation. A village coach explained "it can be done (swimming development) with the support of key people, coach, the *pulenu'u* (mayor) and council in the village" (Vaa Laau). He believes that it can be done if status and movements are elevated.

> Our local swim manager was a not much of a name around the village. Now he takes on more responsibility and we gave him a bit of money. His respect in the village has gone up. He went around the island with swimming, and he went to Savaii. There are things which are not quantifiable in dollars but rather quantifiable in life experience. Now the question is whether these life experiences really mean anything to them or not. But I have swimmers who have represented Samoa on the national squad. I don't really know what more you could ask for. (Va'a. Laau)

Another participant summed up her perspective regarding development. She reflected that "it is one thing to develop a swimmer and it's another thing to develop swimming" (Papa Vau). Although the village programme developed individual swimmers but could not develop a swimming culture that was sustainable, supported, and economically beneficial within the village.

Being seen – local notoriety but it's not enough

There is a dichotomous issue presented within the story of *Fa'alogogata*. While the parents do not support his involvement with swimming, having their children appear on local TV, radio and the newspaper due to their swimming feats are worth noting. In the findings, some discussions revolved around being seen by others and being portrayed as exceptional. "The publicity around swimming in Samoa needs to be more visible as when families see their children on TV representing sport and doing well in competition, it really means something" (Lualua Taleni). It is not too dissimilar to the other stories shared. While families are not in favour of their youth participating in something that is

against the collectivist mission and aim of an extended family and do not like being seen in a negative light by their external community, there is affirmation of participating in a sport if it brings the family's name into recognition via media.

Being seen but no return on investment

Being seen as doing well, even if in a vaguely understood sport such as swimming, allows youth to participate in the sport but may not be enough to stay encouraged in the sport. As one swim parent explained, "this is due to pure economics. Swimming, regardless how good their child does become, will not be able to make a career or income from this pursuit" (Iosua Tasi). Another participant framed it differently. She explained that:

> Families here like to have their children recognized by society. That is a notch. Like the ranking system in the classes at school. This external recognition is a notch on the belts as they are seen as good parents, good providers, intelligent. They are leading their children to do well, and that national recognition is important. (Telesia Valu)

Being recognized is a vital element within the *fa'aSamoa* such as being recognized for efforts, talent, skill or performance. A community-based coach shared his perspective on success in swimming:

> You know, as much as you want to see them go to higher levels in swimming, you visit their Facebook page and see them at Taumeasina Resort, Sheraton Resort, playing in the water, going to Lalomanu beach, competing with the European tourists, and mucking around. What more could I ask for? And with Savaii. It made such an impression on the village. Our team is swimming to Savaii. Now that was an accomplishment. (Vaa Mene)

Cultural implications of the feiagaiga (Brother and Sister in the shared spaces)

However, the participants were aware of the cultural implications of being seen in a counter-cultural manner as well. A senior sports executive and village matai articulated the implications during the talanoa:

> If a girl goes out to swim with her brother, she has to cover up or the village is offended. Even with girls wearing shorts, they are offended. This caused issues with my programme and it looked bad from a village standpoint. A lot of my girls ended up quitting. I can't say it was because of the cultural rules, or the chores they had to do at home, but I am aware that brothers and sisters shouldn't be playing together like this. (Lapine Masina)

The participants' insights are explaining the complicated but sound cultural protocols within the *fa'aSamoa*. This suggests there may be implications with the organic constructs of swimming clubs as

clubs are usually co-educational, training both girls and boys together, which challenges the *vā* between male and female and brother and sister.

Contrary to the cultural protocols of the *feiagaiga* and cultural behaviours expected between brother and sister, the urban-based participants explained that since their siblings swam, they also swam. A male swimmer explained that because his sisters swam, he felt supported within the club. Other participants echoed similar sentiments referring to swimming being a 'family affair', 'I go because my brother does' and 'it's easier because all my children, sons and daughters, swim in the same programme". While the participants had acute awareness of the *vā*, they did not address it with swimming at the pool.

Traditional versus contemporary parenting

> *"To consider swimming as an activity for your child, you must build your family around the child. This is opposite to fa'aSamoa where you build your family around the village" (Lualua Taleni)*

Although being seen as performing well and getting attention through local and national media encourages parents to allow their children to participate in the rural swim programme, there remains a strong element of family first, fun later within a village dynamic. Typically, if children engage in activities that lead them away from their responsibilities or failed to attain parental approval, the result is usually punishment, either a hiding or removal from the activity altogether. As Pala'amo's (2017) research indicated, "Physical force resulted as a way to discourage repeat offences and to meet the underlying goal of morally-acceptable and culturally-appropriate behaviour displayed by her children" (p.159). This reinforces the behaviour the parents want from the children. If they are to be doing chores and not swimming, a smack reinforces what the parents' beliefs are.

There is more fluidity of where children are within the village as communal structure dictates where and what they should be doing. Volleyball and rugby are typically supported in the late afternoon when there is time between work and evening *lotu* (prayer). Participating in this village swimming club falls on Wednesday after-school and Saturday afternoon trainings which conflicts with the demands of the family unit. The negotiations that must occur for village sport development are far more layered than negotiations with single family units in the urban area. Swimming is seen as a time-waster as there is no value for the family. As one urban parent attests, "if the parents aren't in it, then I can't see how it would work" (Masi Tasi). Kwauk's (2016) work on sport and development in Samoa raised similar sentiments regarding the conflicted space sport has within the village, family, parent and athlete dynamic. She reiterates:

> For parents and matai (chiefs), whose immediate demands entail the social reproduction of the household, village and *fa'asamoa* (the Samoan way), activities like sport that take away

> valuable human resources and labour are often de-prioritized if not resisted. (Kwauk 2016, p. 655).

Kamu (1996) further adds that "the divine connection gives coherence and meaning to culture" (p. 37). The culture is good for everyone and the "structures and rituals preserves and perpetuates the core values of society" (Kamu, 2016, p. 37). There is merit in the *fa'aSamoa* promoting the well-being of the community, the undercurrents of new and contemporary practices such as brother and sister training together and playing a sport with no economic return, disrupt the flow of the *fa'aSamoa*.

However, the participants in this study, most of whom had humble, rural upbringings in Samoa, believed that these issues should not be barriers to participating in swimming, rather they should be encouraged. One parent's insights reinforced this issue:

> We are not in it for any type of monetary gain- having our child in swimming as we aren't looking for income. We aren't trying to turn our son into having market value. We are here to help him to have this as part of his educational programme, his development programme. Then at some point he will decide, or we will decide what to do with it or leave it. (Iosua Tasi).

Summary

The first part of this chapter revealed the conflicted space between the village-based swimmer and their traditional landscape. Negotiating with their coaches, their parents and their peers resulted in short-changing themselves in developing into an elite swimmer. While the external factors such as chores, village commitments and travel constraints were ever present, the swimmers pursued activities to suit the moment as opposed to seeking mid- or long-term goals. Larger cultural factors such as the implication of brother and sisters training within a shared space, the resistance to pursuing sports with no economic return and the lack of understanding swimming as a worthwhile pursuit were found in the research. The stories highlighted the challenges within a rural setting hinting to the differences between urban- and rural-based families in Samoa. A more in-depth look at the urban family's intersection with swimming is presented in the second part of this chapter.

The urban setting and negotiations within the home

The second and final part of this chapter explores the life of the urban competitive swimmer in Samoa. *Whose Voice is the Loudest?* is written from four perspectives, the swimming suit, the swimmer, the parents and the coach. The story addresses the challenges of daily life as an urban-based student-swimmer in Samoa.

"Why swim? It just takes you away from what is important in terms of priority, you have your family, your church, your community, your schoolwork, and then your social life" (Lualua Taleni)

"Why swim? It isn't going to get you anywhere as it just takes you away from what is important" (Taimane Va'alele)

Whose Voice is the Loudest?

Afternoon training (The swimming suit)

I hear the car before I see it. Always the same time every afternoon. Always the same words Usita'i's father bellows from the aquatic centre carpark "Usita'i. Let's go! Hurry up! Your sisters are waiting. Now, son!" He wraps a towel around me, then with deft manoeuvres, I fall to the floor. In a rush, I am picked up and stuffed into his bag. I can hear the others saying, "toe feiloa'i taeao, Usita'i","Malo galue!", "See you tomorrow", "Nice work today" He laughs and says good-bye. Somehow, I know he is smiling. He walks with purpose; he does not rush to his pickup all the while he does not detour either. We jostle over the roads, but he is quieter now. The father is doing the chattering, saying "you swam fast today?" but Usuita'i explains that it was a distance set. The father asks again "so you swam fast then?" I see Usita'i nod his head in resigned agreement. He sighs and grows quiet. The pickup sputters down the road searching for the turn off. His father continues to talk, and I can only catch a few of the words "visitor, feau, cooking, lotu". The car lurches to a stop. We go inside and I am dropped onto the floor. I hear the cacophony around me. The older voice pierces through the air, staccato words, sharp commands. But I still want his attention. I am damp, wet, and musty. I need to be unpacked from the bag, to remind him that we must be together in the morning. I need to be fresh; he needs to be fresh. But he has already forgotten about me, turning towards the instructions from the older one. Maybe I will see him in the morning, as I consider my discomfort at the bottom of the bag, ignoring the yearning to stretch, dry out and prepare for the next day. He returns late into the night. With a sigh, he folds himself next to me. He leans his heavy body against me, I can feel him sink into a heavy slumber. He has forgotten that I'm still in the bag.

At home, (The Tinā (mother) and Usita'i (son)

It is the evening
Auntie is here, lots to do
Make the suka
Family lotu
Remember
Iron your siblings' uniforms
before you go to bed
Complete your homework
before you go to bed
Wash the dishes
before you go to bed
Sweep the fale
before you go to bed
Serve the tea and masi
before you go to bed
Sit with us
before you go to bed
Pray with us
before you go to bed
Eyelids heavy, swim bag full from the day
Too tired to eat
Sleep

Before morning training (The swimming suit, Usita'i and the parents)

I hear the roosters crowing and the sound of him gently snoring next to me. My dampness is still with me, but now I seep into the papers and the books I share the space with. The papers and books are always in here with me, to and fro, from home, to school and the pool. He didn't look at them last night. Usually, these things demand his time and his attention, but last night, he never came back to us.

There are whispers but the voices begin to crescendo for me to hear the tension of a verbal tennis match in the dark morning. "It's his responsibility", "I know we paid the fees", "He has work to do", "He can't keep missing training", "he can't keep skipping his feau either", "school should be his focus", "is this even worth it", "mornings are so difficult", "I'll wake him up" ,"I'll tell coach". The terse conversation likened to a tennis ball rallying back and forth between competitors, each making

a shot that echoes their continued frustrations over the young boy who is asleep on his fala on the floor.

I hear footsteps and a gentle voice whisper, "Usita'i, wake up. You didn't do your homework last night. You need to do your feau. Get up. Do it now." I feel him sit up, the cool breeze flowing between us, and hear him say "But what about training?". I hear the footsteps recede into the distance followed by the car keys clanging into each other. The truck spits and spews, coughing into wakefulness. The headlights beam into the fale and then turns down the grassy road. (Reflections of a swimsuit)

In the morning (Usita'i)

It is the morning
Raining and dark
Stomach lurches with hunger
Body aches
Boil the kettle, get ready for the day
Where is my swim gear? Where are my goggles?
Towel hangs damp on the line from last night's rain
Unpack my homework, unfinished from the night before
Find my school uniform, still sitting in a heap on the floor
Next to the cold iron
Finish ironing all the school uniforms
Sun soon to rise
Didn't find my goggles
It didn't matter after all
Coach will soon learn
I am not coming

At morning training (The coach)

I turned into the pool, careful to watch for sleeping security guards. The nights are so cool that the warmth of the smooth pavement provides comfort for the unfortunate workers who work at night. Perhaps not working, but sleeping at their place of work, somehow keeping a watchful eye on the sports facility while caving into slumber. I admit that I prefer when the security guards are not awake as their moods coupled with my lack of sleep can set off a chain of events resulting in not accessing the pool. It was a good morning as the gate was open and the guard was fast asleep, so it was a conflict-free moment.

As I rounded around the back of the pool I saw the car, parked, quiet, dark. I could see the outline of the someone in the car, only one person, no passenger, only a driver. What would it be this time? A fever? A cough? Neglected chores? I pull my car up next to the dark car. Our windows already rolled down, ready for morning conversation. 'Good morning, Coach. I'm sorry Usita'i won't be coming to training this morning. He must finish his homework'.

Findings and Discussion

Obedience

The story plays on the translation of *Usita'i,* which means obedience as a strong theme of obedience is threaded within the story. *Alofa* (love, caring) is a fundamental part of the *vā tapuia* between parents and children in Samoa and is closely linked to the concept of obedience. Huffer (2006) explains that "this relationship implies a certain reserve and respect demonstrated through language use, actions and deportment, it is a solid bond and implies security and mutuality" (p. 9). In Samoa, children will obey their parents without question. However, *Usita'i's* second name could easily be juggling as the competitive swimmers revealed that they had to perfect juggling their roles, responsibilities, activities and expectations over the seasons of swimming.

Feau, Family and Swimming

> "*The commitment to swimming. Come and do the feaus, go to swimming in the morning at 5am, then to school then back into the pool until after 6pm. Will Samoans really want to do this?" (Roseta Tavita)*

Feau (chores) are a large part of life in Samoan families. Chores are given in response to the family member's age, status, gender. Chores can be based indoor (sweeping the *fale*, ironing, etcetera) or outside, cooking in the *fale kuka* (open area/structure for cooking), cutting the grass, sweeping the grass, weeding, gardening, plantation work, collecting firewood and crops. *Feau* can also extend to other duties that are central to the concept of service. Serving food, making meals, driving family places, running errands, supporting the family *Faifeau* (Church minister), church duties. Chores do not disappear for children who engage in afterschool activities such as sport, tutorials, church programmes and village programmes. Everyone must still attend to their duties, depending on the allocation of each family.

Traditionally, in the Samoa culture, girls tend to the indoor chores and boys tend to the outdoor chores. One swimmer spoke in length of the impact of chores on his swimming pursuits. He ponders on how he made it through primary and secondary school in Samoa while training four hours a day, tending to *feau*, church, school, and family. He reflected that only the Lord could have helped him

with all that was on his daily schedule. Another coach explained how his emerging female swimmers just left his programme:

> I returned from one Christmas holiday. Before I left, I had 25 swimmers and about 12 of them were girls. When I started training not one girl showed up! Apart from the local coach's daughter, 10-12 girls just disappeared. I ran into them later and asked what happened. The girls just said, 'sorry coach, I am not allowed to swim anymore, we have too many *feaus* to do'. So that was it. The customs and the expectations, which may not be necessary, can override the young person's life. (Vaa Mene)

National-level swimmer, Pani, explained how he had to alter his actions every night, so the morning trainings were unhindered and not stressful.:

> Every evening, my siblings and I had to iron our school uniforms, hang them on a hanger and put them in the car. Then we packed our cereal for breakfast and would find an empty water bottle to put our milk into. Sometimes we would forget to pack our spoons so drank our cereal after training. We then packed our school bags and made sure our lunches were made the night before. Suits, goggles, caps, towels. There was always so much to remember. We couldn't store anything at the pool as there were no lockers. The same at our schools, we carry everything in our backpack all day long, wet suits and towels from morning training. When I moved overseas for University, I was happy I had that training, as I am a really organized swimmer and student now. (Pani Pose)

A swimmer, Kilisi, agreed with the stress of being organized when he reflected that coming home every evening from training was stressful as all he wanted to do was relax, but knew he had to do the chores or there would be no swimming the next day (Kilisi Maalili).

Reflective silences: disconnection but wanting a shared experience.

The swimmers also shared that they wanted to share their sport experiences with their families, but lack of understanding of the sport and terminology remained a point of tension. Parents shared that learning the sport of swimming has not come easily. Swimmers, in their own talanoa sessions shared similar sentiments and frustrations that their parents just didn't understand swimming, so it was difficult to share in the experience. During the talanoa sessions, swimmers expressed their thoughts on their parents' understanding of the sport. Most said their parents didn't really understand the sport but supported them. At times they were disappointed because they had tried to explain things to them but "they didn't really get it" (Ioana Uila). The swimmers agreed that parents could understand race times but as one swimmer expressed, this is limited understanding. The swimmers wanted their parents to understand that it's about a feel of the water, their movement within the sets, and the way they reflect

on how their practice session went. The swimmers explained that these concepts remained foreign to their parents. One swimmer offers his point of view:

> My Dad really tries to understand, which is nice because sometimes you want to be like, although I did a good time, I did a really bad set. I am quite critical of my swims and it's not always great if you can't talk to someone that is not understanding. (Pani Pose)

One father admitted that:

> Swimmers make it look so easy so the general person watching [the swimmers] and thinking, 'I could do that!' This effects that way I speak with my daughter as I catch myself saying [to her] 'you looked too relaxed, so you didn't try hard enough'. (Sio Meamata)

Another parent shared her recent learning experiences with swimming:

> I've had to learn that swimming is all about the times. Not the placements. Not winning the heats. This has been hard for me to learn. In the islands we understand athletics. It is simple. The top two from each heat advance to the finals. But swimming is not like athletics where the top two go through to finals. It is a difficult concept to educate parents and the population that swimming it is about the times. (Tagi Meamata)

While times are the key indicator for advancing in swim racing, national swimmer Ioana Uila expressed her concern that her parents only focus on her times. She said that she struggles explaining to her parents that it isn't always about her time that indicates if she is improving.

> I definitely think it's not a sport that my extended family are knowledgeable on. They're always asking how many metres do you swim? Or do you do sprints? Or what's your stroke? I am quite forgiving as they probably know a lot more about sports like rugby, football, and even American football. It is frustrating because they don't even have the language or the terminology to even hold a conversation. (Ioana Uila)

A parent shared her own mishaps when she was new to the sport:

> I don't know the terms. We now know PBs (personal bests) and are happy that our son accounts for his new times. As for strokes, I have no idea what they are called. It's not like rugby where they just off to the park afterschool and I don't have to get involved. (Tini Ataono)

In addition to the new terminology, parents discussed their views on morning trainings. "We don't do mornings" one parent said in her talanoa session. She admitted that she struggled with feelings of inadequacy when her children joined swimming. However, her talanoa responses revealed that:

> Although we don't do mornings as I was never raised in a home where children train for sport in the morning before school, it made their entire family more conscious of time, organized, and responsible. And that's the key. It involves a lot of time. It's not just once a fortnight or once a week. It's got to be daily. And, you know, sometimes twice a day, and the parents just do not have that capacity to do that. (Roseta Tavita)

School is priority – leave sports for the others

In the talanoa sessions, both parents and swimmers reflected on the tension of being an athlete and a student. One swimmer explained the system within the colleges in Samoa:

> I remember that schools put the students in classes based on their abilities, the lower the class level had the students with the lowest marks and scores. There are more athletes in those lower classes. In the higher classes, where the students score well, you won't see many athletes in those classes. Even though there are some really bright students who were really athletic, they weren't allowed to play rugby. Their parents did not allow them to even play athletics at school too. It was really sad to see it because they were really fast, and they're really gifted at running, and at the same time they were really clever. But then they just weren't allowed. (Samuelu Va'alele)

The swimmers and parents spoke about how sports are not valued within the family, therefore the emphasis was on school performance. Parents and educators offered another perspective regarding sports and academics in Samoa.

> There is no intersection between the two (sports and school). I have colleagues and my own family who say, can you leave the sports for those who aren't doing well at school? They see my children do well at school which will bring them opportunities. They say your children don't need to do the sports. So what does it mean that they do well at school then run over there and do well at sports? They will take the opportunity away from someone who is less academically oriented. (Taimane Va'alele)

Open Communication and the Contemporary Parent

While there are many like *Usita'i* who attempt to juggle the demands of home, school and swimming, there are other swimmers who were not challenged with these concepts. In the talanoa sessions, these swimmers and parents articulated an intricate element of communication between child and parent.

> While I was raised to know that children are to be quiet and do as they are told, my wife and I find ourselves talking with our son about swimming. We asked if he is enjoying it, wishes to

> continue or wishes to play other sports. It is strange how we are evolving into contemporary Western-style parents. (Petelo Ataono)

Another parent explained that she negotiated with her older parents, her children's grandparents, to ensure that the children could continue to participate in swimming even when the older generation was unsupportive. The negotiation resulted in a tenuous compromise. The grandparents made it clear that "as long as the kids kept up with their *aoga faifaeau* (Pastor School) and their grades at school, they could keep swimming. I made sure of that." (Taimane Va'alele)

Internal conflict of the parent

There was a constant conflict parents expressed in the talanoa. They wanted to support their child and swimming, but they also wanted to be seen in good standing with their extended family and school. However, when the swimmers and parents were able to address the external demands jointly, it resulted in challenging yet fruitful negotiation. One participant explained that while the extended family may not understand the purpose or importance of attending swim training on a consistent basis, parents who advocate and support their child to attend swimming are able to negotiate these internal family expectations.

One participant shared her story of extended family obligations in the village setting.

> It was a tense time, that is for sure. I believe it was the General Elections and we were all in the village waiting for the results to be announced. Everyone was there. Aunties, Uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces. Everyone was called to be in the village. One of my nephews was there. He was a swimmer and had a large event he was training for. He asked to leave to train, and his Aunty blew up at him. I felt so bad for him. It didn't make any sense, as there were so many people there just waiting. I remember this boy's father stepped in and told him to go training. There was no ill-will in the remark. The father then told his sister to let the issue drop. I remember she then continued to comment how it was wrong for his child to be 'seen leaving the village home and not stay to support his father and the election outcome.' It is about being seen in a good light as there is so much judgement in our culture. (Tini Ataono)

The issues that this participant raised reveal the contentious issue that is at the heart of the concept of *usita'i* (obedience). In the Samoan culture, being seen by external audiences as doing the right thing and being exemplar of *fa'aSamoa* is highly valued in the culture. Participant responses align with the literature wherein "cultural constraints precede individual constraints" (Chick & Dong, 2005; Ross et al., 2014). The story shared by the participant opened a discussion on the difficulties of supporting a young athlete when their movements and their whereabouts are incongruent with the expectation of the larger family unit and may cause a disturbance within the village setting. This aligns with

Pala'amo's (2017) findings that "having two separate voices within an *aiga* confuses the children about which voice of instruction to obey and why" (p. 127).

Summary

As we can see from the previous two chapters, the swimmers' relationships with their parents is central to their participation in competitive swimming. In Samoa, relationships are critical to understand what compels people to do things, for others before self, though the cultural implications add pressure to a young athlete who must balance the cultural demands with a contemporary Western sport. To do so, the success of continued participation lies with the parent as the child depends on the parent for access to the facility as well as protection from external demands. Not surprisingly, a swimmer's involvement with the sport increased when open dialogue, Western family constructs, and negotiation with cultural expectations were present. Conversely, the swimmer's involvement with swimming decreased when culture outweighed in time and priority, leaving negligible space for the swimmer to balance everything, swim, family, culture, church and school, equally.

A major finding with the chapter of *Fa'alogolata* (not listening) and *Usitai'i* (Obedience) does not necessarily lie with the athlete. The enablers and barriers lie with the parent. Parents who are not imbedded in the *fa'aSamoa* can open doors that otherwise remain closed to their rural counterparts for their child to participate in swimming. Presently, the sports development industry, the education sector and the general economy are not enabling children to pursue sports such as swimming thus leaving it entirely up to the parents and family to make these decisions.

This leads us into the following chapter which explores the elements of relationships not only between swimmer and parent but also the relationship with the sport of swimming itself. In this chapter, the reader will learn about the findings regarding the relational issues that supported, competed and accepted a family member to engage in competitive swimming.

Chapter 8: The Complicated Space between the Swimmer and Others

Introduction

In this chapter, the findings centre around relational concepts and how relationships with the family, the community are culturally driven. In the Pacific, relationships are critical in every aspect of life. Relational elements between swimmer, parent, coach, and the sport of swimming were strong findings within the talanoa sessions. The participants shared their stories of how swimming impacted their lives and the challenges of maintaining a relationship with swimming due to parental involvement or lack thereof, obligations, expectations, and the desire to play other sports. Other studies revealed that family and parents greatly affect their children's activities (Ross et al., 2014; Shaw & Dawson, 2001) as "parents are a child's primary advocate and support their participation financially and practically" (Shields & Synnot, 2016, p. 8). Conversely, the relationship between the parent and the child can be presented as a barrier.

The three stories are presented to frame this chapter. In the first story, *The New Swimming Suit* is set within the context of a family who is not familiar with the code of swimming. The story explores the excitement and appeal of participating in a new sport, the discomfort with the unknown, the respect for school authority, and the child's acute awareness that a parent's silence is the dominant voice to obey.

In the second story, *I Ga Ve'a*, also raises theme of obedience again, but it is set against the backdrop of the swimming pool. It houses the differing perspectives of the swimming suit, the swimmer and the parent focusing on the challenge between being seen and being obedient. The facility was the contested space. The pool was considered a safe space that the parent sought for their child, a protective space where the swimmer could hide yet still produce an outward appearance of obedience, and a conflicted emotional space where the swimming suit was witness to the unspoken yet conflicted dance between parent and swimmer.

The final story, *A Swimmer's Apology*, houses both elements of obedience and commitment within the *fa'alogolatā* (not listening) context. The story emphasizes how the swimmer's individual pursuits compromise the relationships with parent, coach, and team.

Following the three stories is a conclusive response on how these relationships enable and constrain participation in swimming.

The New Swimming Suit

This is a story of *Falute*, a young Samoan girl who was schooled in New Zealand. This was her earliest recollection of engaging with swimming in Year 7. The story addresses the unspoken responses and tensions between Samoan parents, paying heed to school policy, though quietly not in agreement with the activity. It also explores the themes of the athleticism of Polynesian children, the opportunities to participate and represent in school sports but the pull to join in mainstream team sports. In addition to the tension that exists within the Samoan child-parent relationship, it highlights the reality that while swimming may be fun, it is only momentary, as other sports draw their attention and are more accepted by Samoan parents.

The Girl

I rushed home from school as fast as my legs could take me which was pretty fast. I loved running. I loved sports. I was good at them. I hurried past the shop where all my school mates were hanging around vying for a cool drink. Did I see my older brother? Maybe but I don't care. I just couldn't wait to show my Mum the letter from the school.

I burst in through the back door and screech to a halt. My chest heaving as I try to catch my breath and not seem too excited. Auntie was there talking with Mum in the front room. I'll have to wait. And wait. And wait.

I go to my room that I share with my sister. She isn't there. I change out of my uniform while keeping an eye on the front room to see if Auntie has left.

"Ia ta o. Toe feiloa'i", the gravelly voice of my Auntie resounds down the corridor. The front door swings close confirming she has left. I grab the paper off my bed, a notice from school and run to my mother. My mum takes it from my hand and peers at it. I can't contain my smile. My dimples always give me away when I am trying to keep a straight face. "What's this? You need a swim tog for school swimming lessons?" I can't tell if she is asking me or just talking to the paper in front her face. She crinkles her forehead and squints further at the paper then sets it down. She doesn't say anything. She just turns away and calls out the backdoor, "Sikope, fea oe? Alu I fafo ma fai le feao". Mum's focus is now on my brother and his outside chores. My smile disappears and I sulk back to my room.

I don't remember how many days have passed. I return home from school, like I do every day, and go to my room to change out of my uniform so it can be washed for the next day. And there it was, lying on my bed. Brand new swimming togs. I grin from ear to ear. She got the togs. I can't believe she just went and got the togs! I can join the swimming races!

Today is the day. Mum still hasn't said anything about the togs she left on my bed. She must have agreed with the school programme because she got me the togs. That was all that mattered anyways. I packed my school bag with my new swim togs and started walking out the back door. I hear my mother shuffle quickly behind me. "Teine, don't forget to take the soap and scrub yourself well."

The Swimming Suit

The Samoan Tinā is looking at me, or rather squinting at me with a frown so deep that it furrows her brow and creases her mouth like an old piece of wrinkled linen. She doesn't look like the others who come to get us. She seems uncomfortable, awkward. Does she know anything about me? I wait patiently. I try to hide my bright colours, my excitement that I might be chosen. I wait, expectantly. She sighs and clucks her tongue then takes me to the counter. I can't believe it. I hear her gravelly voice say "I'll take this one".

I wait patiently on the bed. I have been waiting for a long time. I hear the door slam and a thud of a heavy backpack reverberate onto floor. There are more steps. 5 to be exact. Then a pause. I hear nothing but some murmuring in the other room. I hold my breath. I am sure she will like me. She must. The footsteps start again. Getting louder. I hear the door swing open and a shriek of delight from the girl as she runs towards me, grabbing me from the bed and twirling me around and around and around. We are a perfect match.

We are wonderful for each other. I am paraded around on the special day in front of all her classmates, mostly a sea of white bodies with only a hint of brown bodies at the pool. I can't hide my pride, the way she looks so strong and athletic. Just waiting with anticipation for everyone to watch us. It's our turn now. The water gives me a bit of shock but soon I feel how I am helping her propel through the water, like a hot knife through butter, we glide easily and finish. Exiting the water, my shimmery reflection attracts the audience. This was my best day ever and sadly my only day with her.

Many months later, I am still hidden away in her closet. It is dark and stale. A mustiness permeates the air around me. Where is she? I can only hear her sometimes, but I usually just hear her coming in late or reading the bible in the morning. Suddenly the closet door creaks, the box I am in is picked up, I am unbalanced and disoriented as light suddenly envelopes my space. A hand reaches in and yanks on me. I struggle against the weight of the others that stay with me. I push against them, hoping that I will be released from the clutter. She waves me in the air, and I feel her stretch and pull me. My edges are dry and dull. My skin is inflexible. She tries to be my friend again. Her hands, her legs, her body don't feel right. I hear her mumble, but I can't catch the words as I fall to the floor in a heap as she grabs her training bag. I hear her tinā sing out from the driveway, "Fa'akope or else you'll be late for netball training. Don't worry you can just swim in your lava after training". As she ran from the

room, I was trampled on by her new friends, the ones that seem to take her everywhere, running on the court, sweating, and playing a game that I could never be part of.

Coming back to the present, the participant paused as she recalls the memory. She leans into our conversation saying, “She never said to me anything. Not when I gave her the letter or after she bought me the togs. I just felt that she wasn't in agreement with the school or learning how to swim. She didn't say ‘no’ because I think the order came from the school.”

There is a settled pause between us, then I asked her if she enjoyed the school swimming. She focusses directly on me and said, “Yeah, I liked swimming, I liked sport. And being Polynesian I was good at sport anyway. It didn’t matter what the sport was.” She slowly smiles and with astonishing insight, laughs, saying, “But you know as a little kid at that age I grew out of my togs quickly. I never asked her for another pair! That was it for me. I just joined netball and other poly sports.”

More memories tumble into our conversation. My participant, Taimane Va’alele, concluded:

> You know I recall my brothers going swimming back then and nothing being said. But you know it's just all this sort of unspoken. Like somehow, we learn what’s considered okay what's not okay. We learned to give our parents the right amount of information. Just enough. Not too much or we would get in big trouble. You just pick it up, through osmosis, it's amazing. The culture- you know what to tell and not to tell your parents when you go off to do an activity that they may or may not like you doing.

Findings and Discussion

Swimming is not familiar enough

As the other participants expressed, it was a matter of what they can do when they were a child, without disrupting the family dynamic and what they had to say to the parents, to ensure that they avoided trouble. There is more compliance to participation of a sport if it is facilitated by the school, but generally, sport and activities unfamiliar to families are seen as time-wasters. Participants agreed that swimming is very different to all the other sports, and it is just easier for their children to migrate into the more Polynesian sports. “I kept asking my son, don’t you want to just play rugby? Go play rugby. I understand that game and all his friends are there” (Tini Ataono).

School is a driver, but is it enough?

In the story, school swimming was the central driver for the child's participation. Since the aquatic centre was built in 2007, swimming programmes for the public and schools have been offered. However, as reflected in the story above, if a child had an opportunity to swim, it was highly likely that it would be a brief interlude. School swimming in Samoa has increased participation, but temporarily as only two private schools within the Apia urban area have swimming within their curriculum and weekly schedule. One participant who runs a successful private school reflected on her position:

> I was fortunate that I run an independent school. If you try to put in an extra programme like swimming and put this through the educational system, you'll get resistance all the way up. Because first you must transport children to the pool. Then you must have the trust of all the parents that you won't drown their children. But I wanted this programme. I am a bit of a bulldog and once I get a hold of something, I don't let go. I wanted my students to become swimmers. (Fili Uso)

She believed commitment was the greatest challenge for the swimming as a school-based programmes, explaining:

> I think perhaps one of the biggest problems, that I know you also encountered, is the stickability. Sticking to stuff and following it through. Everyone wants to jump on the bandwagon with something that is new. Like handball, futsal, all these new sports are introduced at the schools. It is the continuity of staying with these new sports that is a challenge. Because there is always a new sport, new equipment, some funding, there are so many sports competing for the student's attention and as you know, swimming is not cheap. (Fili Uso)

Ua lava (that's enough) swimming: unclear if there is a future in swimming

While the school's parents agreed to the swimming curriculum as "they have bought into health and life skill narrative" (Fili Uso), she agrees that offering swimming through the athlete development pathway was met with some resistance.

> Overall, I think that is the real challenge we all face. Parents asking whether there is a future in swimming. And I think, with the development of swimming scholarships and opportunities to go overseas to swim AND school, there was an excited interest for parents to say, 'oh you're not wasting your time in the afternoon at the pool. (Fili Uso)

buWhile administrators and teachers in the study believed that swimming offered opportunities, parents also saw other benefits for their children to be in swimming which is explored in the following two stories.

In *I Ga Ve'a* the theme of obedience appears again, but it is set against the backdrop of the swimming pool. Based on the research findings, the vignette offers a way to understand the internal conflict Samoan children have when their desire to play a different sport which doesn't align with their parents' wishes. It was a common theme that parents made decisions for their children to remain in swimming as it was conducted in safe environment, was considered a healthy activity and reinforced the parenting disciplinary style.

I ga ve'a and Hide and Seek

The Swimming Suit (I ga ve'a: the call of the banded rail)

We are outside the pool again. I don't understand why we are always outside when the others are inside. We sit in the fale across the parking lot. He doesn't do much. He never says much. We just sit there every afternoon. I tire of hanging out in the parking lot while I can see the team training indoors. I hear the coach blowing her whistle. I hear the call for us to be inside with the team. But we don't go in. He isn't getting any faster and his Tinā always wonders why his times aren't improving. It's obvious to me. He isn't putting in the hours IN the pool. Just before we are picked up by his tinā, we go into the change room and duck under the shower for a second and he wraps a towel around his body. I hear the same question every day. "How was training?", his mother would ask as he jumps into the car when she returned to pick him up. "Great" was his standard response. I wondered, Great? What was great? Hiding in the parking lot for two hours? (The Swimming Suit)

The Swimmer (Lafi: Hide)

Mom insisted that I swim. I used to like it; I really did. Then something happened. My body didn't move as easily. I felt heavy. I felt slow. I was slow. The sets were big. The training lasted forever. There weren't many competitions. I just wanted to play rugby. That's where all my mates went to after school, but I was always dropped off at the pool. Mum insisted. There is no arguing with Mum. But I didn't want to do it anymore. Hanging outside the pool every afternoon was a small price to pay. Just splash some water on my hair and get my suit wet before I'm about to be picked up. At least I didn't have to swim.

The Mother (Su'e: Seek)

I don't want him playing rugby. Both me and my husband said no to rugby. We aren't a rugby family, but that isn't the reason. We don't like the rugby culture. I wanted more for my son beyond learn to swim. I saw that he lacks independence. He is irresponsible. So, it was our way to survive. He is very friendly. He is my only son. I think of the peer pressures of lots of things. I look at rugby and I see alcohol. I look at soccer and see the same thing. I am not rich or anything, but it was my sacrifice. So, it was more to build him as a person and swimming was that sport that could do that for him.

Findings and Discussion

Understanding I ga ve'a

I ga ve'a is the Samoan version of Hide and Seek. It is literally translated as "the call of the Banded Rail bird". Assuredly, I am not digressing, but this is relevant. The Banded Rail is a bird located in Samoa and is characterized by its call and its movements. The "I" (pronounced EEEEEE!) is the call a Banded Rail makes while running on the ground. The game indicates that that hider makes the Banded Rail sound of "I" and the running bird seeks to find the others. In Samoa, there are rarely direct translations to the games and concepts, but the characters' names in the following vignette draw on both the Samoan (*I ga ve'a*) and the literal meanings of Hide (*Lafi*) and Seek (*Su'e*).

The swimming suit represents the concept of the Samoan version of Hide and Seek called *i ga ve'a*. As aforementioned, the game is played with the hider sounding for the others to come find him. The swimming suit sits, hiding though wanting to respond to the call of the others. Perhaps it is the call of the coach. The sounds of the sets being called, the sound of the clock setting the pace, the sound of the swimmers kicking the water in unison or the sound of the whistle reverberating within the indoor pool structure. Perhaps is to call to the mother, who insists for the child to be engaged in this sport and is unaware of the present conflict. Perhaps it even wishes to call to the conscious of the swimmer himself, to be found, so the swimming suit can engage with training. However, the suit has no voice when found in a space outside of the pool.

The strength of the parent's voice

The findings lend insight into understanding that not only did the swimmer confront internal conflict with staying in swimming and/or participating in other sports, but the parents also had similar conflict. In the talanoa sessions, parents referred to swimming as a family affair and were troubled when their child expressed uninterest. The parents were acutely aware of the time and money they had already invested so didn't want the child to quit. A seasoned regional coach also had misgivings when his own children exited the swim pathway. "It was so hard to accept, but then you realize you must really

pull away and let them make their own choices. You must look at what they're going to do for the rest of their lives too" (Pule Saipini).

The findings indicated that the parents became very vocal when their children expressed a desire to play other sports or quit swimming altogether. One parent reflected on the difficulties allowing the voice of the child to emerge.

> In the Samoan culture, children don't have a voice. They are to be quiet – shut your mouth concept –that is the sign of respect. When we were young, when parents say, 'Don't talk' so we don't talk. Even the teachers at school emphasize for the student to just sit there and listen. That's why when you try to express yourself, you can't express yourself, because most of the kids lack self-expression. (Petelo Ataono)

Although some parents explained that they had more open conversations with their children regarding swimming, some parents claimed that they did not allow negotiations regarding the sport. Some parents admitted that they would not allow their child to quit explaining their point of view: "We said that when you turn 16, you can make that decision, but it must come with well-presented reasons. However, before 16, you will stay in swimming" (Mele Uila). They explained that their stance on swimming supported their desire to limit their child's activities and social opportunities, so she didn't "fall in with the wrong crowd". Another parent of a seasoned swimmer explained that he had to stay in swimming "as he always had so much energy to burn and liked to play around. Swimming kept him in line and we liked swimming as the coaching style matched our parenting style" (Lualua Taleni). Parents of younger swimmers admitted that their children played multiple sports throughout the year, but they would not allow their children to drop swimming. "So, it is swimming and whatever sport can fit around it. Swimming is priority for our family" (Kilifi Taleni) but has recently shared that their eldest son now has chosen swimming as his only sport due to the training schedule.

This is echoed in the vignette from the swimmer's perspective, who was called *Lafi*. In Samoan, *Lafi* means to hide. While *Lafi* literally hid from swim training, he also hid his voice from his mother. He opted to hide his true feelings and his personal interests as obeying his mother was prioritized. Some of the older swimming participants in the study confirmed their struggle with expressed interests in other activities, but they chose to stay in swimming as they obeyed their parents.

Contrary to these findings, some parents tried hard to dissuade their child from pursuing swimming. This was based on economic circumstances. Contemporary parenting involves the child more. One parent explained that "Samoan children being raised overseas or with younger parents now can share their views and speak openly about what they like and don't like" (Petelo Ataono). However, this led to the parents facing a new conundrum. Parents admitted in the talanoa discussions that they had also tried to persuade their children into taking up other sports.

So, I tried to say, it's your choice it's your choice, but we're here to advise you and support you. But I quietly hope he will say no more swimming as it is so expensive. I remember telling my son to take up rugby. It is what I know. I pushed my son to play a sport. I pushed him to play rugby. He would come back and say, 'my legs hurt, my ears hurt, my shoulders hurt'. I would say just 'go –go– go back to rugby' and he would say, 'no, it hurts too much- I feel pain in my body'. I guess swimming it is for him. (Tini Ataono)

Swimming has so many benefits

During the talanoa sessions, the parents shared why they were so insistent on their children staying in swimming. Parents explained that they were pleased when they saw their child improve in swimming not only in skill, but in behaviour. Parents spoke of their children becoming highly organized, packing their swim and school bags the night before and having a greater awareness of time. One parent recalled a change in his son. "He is aware of his training times. He takes initiatives. He leaves a note on the table 'I've gone to swimming' and this is unheard of in our culture. I really like how he is so responsible" (Petelo Ataono). The parents shared that they believed the skills competitive swimming taught their children opened other opportunities as these qualities were recognized by others.

For those involved in the sport, parents and swimmers raised a perceptive consideration. As those involved with swimming have recognized that it is a very white or Western sport, not common or popular in the islands, they were attuned to the benefits of being involved as the minority. One parent who now resides in Auckland but raised her family in Samoa until recently moving to New Zealand explained her perspective. "Not many polys in the sport and that is why my son stands out and gets recognized. There are only three brownies in the club and the rest are white" (Tini Ataono). While her approach to encourage him to take up rugby, a sport that is familiar to her, costs significantly less and has a larger Pacific representation, she was able to see the benefits of her son remaining in swimming as a minority. She continued her insights on the benefits of her young Samoan son swimming competitively in Auckland.

> Because of his swimming skills, his school recognized him, and he played water polo for his school which is an even more white sport. From this he was identified by the teachers as being a good prefect- with his water sports, his Samoan dance/culture group and doing well in school. He is a good role model for the younger ones. (Tini Ataono)

Furthermore, both parent and swimming participants spoke about how they "chose" swimming over other sports due to the external recognition they received. "People came up to me after competitions and told me how talented my daughter was" (Mele Uila).

> I watched my boy's race, and thought, they are pretty good at this. Then when they joined the swim club, the coach reconfirmed our thoughts. My kids had talent. Then we told them to choose their sports, as it was getting expensive. Cricket, rugby, soccer, tennis and swimming. Multiply that by three children and there is no way they can continue that way. As much as they enjoy the other sports, they all chose swimming. Maybe because they were good or maybe because they could see results. (Kililfi Taleni)

While they were aware of the gravitational pull towards rugby and other team sports due to the cultural relationship with those sports, one parent explained that she liked that her child was different.

> I like that my children are different. Swimming allows that, but when they wish to be like all the others, I don't encourage them to be like the others. We cut off the conversation. I am not interested in rugby, the discussions, the culture. Everyone talks about rugby, but we don't. We feign encouragement for him to make a choice, but inside we don't support rugby participation. (Masi Tasi)

The pool is a safe space

In the vignette, the mother's name is *Su'e* which means to seek. Her son, *Lafi* (hide), attempted to avoid swimming and hide from his commitments while his mother actively sought a sport for him to be safely engaged in. Parents sought a place and sport that offered the discipline, the safety from social influences, and a built environment that suspended the *fa'aSamoa* so the children could be themselves. Some parents had spent time explaining how they viewed the swimming pool, circling back to the location itself. "It was a place that we had invested in. I hated to see that we would no longer be in this group if my child didn't continue to swim" (Masi Tasi). Also, the space was seen as restorative as some parents viewed the pool as a place that was safe, protective, and healing. "It was a safe place, the pool. It was where my kids didn't have to be Samoan or play a role for the family" (Roseta Tavita). Investment of time and money as well as it being a family sporting pursuit were key elements to encouraging swimmers to stay in swimming.

The swimmers, who are conflicted with wanting to pursue other sports or to leave the athletic world behind altogether, began to see the space as a site of contention and unresolved conflict. Swimmers shared their perspectives of the swimming pool and swimming as it interfered with their outside lives. "What outside life? I couldn't do sleepovers, the odd movie in town, or any of the fun birthday parties after school. I had to train" explained a seasoned elite swimmer, Poto Va'alele. "Swimming always came first. Then if there was time, I could do the other activities with my cousins or friends" (Nina Taleni). "If I skipped training, it was that much harder to get back into it. That much harder to get better times. It was easier not to leave the sport. I just stayed so I could make it worth it" (Ioana Uila).

The swimmer's voice

The swimmers chose to hide their voice. While parents felt there was stronger communication with their child, there were some swimmers who felt they couldn't quit the sport as "it would be too much of a disappointment for my parents" (Kitiana Meamata). The swimmers explained that while they confidently had a voice in the family, they intentionally muted their own voice so they would not let their parents down. In the story, the son outwardly obeys the parent and goes to the swimming pool everyday afterschool. This story resonates with the swimmer participant who shared their internal conflict of obeying their parents and remaining in a sport they no longer enjoyed. This was a strong finding in the talanoa discussions where the younger participants spoke intimately of their desire to play netball, soccer, basketball and rugby, but knew they were disappointing their parents, the family and the overall investment. Their uninterest to relentlessly swim daily coupled with their inability to effectively voice their dissatisfaction was an ongoing point of contention within the talanoa sessions.

One participant who previously swam nationally for Samoa offered a parallel perspective on the swimmer in the story.

> It's all about training. That is how I see the sport. There is no battle, no competition. There was nothing in it for me except training. I know the others who stayed can find that edge or competitiveness when they train. I saw it as nothing more than training and I was never passionate about this type of sport (M. Schuster, Personal Communication, 22/01/22).

The talanoa session moved onto the moment he quit swimming and he explained that he quit when he went overseas for university. "As long as I was in Samoa, we (me and my siblings) had to swim. It was not open for discussion with both of my parents" (M. Schuster, Personal Communication, 22/01/22). The role of obedience as it extends to sport participation presents a difficult space for a young swimmer to navigate. As much as parents spoke of progressive communication, there was still remnants of socio-cultural obedience that played out in this interaction.

Furthermore, the tension increases as the swimmer becomes aware of the cultural implications of the parents' investment in their sport. The Samoan culture impresses upon youth to do well in their pursuits, be it academic pursuits, sport, or whatever talent they have been given. There is a family expectation to do well, as their efforts are on display for family, extended family, village, and nation. The swimming participants explained that they carried on the role of being a swimmer to save disappointment and to keep the image alive. One swimmer explained his family's expectations with all things in his life. "I had to do well in school. I had to do well with my *Aoga Faifeau*. My chores. Family prayers. If not, there was to be no more swimming" (Samuelu Va'alele). The swimmers explained that they had to continue to do well in swimming too, or there was more conflict within the family.

The final vignette for this chapter houses the findings of conflict between parent and swimmer, specifically between the level of investment by the parent and lack of reciprocity from the swimmer. During the *talanoa* sessions, the participants expressed their frustration that their children did not enjoy swimming as much as they had hoped. While the parents spoke of their child participating in competitive swimming, some admitted that it became a source of tension in their relationship as they could see that their child was looking to join other sports. However, the levels of frustration and attachment to the sport became greater due to the time, energy, and money they had invested in the sport over the years.

A Swimmer's Apology

The talanoa session was moving along with a distinct flow. Mother and son or rather coach and swimmer were sitting in my home as we explored the research question of what constrains and enables swimming participation in Samoa.

Our conversation flowed towards the time-wasting topic. Surely, a coach and swimmer would not see swimming as a waste of time. However, our conversation took a slight turn when the mother/coach said, "In Samoa and sports, well most sports, it's a time-waster because they see you're not winning. But I see it is another type of time-waster". I concurred as we connected the complicated relationship the fa'aSamoa has with anything that competes for the attention of our communities. The discussion was lively and insightful, with all three of us sharing about swim development in Samoa.

Then, without warning, the conversation turned on a dime, the tyres of the figurative car careening around a corner, on two wheels, at a speed that seemed dangerous. What happened? I hold my breath as she turned to face her son straight on and said, "Well, are you going to tell her?" Her son's muscular body visibly twitched, but remained silent, his head hung a bit lower with his eyes averting to the ground.

She pivoted in her seat and redirected the conversation towards me, "The reason why he is performing like he is today because he decided, like three days ago that he would like to try it out for this football team."

I quickly tried to catch up as the story seemed to begin in the middle and I was missing pertinent information.

My swimmer must have seen my confusion so tried to bring me up to speed. "Coach", he said, "last weekend there were football trials. You know I still love football and thought I'd try out as we are coming to off-season in swimming. But instead of trials, the coach made us play games to see who would make the squad."

I am beginning to piece it together. His performance at the current nationals was sub-par and now I knew why.

His mother segues in and clips a response, "he played not one but FOUR games. Luckily, he didn't get injured. I am a coach too so that's how I'm looking at it right now from a coach perspective. But really? You couldn't even walk, son. You couldn't even walk on Sunday morning."

She sighs and continues to continue her frustration. "I think he is foolish. He puts his body on the line, play soccer and wins, right? No! It is wasting everyone's time and money too."

She turns to her son again and says, "Your coach and your club have been putting you through all the paces right up until you get on the blocks for you to win. So, between your last day of swim training and competing today, there was that day that you did not listen to your coach. You went and did what you wanted. Don't come and complain to me that you have sore legs, or you have this pain or that you want to scratch your races. Don't say that those are your free days to do what you want."

She turns back to me and says, "His coach has told me to reconsider his involvement with swimming as it is so much money."

The swimmer shakes his head but doesn't say anything.

The mother continued to explain, "If I did that my parents would laugh at me and say, 'well, you're stupid because who told you to go and get your body injured?' 'Who said that it's only up to you?' 'It's your fault'".

The mother sighs and pauses. Her son offers an apology, "I realize it's wasting everyone's time, efforts and resources. I shouldn't have done it, but it really is now wasting so much as I must scratch out of events because I'm so heavy in the water."

I looked at both swimmer and coach, mother and son, as the air became heavy with the swimmer's guilt and the mother's silent recriminations, realizing the immense impact of what was just shared which revealed another layer in understanding the factors influencing competitive swimming participation.

Findings and Discussion

The story is a representation of the research findings regarding the themes of *usita'i* (obedience) and *faalogolatā* (not listening) within the context of competitive swimming in Samoa.

Research findings support that when athletes feel parents are pressuring them, they have higher drop-out rates (Gould et al., 1985), stress (Jellinek & Durant, 2004), increased sport anxiety (Anderson, Funk, Elliott, & Smith, 2003), and reduced self-concept (Hoyle & Leff, 1997). However, the findings

in this research did not indicate that the swimmer was confronted with the issues of quitting, stress, anxiety or reduced self-concept. The swimmer's response to the conflict was guilt, acknowledgement, respect and repentance. These are strong cultural values in the *fa'aSamoa* which are presented in this story. It is likened to Faleolo (2013) who defines the 'fish' within the *Talanoa ile i'a* as a Samoan young person who "silently slips through social groups and are unlikely to share their struggles despite their turmoil" (p. 117). Although Faleolo's (2013) research was within the field of social work, the 'fish' or the 'swimmer' in this research has the same world of people influencing and impacting him/her such as "their home, classmates, siblings, caregivers and parents" (p. 119).

Insert anything that competes with the swimmer's attention. Be it another sport, a career, a hobby, an interest, or a significant other. The swimmer begins to test the boundaries and attempt new activities within their schedule. The findings indicate that the parents, more than the coaches and administrators, had conflicted feelings regarding their child and their interests being elsewhere.

Open communication

In the Samoan culture, respect and love are pervasive elements within the family. Participants shared their stories of negotiating their desire to play other sports while maintaining swimming as their priority sport.

> I remember coming to the pool after school and my mom/coach blasted me. I had jammed my finger playing basketball at school and stuffed up my knuckle. I couldn't swim as it hurt too much in the water. She was so angry as we were getting ready for the Fiji competition. (Pani Pose)

Another parent shared their frustrations when their children compromised the swimming programme. "When my son was excelling in swimming, we agreed he could play in the interschool rugby competition. On the first day he broke his arm. That was it for swimming" (Sio Meamata). Other parents recalled the events that pulled their children out of swimming were mainly due to injuries sustained in other sports such as broken arm, broken toes, dislocated knees, and dislocated shoulders. These findings support Pala'amo (2017) research finding:

> Although fa'aaloalo (respect) and alofa (love) may still be central to many Samoans, these key features are now more aligned with individual rather than collective choices. People are exercising choices that benefit themselves as individuals even if such choices go against parents' wishes. (Pala'amo, 2017, p. 131)

The sport and space viewed differently as swimmer and parent

The swimmer intends to obey, as the cultural protocols and upbringing dictate, but are conflicted when they yearn to play other sports. However, they obey as they do not want to compromise the trusting relationship between parent and child. Internally, the swimmer does not want to disappoint the family nor compromise the parent's investment. The parent has internal conflicts as well regarding the investment they have made to their child and the sport. The parent's voice trumps the child's voice, enforcing them to remain in swimming, due to the fear that all their invested money, time and resources will go to waste. Within the talanoa sessions, the cost of swimming acted as a driver to stay with the sport. One parent expressed it simply, "because we're paying so much so we need to commit ourselves" (Tili Ataono). A parent who has moved into an additional role as a coach agrees by saying:

> It is an expensive sport. And it's mainly for those people who can afford it. Affluence and white affluence are glaring at us. I wonder because I think those who could actually benefit from being good swimmers just can't afford it. (Soso Maalili)

It highlights the parents' frustrations and hopes for the swimmer, yet it is not equally reciprocated. This is echoed in Mele's perspective, who framed it this way:

> We have always said to our daughter that swimming as a sport is a privilege. It is a privilege to swim as it is an expensive sport, and it takes up a lot of time. It is sport that you sacrifice for. It isn't a sport that gives anything tangible back. (Mele Uila)

Summary

A theme within all the stories was swimming is not seen as individual but collective. The data confirmed that there was an acute awareness that the swimmer's movements, decisions, hidden desires, outward appearance and motivations were hinged on family expectations. The relationships are visceral and demonstrate that participating in competitive swimming has moved beyond the individual. The other people within the child's worlds are directly invested and impacted with the decisions they make. As a regional Oceania coach explained the impacts of a swimmer getting injured, like broken toes, jammed fingers, broken arms and even TD1 diagnosis:

> There is never-ending list of injuries. These are blips. Nothing more. But they are massive stains and strains within the family dynamic and to the point of no return. The parent investment in the child and the child's lack of concern is enough to break the relationship. (Pule Saipini)

Like Samoan meaning-making, the culture and the concept of swimming, staying and/or leaving the sport was not a straightforward task. Staying in the sport was due to parental expectations and being

seen in a significant light. Leaving the sport produced other emotions such as relief from some parents if their child exited swimming before swimming up the elite performance pathway. The parents had not made a significant investment in the swimming, they had no understanding of the sport itself, and expressed relief when their child chose to participate in better-known sports such as rugby and netball.

Chapter 9: The Swimmer and the Swimming Suit

Introduction

This final chapter of findings explores the relationship between the swimmer, the code of the sport and the cultural mores. It builds upon the previous chapters and explores the recurrent themes of the swimmer and the cultural nuances with the *fa'aSamoa*. The findings are uniquely presented through the perspective of the 'Swimming Suit' as well as the perspective of the swimmer. Swimming suits are a pervasive element of competitive swimming and the findings illustrated that the swimming suit is a site of contention and conflict within the *fa'aSamoa*. Each story attempts to push the swimmers' voice to the forefront though my voice is unavoidably present due to the autoethnographic style of writing. The stories represent the challenges both male and female swimmers have undertaken as they stepped onto the path of competitive swimming. As the swimming suit is a token symbol of competitive swimming, I have given a voice to the suit, threading in the socio-cultural realities of being a swimmer in Samoa. The stories are not presented in a perfect order, as none could be found. Rather they are a representation of the challenges and negotiations swimmers must endure to progress in the competitive swimming pathway. The findings share commonalities with other research findings such as access, cost and lack of interest as barriers to participating in competitive swimming. However, a surprising finding was the negotiations swimmers and swimming families had to undertake regarding cultural restrictions to acceptable clothing, both inside and outside of the pool environment. The negotiations undertaken reveal the transformation a swimmer makes in accepting their roles locally, their desire to be seen as a swimmer within a regional context and their transformation as a swimmer on an international context. The Swimming Suit depicts the swimmer's journey through the stages of resistance, negotiations, acceptance and ultimately swim identity as they progressed in the sport.

First are two vignettes, *Pani and the Pe'a* and *Nala at the Pool*, from the perspective of development swimmers at the beginning of their regional competitive journey. The first vignette, *Pani and the Pe'a,* offers insight into the male swimmers' discomfort in Samoa with swimming suits and their tentative steps into wearing competitive swim gear for both training and competition. It demonstrates that travelling outside the country of Samoa and participating in regional competitions influences their choice of swimming gear. It highlights the struggles of the discomfort of being seen as different while simultaneously desiring to be seen as different. It draws on the concept of humour, a theme encountered in Chapter 6, reaffirming Besnier (2016) who concludes that humour is often seen as a social act.

The second vignette, *Nala at the Pool,* tackles the discomfort young female swimmers had in wearing swimming suits at the Samoa Aquatic Centre. The story presents a turning point when swimmers have a sense of agency of their own bodies and comfort within the pool setting.

There are so many layers. I feel so constrained. Too tight. Uncomfortable. I am not sure why I have to share this space with another layer. I hear Coach gently explaining to her mother that it is not encouraged for the swimmers to wear their pe'a (underwear) under the swimming suit. I don't think they listened."

Insights from the swimming suit

Pani and the Pe'a: Is that Underwear?

Insights from the swimming suit

The others are always laughing at me. They aren't even quiet about it. But I love being here. I fit in at this place, at least I think I do. The coach never yells at me, but I've seen her growl at the other clothing, saying they're too loose, too big, too weighty, and too many layers. I inwardly smile knowing that I was made perfectly for the pool, but I still get teased by some of the swimmers. It is hard sometimes. I wish I had more friends like me, like all my friends in Fiji. There are so many like me over there. Parading around for everyone to see. I know I am different. I am edgy and can't be hidden. I am quite visible, and I realize some people don't like that here. They don't want to feel or look different. If only they tried to get to know me, I just know they would like me.

Insights from the swimmer

"There he is again- in his pe'a (underwear!)" snickers Sami and his school friends. "He looks so stupid. Who would ever wear their underwear to swim in?" All the boys hoot and holler in a chorus that echoes across the pool deck. Pani, in his speedo suit, is clueless to the laughter and being on the receiving end of the jokes. They undress and slowly fold their school uniforms into a pile. Coach yells out to the swimmers, "Slow jog around the pool, and Sami, run the stretches for the team." Sami stops cackling with his friends as he realizes he needs to step it up. "Sure Coach, coming Coach!" Pani set the pace with Sami, while Koki, Rani and Tovio are lagging behind adjusting their long shorts which keep riding up as they jog around the pool. "Remember team, the competition in Fiji is next week. Let's hustle into the pool and get focused on our event sets", the coach pushes her voice over the stretching set. "I can't wait go; I've never been on a plane before" admits Koki. "I'm excited yet nervous and I love competing. I can't wait", says Sami. Tovio and Roni seem quieter, a bit pensive with eyes cast to the floor. Rimoni pipes up "I can't wait! Look at my body", clad in oversized rugby shorts, he twirls his plus-size body in a pirouette, creating a ripple of laughter throughout the team.

A week later, coach reflects the successful Fiji trip, and audibly sighs. So many new experiences for the swimmers as well as their parents. Awesome results which seem to have bolstered their confidence. But now it's back to the drawing board to focus on improving those times. She walks to the white board to write out a new set. Sami walked in early for training after a day at school where he was congratulated for his gold medal winnings from Fiji. A grin ear to ear. "Coach, what a great trip to Fiji". "You did great, Sami, really you did. Now it's back to training", Coach insisted. As Sami began to remove his school uniform on deck and prepare for warm up, he looked over his shoulder to make sure his school friends were out of earshot and asked, "By the way coach, where can I order a suit like Pani's?"

Findings and Discussion

Teasing is a protective layer

Pe'a is the colloquial word for underwear, but the proper term is *ofuvae loto* (short pants). The literal translation supports the surrounding issues of modesty, covering up and attunement to conservative dressing behaviours. It was common conversation within the talanoa regarding the many swimmers who would arrive wearing their underwear beneath their swimming togs. Parents resisted when coaches and teachers explained that underwear was not required nor sanitary to wear in the swimming pool. However, in this vignette, Pani wears a small speedo training suit which is likened to underwear by his peers.

National swimmer Samuelu Va'alele reflected on the issue of wearing speedos in Samoa, both at the pool and in open water competitions.

> Back then the only thing I worried about, which is really silly, was being seen by my friends when I was wearing speedos for competition. If my friends didn't see me then I didn't worry about wearing the small racing suit. For the village-based river or sea competitions, I didn't really care if local villagers saw me because I would never see them again. (Samuelu Va'alele)

As his peer group sits outside of the swimming fraternity, he admitted that this remains a vulnerable issue for him. While he enjoys being seen (or known) as a swimmer, he hesitates to be literally seen as a swimmer by his peers outside of swimming. These findings are consistent with literary agents such as Figiel (1996) and Cowling (2009) who emphasize that the fear of being talked about by others and shame are strong relational factors in Samoa. It is also supported in Garth and Hardin (2019) where being seen as different has social stigmas.

However, swimmers in this research agreed that travelling overseas allowed new perspectives of being a swimmer to take shape. A regional swim administrator also reflected on the swimming transformations he would see.

> It was only when we returned from overseas competitions that the local swimmers would start removing their surf shorts, T-shirts and street clothes. They started to become interested in the competition suits because they were exposed to it in the overseas competition. (Pule Saipini)

Nala at the Pool: They are looking at me

The swimming suit

She always pulls at me. Stretching me down, trying to hide behind the little I have to offer. I don't like being pulled at. I think I understand, at least I try to. When we first started coming here, I was always covered up. She didn't like showing me off. Even when the training would start, I was covered up and only revealed when we both were in the water. The weighty layers would come away and put on the edge of the pool, safely within reach, ready for her exit from the pool. I wish she wouldn't be so quick to wrap the towel around me. Covering me up. But now she doesn't cover me up when we are walking around deck, though she stills pulls at me. I wish she could see how I see her. She is so strong, and fast and athletic. I know we stand out, heads above others, contrasting colours to the others. I feel her discomfort, but I wish she could feel my comfort. I only hope I can help her stand talIer . (Insights from a Swimmer's Suit)

The swimmer and the coach

I sit quietly in the truck, not moving, not talking. I don't want to add stress to my mom's already stressed life, but every day it doesn't seem to get easier. "Get out, Nala, I have to go back to work". I hate this part; I hate walking across the deck. I reluctantly step out of the truck. One two three, I've stepped onto the deck. Look down, I say to myself. I try to make myself smaller. I have almost made it inside where I can quietly wait for training to start. Three more steps but then Coach spots me and calls out. "Nala, please get ready and jump in to help with this lesson. The children really want you to teach them". I smile but sigh. I disrobe and slide into the water. At least the water hides me. I don't feel so exposed. I swim towards the group that I am to teach when young Nua pipes up, "Nala, you're so pretty. I want to be just like you."

Findings and Discussion

Towels are protective layers

Through the talanoa sessions with the participants, the story of young female swimmers peppered the conversations.

> I remember the transformation that Nala went through. She used to wear her shorts and a T-shirt. And then it just was her shorts with her bathing suit. And then it was walking around in swim togs all over all over the deck. (Lualua Taleni)

The journey of wearing garments under the suit as well extra layers over the suit shifted as the swimmer took ownership of themselves. Participants observed the challenges, and the changes female swimmers underwent to reach a point of comfort in a swimming suit. However, the stories shared didn't always result in personal transformation and body acceptance.

> I remember the towels. Every time the girls would want to exit the pool, they quickly wrapped themselves in towels. Even after the races, their towels had to be at the end of the lane or else they wouldn't get out of the pool. (Roseta Tavita)

As the swimmers progressed in their journey as a swimmer, they still struggled with feeling vulnerable in their swimming suits. These findings resonate with literature that concludes that women feel inadequate, exposed and uncomfortable in swimming spaces (Evans & Allen-Collinson 2016; Evans & Sleap, 2012, 2015; Scott, 2010). The following two vignettes, *Leilani and her Racing Suit* and *Falani and the Fabulous Fast Skins* continue to unpack the swimming suit challenges national-level swimmers were confronted with. *Leilani and her Racing Suit* is from a national level swimmer who felt challenged with swimming competitively in New Zealand which required her to wear a racing suit for the first time. *Falani and the Fabulous Fast Skins* was written from a talanoa session with a male national-level swimmer. While the previous vignette focussed on the issues of the female swimmer wearing fast skins, a seasoned male swimmer shared a story of his own time of struggling with the constraints of a FINA World's sanctioned racing suits.

Leilani and her First Racing Suit: I can't hide

The swimming suit

There is a new one, like me but not like me. Black, small, so, so very small that I am not sure how it will fit her. All I know is that this new one made her cry. I heard her when we were in the bathroom stall. The coach tried to coax her out as her race was coming up soon, but she wouldn't come out. Big, quiet tears fell down her face. It seemed that the 'new one' was for racing, and I no longer could

be with her for the races, only for her warm-up. Why did this 'new one' make her sad? Why was this 'new one' so important that it took almost an hour to be with before the race? I look around the locker room and see many 'new ones' and notice that somehow the room was now filled with competitive swimmers. I was in awe.

The coach and the swimmer

"It doesn't fit and I'm not coming out," cried Leilani. This was followed by "I'm so fat", another self-incrimination sounded through the bathroom stall. Well, fat she was not. I could guarantee that, but I feared there would be no convincing her otherwise. She was to be in marshalling in a mere 10 minutes and I was unable to coax her out of the stall. This was the first competition where I insisted everyone step to the next level and wear racing suits.

I recalled the excitement of the day back home in Samoa when the suits arrived. The endless giggles from the girls when they opened their packets only to look at a suit no bigger than a new-born onesie. With painstaking patience, the girls tried their suits on, moved awkwardly but swam smoothly in them. However, I remember the next day, when Leilani's mother drove to the pool, clutching the racing suit in her hand and beelined for me on deck. "Just look at this construction", she exclaimed, holding up the backside of the suit. I looked and saw that the fabric seam was sheer, and it ran right in the middle of the buttocks. I looked over her shoulder and saw Leilani sheepishly glance at me. "Coach, when I bend over on the blocks, the timekeepers will see my bum", her cheeks aflame with bright red spots and her eyes avert from mine. The best I could do was to call all the mothers onto the deck and do a trial run. Leilani reluctantly agreed to don her racing suit and then pose for take-off on the blocks. Every mother stood behind, peering from behind, looking at her behind, safely confirming that there was nothing untoward to be seen.

Now, back to the present. I stepped back as the other girls had convinced her to come out. Tears were wiped, hugs were given, confidences were built up. If only she could see in her own reflection that she was just like all the others: strong, athletic; a swimmer.

Leilani stepped out of the stall. She saw of sea of white, not many brown bodies in here, she thought. She wiped her eyes and put her shoulders back, walking steadily beside her teammates. "I think I am a swimmer" swirls through her mind as she approaches the competition pool.

The final vignette was written from a talanoa session with a male national level swimmer. While the previous vignette focussed on the issues of the female swimmer and wearing fast skins, a seasoned male swimmer shared a story of his own time of struggling with the constraints of a FINA World's sanctioned racing suits.

Falani and the Fabulous Fast Skins: Code constraints

Insights from the swimming suit

I'm mesmerised with the new one. So shiny, so chic, so expensive. I know it's the Sultan of swimsuits. It's for the elite swimmer. I see a few new suits exchange hands and are given to him. He is told to try it on and if it fits, then to come back for the next size down. He started with a size 26 and ended up with a size 22. Each time he went to try one on, it took longer and longer. Finally, Pani returns, wearing his shorts and he is sweating and looks a bit perplexed. He whispers quietly into his coach's ear with his eyes closed, "I can't fit my bits into it". Without hesitation, she calls on her male coaching colleagues, who were competitive swimmers themselves. They turn to Pani giving sage advice of how fit his privates into this elite performance suit. Sometime later, he returns wearing this magnificent suit with gold and black panels made of the latest technology guaranteeing a perfect streamline with no resistance. I am speechless. He is a swimmer. (Insights from a Swimmer's Suit)

The swimmer

I remember when we were in Kazan at the FINA World LCM Champs. Our Oceania administrator scored free fast suits with a Speedo representative. These competition suits were easily $500USD and we got them for free. However, it was the first time I had worn real racers. I was used to the Ying Fa racing suits which were always loose and didn't assist in swimming performance. It was a funny time. I think I dropped like 4 sizes but started really struggling in how to put this suit on. It offered no forgiveness and squeezed me in places I didn't know could squeeze. I asked the Palau coach to help me out as I couldn't put on the suit. I think I had to start shaving too as it was a low hip-cut. Many new experiences but we were family, all the Oceania coaches and swimmers, so it was okay. Everyone helped. (Pani)

Findings and Discussion

Discomfort at being seen as different; peer influences

The introduction to new attire for competitive swimming was present in the talanoa sessions. Parents, still, were perplexed at the concept of buying racing suits purposely too small. One parent, whose child who is new to age-group competitive swimming, said:

> I didn't know. I don't know about the types of suits. The speedos, the jammers, the short ones, the racing ones. No one tells me anything. I thought I was being clever, buying the suit a few sizes too big so he could grow into it. It's so expensive so why would I buy it too small? (Tini Ataono)

Some parents were able to witness the transformation of becoming a swimmer.

> You know seeing some of the girls that come through swimming. All this fidgeting and covering up. After a year or so she was just so confident and ran around (in her suit). It wasn't at all like showing off, but it was about being confident. It was obvious that she could now say 'this is what I wear when I swim, and this is what I wear when I train.' She was so comfortable in her own body after a while. It was incredible to see. (Lualua Taleni)

It wasn't only the girls that struggled with exposing their bodies. One parent participant recalled her son was self-conscious. "Remember Iosefa? He used to wear a T-shirt and he because he was worried about his man boobs" (Roseta Tavita). A tertiary educator said a similar statement that her swimming programme for the University boys resulted in the boys wearing large T-shirts as they were very uncomfortable being shirtless at the pool.

> Now that I think about it, it was really strange. Most boys are from the village where they go shirtless most days, especially doing *feau* and plantation work. Even playing sport, the male youth may or may not wear a shirt, depending on where they are playing. I can't explain why they wouldn't remove their shirts at the pool. (D. Rasmussen, personal communication, 2 November 2021)

Some of the participants who travelled to overseas competitions with the team had additional insights on the attire.

> Competing in Fiji really helped with body consciousness. There we saw bodies left right and centre, all showing off in their swimwear. Everyone had a great time in the pool context and then they went back home to Samoa and thought this is a safe area to dress like this. (Lualua Taleni)

Influence of missionaries, Christianity and modesty are threaded from the past to the present. Research participants recalled the challenges of wearing swimming suits as required, without undergarments, without clothing, without cover. These layers present the various issues that swimmers must negotiate along their journey. This research documents the shift from wearing local clothing to adapting to new sport attire. The Samoan culture is deeply rooted in modesty, traditional clothing, and acceptable public attire. Within the talanoa sessions, participants queried the obvious dichotomy between old Samoa, where women were bare breasted to the practices of modesty that the missionaries brought. Parent and Government Administrator reflected on the irony within the culture and said:

> In the past, clothing was a big problem for people going swimming. We couldn't do what we do now. They had to wear a lavalava. It's funny as before the missionaries, women didn't

> even wear a top. They were bare breasted. When the missionaries came, everything changed. And now people are offended with the clothing or lack thereof. (Petelo Ataono)

When competitive swimming started, children would wear ill-fitting swimming suits, shorts, leggings, T-shirts for their lessons. Telesia Valu reflected that "if they managed to find a swimming suit, without fail, the swimmer would have knickers on underneath. This wasn't just the learn-to-swim age group, but some of our development swimmers wore briefs under their training suit." Fili Uso further added that:

> There were many young females who did not want to remove their shorts and T-shirts before entering the pool. I would make allowances and let the swimmer enter the pool then discard their clothes onto the side of the pool. They seemed happy enough to do that. They put on these clothes again before exiting the water as well. (Fili Uso)

Within other talanoa sessions, this discussion centred around the cultural nuances of covering up.

> The bits that must always be covered up are from the waist to the knee. Even as an older woman, I need to cover up in a lavalava if I am to wade in my village river. The children can freely swim in their street clothes or shorts, but I must modestly cover up. (P. Schoeffel, personal communications, 10 August 2020).

Swim coach and school administrator, Fili Uso, concurred explaining that the girls preferred wearing their shorts over their bathing suits as they didn't want their bum exposed in the school swimming programme. This aligns with Giles (2005) in the challenges of indigenous females engaging with swimming due to cultural practices.

The following vignette, *Tava and her Togs*, was written to emphasize that although swimmers transformed into accepting and wearing the competitive swimming suits, they were acutely aware of how this accepted attire was only suitable for training and not for other swimming spaces within Samoa. The following vignette drew on experiences of a national swimmer who was born, raised and schooled in Samoa. Her insights to the delicate walk between two cultures play out within this scene confirming the internal negotiation and sensitivity that must be addressed constantly to ensure that culture and respect are always upheld and becomes an automatic, learned response.

Tava and her Togs: Collision of culture and competitor

Insights from the swimming suit

I thought I was invited. Sometimes I am but not this time, I guess. Tava reaches into the drawer and pulls me out. The brightness envelopes me. Oh, it's such a beautiful day with the sunny skies that appear through her bedroom window. But a voice called from the car outside, "Hurry up, Tava- we are all ready to go!"

I can see her glance down, her fingers delicately untangling me. I hear her sigh and she put me back into the drawer, pushing me to the side and grabs the others, the ones who shouldn't be going to the beach.

I feel angry. Why do they get to go? They don't have my style, my passion, and my love with the water. Why do I have to stay home, and they get to swim and play, in all their awkwardness and heaviness. I know Tava feels the same, yet she casts me aside and grabs the others. I hear her call out to the car waiting for her outside "Just a second, I am grabbing my T-shirt and lavalava".

Insights from the swimmer

When we shared stories in our talanoa session, Tava sighed as she recalled an uncomfortable memory. "I can still see those girls giggling at me. They probably remember that one time I wore my bikini". I glance at her wondering how that happened as most of my swimmers have this attunement or this innate sense of how to be in each situation in Samoa. This was interesting that she can share about that one time she forgot. Tava smiles and shares her story. "I remember one time I forgot my coverup clothes. We were on the bus for the church youth picnic, and I realized I was only wearing my bikini and sundress, yet I didn't have a big T-shirt and lavalava to wear over it. I don't really know what I was thinking as I KNOW what I am supposed to wear when I am with the church group. I felt really stupid in my swimming suit. I always take a change of clothes. Although I usually wear my training two piece, I won't take off my oversized T-shirt and lavalava. I don't mind swimming with all the clothes on- I mean, we don't really swim. It's just social- bobbing around in the water, playing with my friends. It's fun. Anytime we play or in the water, we keep covered up." She pauses. It is quite a long pause and I wait for her to continue. "I mean, I wear my bathing suit for training every day at the pool or open-water training, but I guess I don't want to dress like that when I'm with my church friends. It just isn't right. I can't really explain it."

Findings and Discussion

Balancing code and culture

This vignette represents the swimmer's insights that they constantly balance the code and the culture. They are aware of the unspoken demands of modesty at the pool, at the beach, for casual recreation and for competition. Swimmers also had to negotiate the level of exposure with their parents as they moved higher in the competitive swimming pathway. A national swimmer who was raised in Samoa reflected on this issue:

> It wasn't always easy. We could wear our training and racing suits comfortably at the pool, but we would have our lavalava on hand in case teachers, family members or administrators walked on deck. We knew when we had to cover up" (A. Schuster, personal communication, 15 October 2021)

The process of becoming a swimmer involved analysing and removing multiple layers within their own selves and their external world. Unlike Hooper (1988) and Schoeffel (1978) findings on the covering protocols for village Samoan girls, becoming a swimmer, for Samoa, and in Samoa, required removing layers of clothing and embracing western codes. The higher they went with swimming on national and international platforms, the more they looked like a swimmer and the more confident they became. A swimmer participant's admission was honest and insightful:

> I like the way my body feels. I am stronger and faster in the water. But I see my body is changing and I like it. I know it is a bit of a *fia aulelei* (want to be pretty/beautiful) concept, but it makes me feel good about myself. (Samuelu Va'alele)

With this confidence, the swimmers have more pride in representing their country, culture and heritage in the outside world. A swimmer, Ioana Uila, reflects that "to represent Samoa on the international stage is truly humbling".

They were aware that they dropped the cultural protocols of covering up, liaising between boy and girl and the layers of cultural interactions. However, their confidence allowed them to represent Samoa in the Western context, allowing space for the sport to grow in. No longer was swimming treated as a recreational pastime, a time-waster, or a child's pursuit. No longer was the awkwardness of body exposure and wrapping of towels highlighting the ill-fitting relationship between codified swimming and the Samoan. The Samoan swimmer accepted the code, the conditions, and the constraints of the suit. The acceptance allowed for the swimmer to showcase that "they are Samoan, and they are swimmers" (Papa Vau). No longer was there teasing the others for looking Western but now they were fitting in the Western world and holding their own. All the while maintaining an air of modesty when they are in a non-code context.

This next piece of creative non-fiction, *The Story of Fa'asinomaga* represents the voices of the swimmers who stayed committed to this new sport during primary and secondary school in Samoa. It is a period of time when the constraints of being seen, being different, being an individual and being part of a community are in competition within one another. The talanoa with swimmers centred around identifying as a swimmer even when the pressures to represent the school and family in familiar sports such as rugby, netball and athletics were presented.

The Story of *Fa'asinomaga*: I am a Swimmer

"Fa'asinomaga play for our school rugby team. Trial are tomorrow, says the teacher. Fa'asinomaga doesn't look up from his year 7 homework and merely shrugs his shoulders.

"No thanks, I swim."

"Fa'asinomaga, the college is running rugby training this week. Try out", cajoles his teacher. Fa'asinomaga doesn't look up from the pile of year 8 homework on the kitchen table and merely shrugs his shoulders. "Don't you want play?" asks his friend.

"No thanks, I swim."

"Fa'asinomaga play for our year 9 rugby team. Trials are tomorrow", exclaims his teacher. With a shrug, he murmurs,

"No thanks, I swim."

"Fa'asinomaga play for the year 10 rugby team, practice is today", presses his teacher." Tilting his head to one side, he said,

"No thanks, I swim."

"Fa'asinomaga, all the year 12 boys are asking for you to join rugby this year, protests the teacher. Raising his head, he spoke to his teacher

"No thanks, I swim"

A new teacher spies Fa'asinomaga poring over his year 13 science book. The teacher beelines straight towards him, eager to build the school's senior line-up and seeing perfect fullback material. "Hi, rugby trials are….." Another teacher appeared, shaking his head, interrupting the conversation. Looking at Fa'asinomaga with a resigned smile. "Don't bother asking, Fa'asinomaga is a swimmer". Fa'asinomaga stood up, and looked down at the teachers with a broad smile saying,

"Yes, I am"

Findings and Discussion

Fa'asinomaga is the Samoan word for identity. Throughout the findings, identity to be seen as a swimmer was valued within the talanoa sessions. While Samoans identify with family, lineage, name, village, ancestry, the strength of responses from the swimmers all claimed that being identified as a swimmer kept them in swimming.

Being seen as a swimmer

Findings indicated that swimmers often had to choose one sport to participate in by high school and reasons for choosing swimming resonated with overseas findings such as social support, enjoyment of the sport, and easily accessed. However, choosing swimming over more popular sports such as rugby provided interesting results. An unusual response of the pleasure of being seen as a swimmer was prolific in the data. Being seen is an important element of the Samoan culture; however, the swimmers embraced that being seen as someone different was a driving element to remain in swimming. This was a contrasting finding to those who dropped out of the sport, like Hide from the Story of Hide and Seek.

Ioana Uila recalled how she was pulled between netball and swimming throughout high school. "I am known as the swimmer, but the netball coach always pulled me into the team. As much as I enjoyed the game, I would always put swimming first. I love the independence of the sport" (Ioana Uila). A parent participant explained the pressure her son would get from school:

> My son was asked a lot to come and play rugby. Actually, he was asked a lot, and he was teased for going to swimming. He was teased by his father's family. He was teased by people at school because the teachers kept asking him to play rugby, and he kept saying 'no' because he is a swimmer. Other teachers will say in Samoan "don't bother him, he's a swimmer he's not a rugby player. (Roseta Tavita)

Swimmers explained why they enjoyed swimming over other sports they had played. "Personally, "I like pushing myself. I really like the sport because it pushes my limits. I like the feeling of being tired and knowing I've done all I can, in a training set" (Pani Pose). Kilisi Maalili further explained that there is a level of accountability when you train as you cannot hide in the numbers like you can in a team sport.

A seasoned competitive swimmer who also is now based in New Zealand shared similar experiences with the type of athletes swimming attracted. She experienced that the higher she moved within the swim development pathway, the whiter it became. "There aren't many brownies at the top. It isn't the easiest place to be, but I like it. I like knowing I represent Samoa and that I am recognized as a Samoan swimmer" (Ioana Uila). This did not prove to be a constraint for the swimmer, rather it

motivated them to stay in a sport that was atypical. Other swimmers resonated with similar input saying they liked how swimming made their bodies look, they liked being seen as a swimmer, something different and they believed swimming catered to their competitive needs too.

Becoming a swimmer

The findings also indicated that parents witnessed the child taking ownership of their sport as one parent reflected:

> There has to come a point where the parent isn't telling you to go anymore, where you've internalized the decision, it's just part of who you are. And I think that that that's a really strong force to keep people in the sport. (Kilifi Taleni)

Another parent, Taimane Va'alele, sees it through internalization. She said "although he has the competitions to keep him going, I see that it is all on him. He has internalized his desire to continue at the elite level" (Taimane Va'alele). Petelo Ataono calls it crossing over. "My son has crossed over. He may have been inspired by his older cousins in the sport, but now he has more ownership, and he is motivated to stay in it" (Petelo Ataono). In separate talanoa sessions, swimmers also spoke of this concept. One National swimmer explained it this way: "I think anything becomes internalized now I'm motivated to wake up and do it. No one has to tell me. I don't even need the coach growling at me later. I'm going to do it" (Kilisi Maalili).

Kilisi Maalili continued to share his swimming journey. His cousins and friends, although think it is interesting that he swims, ask him "why for?", a colloquial expression questioning why someone is doing something.

> My cousins ask, why for? Why do all that swimming and all that training? I can never articulate it. I don't know how to explain my interest in the sport. They just think it is too foreign and I don't seem to have the words to explain. Even now, as I am older, I still can't explain it. I guess it is just part of who I am. I am a swimmer. (Kilisi Maalili)

Seeing the opportunities

Those who remained with swimming recognized the amount of regional and international competition they had access to.

> There aren't many of us, so the pool of competition is small. We work hard and we had immediate opportunities to go to Oceania, Pacific Games, Commonwealth and Worlds. That is a massive motivation. But you still have to have the heart to train. Without that, you just couldn't be a swimmer, you know? (Pani Pose)

Swimmers were aware of the opportunities for travel, overseas competition, scholarship and training camps. While some swimmers preferred training over competition, all swimming participants spoke of the pursuit of making selected overseas competitions. They desired the competition as well as the recognition. All the parents and coaches spoke of these opportunities, aware of the burden that came with it.

> We love the fact that our children can have these amazing opportunities. The problem is that with this level of exposure, they have to deal with poor performance and negative feedback when they return home. It's a balancing act. But I think the opportunities are mind-blowing and only want my children to train harder for the next one. (Kilifi Taleni)

Another swimmer offered further insight as he believes that a swimmer needs both as "the heart for swimming needs to be there, but so do the opportunities" (Pani Pose).

Being seen as different

The Samoan culture is strengthened through the concepts of oneness, sameness and collectivism. Collective thought, collective purpose, and collective processes are the heartbeat of the *fa'aSamoa*. When participants spoke of their passion of swimming, they also spoke of their claim to be something different, to be "that other one" who swims. Moreover, the one who doesn't play rugby. As the child grew in their identity as a swimmer, so too the parent transformed in accepting the sport. This is reflected Bush et al. (2005) who explain that there are new opportunities for individualism when people model upon Western perspectives. However, with a lean towards embracing Western perspectives, individualism is more available for the contemporary Samoan (Bush et al., 2005; Pala'amo, 2017).

Summary

This chapter enveloped the journey of a young person becoming a swimmer. The transition from visible discomfort to wanting to be visibly seen as a swimmer was profound. The layers of protection the culture provided were peeled away the more the young person identified as a swimmer. This transformation was present in all the talanoa with the swimmers and parents. An almost palpable evolution of a swimmer was revealed in the acceptance of their sport, their bodies, their abilities and their self-image as they progressed as a competitive swimmer, resisting, accepting and ultimately embracing the code and not the culture.

Recovery Set: A Summary of Chapters 5 – 9

Let me take a moment to recap what the research has unearthed. To answer the research question of what enables and constrains competitive swimming participation in Samoa, Chapter 5 found that Samoa's natural environment offers recreational activities for children and youth when they have time away from school, family and village commitments. The water sources such as the rivers, tidal pools and the sea are functional spaces to assist with everyday life such as collecting resources along the shoreline, washing, fishing and canoeing. Built facilities, such as swimming pools, were only part of the tourist hotel scene and not a public site until the early 2000s. In 2007, the first government aquatic centre which houses indoor and outdoor 50 m pools, a dive well and children's pool was built to secure hosting rights of the Pacific Games. The *fa'aSamoa* has challenged the structure and function of the swimming pools but also proved to be a turning point in developing formal swimming programmes.

In Chapter 6, the findings illustrated that the element of fear was a driving force for parents to enrol their children in formal swimming programmes. Those parents who had privilege with access, travel, and Western exposure were exposed to fear-producing experiences with learning how to swim. The findings showed that connection with land overpowers the connection with the sea emphasizing an unamicable or hesitant relationship with water. However, the fear was not paralyzing nor overdramatized; rather, the fear was coupled with self-reflective humour when the participants challenged their own belief systems and embraced their own agency to effect change for their children's swimming experiences. The chapter ends with the findings lending insight into how a school in Samoa initiated a school swim programme. It revealed that adults learning to teach swimming were challenged with discomfort in an unfamiliar environment and felt like an imposter teaching something they had no skill, knowledge or competence in though managed to succeed in their role. Their newfound sense of agency within the swimming schools challenged their compatriots to do the same, embrace the discomfort, as "it is only water" and shouldn't be feared.

Chapter 7 unpacked the rural and urban-based swimmer constraints and enablers. While the rural-based swimmer had a myriad of challenges due to the traditional constructs of the *fa'aSamoa*, the swimmer played within the margins for immediate personal benefit from the sport with no indication of committing to the sport. Swimming was used as an escape from responsibilities which reconfirmed the parent perspective that swimming is nothing more than a time-waster. The urban swimmer, who attempted to expertly juggle swimming, school and home responsibilities was competing with the limitations of time and the constraints of cultural expectations. The urban swimmer continued to conclude that while swimming was part of the daily routine, it could easily be rescinded if

expectations were not met. Additionally, parents lacked the knowledge, language and overall interest in the sport rendering it more difficult for the swimmer to feel supported in the sport.

Chapter 8 highlighted the tensions that exist between the swimmers, the code, the parents and the coaches. The research found that the parents had a non-negotiable approach to their child swimming, which was a protective measure to ensure safety, healthy and positive peer relationships. This protective element caused a ripple of constraints including muting the voice of the swimmer who desired to play other sports or to quit swimming altogether. However, the cultural element of usita'i appeared as the swimmers opted to remain quiet as a sign of respect for their parents resulting in dissatisfaction for all, the parents, the child and the coach.

Chapter 9 addressed the themes of swimmer agency through resistance, negotiation and acceptance of becoming a competition swimmer. Exposure to regional and international competitions, identifying as a swimmer both outside of Samoa and within the community and embracing their difference, their nakedness and the code were pronounced in their journeys. Initially, they sought to blend in with the others but through their exposures and experiences, they sought to be identified as the one who is different. The one who swims.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

"How are we ever going to build up swimming?" asks a seasoned coach and researcher. Her colleague, with as many years in sport development in Samoa, blatantly replies, "We are not and I'm serious."

(Telesia Valu)

The aforementioned quote was directly lifted from one of my *talanoa* sessions. When I heard this, it struck a chord within me. My shoulders slumped, I sunk a bit lower in my chair and my eyes averted from my participant as I wanted to shield my dejected spirit from her. It was reminiscent of one of my first talanoa sessions when my data collection started. A parent effectually said, "Suzie, you can definitely build a swimmer, but I don't think you can build swimming in Samoa" (Papa Vau).

If I had stopped there, I would have cheated myself and this field of study on the rich findings that came from this research. While there are constraints, tensions, challenges and cultural pressures, the opportunities to develop swimming are more defined, manageable and sustainable due to this very research.

To say that there are three overarching factors influencing the development of swimming would be a gross injustice and misrepresent the data, the participants and the phenomenon itself. It is not only the larger waves and winds that impact the course of sport development and athlete identity, for even the subtlest of breezes can push a canoe off course and change the direction and the destination of a journey.

Training is similar. Training using specific modalities can change the movement, pace and rhythm of a swimmer's stroke thus influencing the outcomes of their performance. The slightest adjustment and detailed focus on these can have the biggest impact. In essence, my comparison is only used to assist the reader to understand that the phenomenon of swim participation have altered course; it has been nudged from Western pursuits; it has been cajoled by Western-influenced people living regionally and locally; it has been introduced to those who had overseas experiences; it has been acknowledged, though from within the industry only, that it is an accepted competitive sport. However, the slightest currents and gentle breezes have pushed the development of this sport not off-course, per se, but on a different course, carrying cultural nuances, influences of architecture and behaviour and belief systems, historical legacies of fear and an assumption that the Western ways of swimming are superior. My challenge is that there is a misstep, a falter, a stumble between the chapter of "water is freedom" and "water is fear". Those who have embraced competitive swimming come from a legacy of fear creating a personal testimony of why their children. Those who have had a Samoan upbringing, on the other hand, have had little to no exposure to Western constructs of formal

swimming, have had limited access to the facilities and programmes, and do not have the same aim to "get their children swimming". The fanfare around this "promotion" lacks relevance, value and importance. Swimming is a *tafao,* a time-waster, a child's play activity that does not have value, be it commercial, cultural, economic or familial. The families who come from this perspective and who have stepped into the development pathway, have only done so briefly, experiencing the lack of return and thus ending their journey or setting their sails towards other pursuits. Coaches eagerly stake a claim that the immersion and inclusion of their local swimmers in international events, rubbing elbows with tourists and claiming local headlines in competitions is "making it". But I question if that is even a notable accomplishment from the perspective of these swimmers and families. None continue to swim. Most have taken up rugby or have discarded their athletic pursuits altogether focusing on studies, family or starting families of their own. These alternative pursuits are not unusual, in the international context. All athletes exit their sports for relevant reasons.

The evidence reveals that those who access competitive swimming come from a place of privilege. Their legacies and histories are peppered with Western beliefs, exposures and experiences. These are the families who have built their homes around each other and have limited their engagement with *fa'aSamoa*. As one parent expressed:

> The millennials coming through our society here today can also be considered elite because they are educated, their priorities are not necessarily in the culture and the priorities are, to build a home around their families and I see it all the time. (Roseta Tavita)

The same cannot be said for those who do not see competitive swimming as a valued pursuit. The families who have not adopted swimming into their daily lives continue with the traditional perspective that it is the village that must be built around the family.

Although not binary, the fact that there remain "two Samoas" directly impacts participation in this minor, non-remittance, self-fuelled sport. One parent aptly reflected on this,

> There are two Samoas. East to Letogo, west to Vaitele and south to Malololelei. The upper or working class is in the confines of the Apia urban area. Those who continue to evolve as competitive, elite swimmers are found in the urban area. (Iosua Tasi)

The subtle influences of architecture, what is seen as greater and lesser, the concepts of dress codes, the tensions within both the site of the swimming pool and the beaches have all pushed the linear, Western development of swimming a bit off course. This is not to say it is 'off course' in a wrong way. The map needs to consider all these aspects and incorporate them into the development pathway. The inherent socio-cultural elements cannot be pushed aside but rather considered, understood and accepted.

Further considerations

Looking at the data and how it is presented in this thesis exhibits some interesting findings. There are overarching elements that were consistently discussed and shared by all the participants which create new lanes for thought, questions and research. The following highlight three distinct areas that can be further researched: the Western vs traditional Samoan parent; the changing urban landscape and intersections between Western infrastructure and culture; and the element of rootedness within the proverbial framework.

The voice of the parent, Western and Samoan views

Samoa is a collectivist society that struggles with individual, independent meaning making, especially with new codified Western sports such as swimming. As found, many participants in this data set did not realize that swimming is a sport to pursue. They viewed it only as a life skill to attain and then move on. Those involved expressed clearly that they desire their child to be different, to be more than the norm of rugby and netball. They desired to see their child excel in that difference – being seen as a swimmer. The elite swimmers fell into a perceived category of "that sport is for them and not for us". Reaching the "this is not for us" population will need to take a strategic approach that involves acceptance, a shift in values, a shift in belief system, an openness for child-parent dialogue and long-term investment commitment.

The voice of the swimmer or the fish was present in all the findings. However, the voice was not always in harmony with the parents' voice or the cultural voice. Another point of tension was the voices between parent and the extended family or older generations. The findings concluded that parents played a protective role for their children which enabled them to participate in swimming. The parents' voices were one, supportive, in tandem, yoked evenly together. Their voices were apparent in this research as "without the parent, there would be no swimmers" as the parents unanimously agreed within the talanoa sessions. The parents' voice had to remain louder, stronger, and exert more confidence to protect their swimmer to remain in swimming and to repel the 'nay-sayers', the cultural expectations and the doubters into the background. Parents who were grounded both in *fa'aSamoa* and Western ideals were able to negotiate and mediate a space for their child to continue to participate in swimming.

However, parents played a conflicting role when the child did not hold up their end of the expected agreement (grades, school, chores, church). Parents entered new territory of dialogue and conversation with child to construct and negotiate swimming involvement and expectations. Parents had to be prepared and open to this. Parents who were sold on the idea that swimming was important for their child suspended negotiations with the child to control and protect child from truant behaviour.

Western exposure to competitive swimming, the value of swimming as a life skill and accepting a new, codified individual sport were key factors in those who have continued the journey. This remains problematic as a sport cannot base its development foundation purely on parents/families having Western experiences. Many Samoans remain rurally based with little to no exposure to competitive swimming opportunities. As such, the sport needs to be within the community, and not on the urban periphery. Fear needs to be usurped as the motivating factor to participate and the taboo relationship with the water needs to be addressed. There needs to be a shift of perspective and experiences so new members have a positive relationship with the sport versus a negative history with water/swimming.

The findings also showed that parents who compared swimming to remittance-type sports struggled with supporting the sport. It remains problematic for those who seek sport for economic return. Those families who remained involved accepted that they did not seek a tangible economic return on the investment they made into swimming and their swimmer. They saw that the sport allowed for growth, maturation, self-regulation, responsibility and independence in their child. They valued these factors more than a capital return. Again, the families come from a place of privilege and Western exposure leaving a gap between those who access because they can and see valuable gains versus those who cannot access and have no interest in pursuing as there are no tangible gains.

Culture and Urban development

The architectural elements of superior and inferior not only reflect the challenges within swimming spaces, but these cultural concepts have also influenced the way these swimming spaces are used and viewed. In addition to the cultural nuances influencing new swimming spaces, dress code, exposure, visibility and modesty, and urban development have also adversely impacted swimming engagement. Rapid urban development has resulted in the side effect of not having a strong relationship with the water. As one parent aptly reflected, “I really don’t know when everything changed because the ocean used to be part of everyone’s lives” (Iosua Tasi). This supports the overall perspective that ‘We are no longer as attached to the sea’. This rapid development also permeated the findings regarding the swimmer’s sights on offshore opportunities for education, training and work. Most competitive swimmers leaving Samoa’s shores directly stunted the growth of the sport, club development and human resources specific to swimming.

Affiliated with space and place of swimming were the negotiations with the code of swimming within the swimming spaces in and outside of Samoa. Those participating in swimming had to accept the code of the swimming suit, the cost of the sport and the time demands it put upon the family. The more confident a swimmer became with themselves in the space of swimming, the less concern the swimmer had regarding layers, covering up and cultural protocols. The tensions of being seen, in village spaces, pool spaces and competition spaces, have allowed the code of swimming to make distinguished impressions upon those that have been part of this sport. Negotiations within traditional

villages allow youth to participate in swimming on the foreshore, including both girls and boys. Swimmers have rectified their mindset regarding the competition gear so long as it is performance based. They now can negotiate these spaces freely, moving in and out of home, pool, sea and village with fluidity. Covering up when the situation demands and revealing oneself when the code is prioritized. Simultaneously, as the swimmer transformed in accordance with the code, parents rallied more so with pride and continued financing their child to stay in the sport. Parents shared their testimonies of the wonderment of how their child swims, competes and how that has translated into desired characteristics of confidence, obedience, discipline, and maturity.

Perspectives with the Talanoa ile i'a

As foreshadowed in Chapter 6 Understanding Fear and Finding Agency, I propose an additional perspective to the conceptual methodological framework based on the stories of *See you Back at the Shore* and *Over My Head*. The late Tupua Tamasese eloquently housed the multiperspectival phenomenon in a three-tiered proverb, identifying that each perspective must be considered to understand a problem in Samoa. As previously explained in Chapter 5, the proverb has been expanded by Faleolo (2013) who added the voice of the fish, the subject of the query, to this framework. I had no intention to add to a comprehensive and seemingly complete proverbial framework. However, a perspective that was a strong voice within the data came from those who stood on the shoreline.

The perspective from the shoreline was held by the parents. From the shoreline, where the land meets the sea, the parents embody *maua'a*. *Maua'a is* a concept of staunchness, strength and rootedness. *Maua'a* is derived from *Mau* which means 'many' and *a'a* which translates as 'roots'. Together the many roots of the tree make it strong, and it can't be moved. In these stories, the *Maua'a*, the many roots, were the parents standing on the shoreline. It was both the parent who supported or denied swimming opportunities for their child. Those at the shoreline were rooted firmly in their belief systems and they could not be swayed. Their perspective from the shoreline is close to the fish (the swimmer), but their lack of knowledge, skill and confidence prevented them from journeying closer, in the canoe, with the coach or in the water with their child. They are rooted in the land as their roots carry their own fears, experiences, beliefs, and values regarding swimming. Their roots reach deep into the soil, holding onto the belief that opportunities lie in the security of the land rather than the sea. The *maua'a* is strong and immovable, likened to the parents' voices in the research.

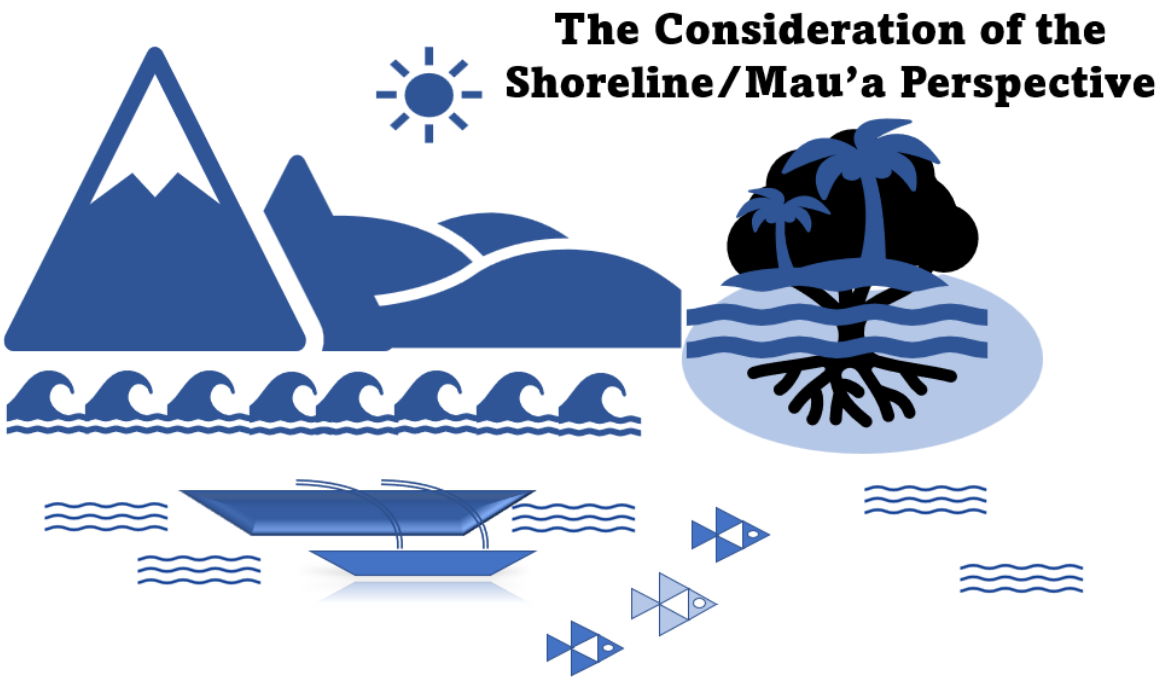

Figure 6 Consideration of the Shoreline/Mau'a Perspective

Source: Schuster

The parents admitted that they will remain on the shoreline, calling out, in support or in fear, to the child that participates in this uncommon sport. A Samoan proverb '*e leai se niu e falala fua e falala lava ona o le matagi'* ('There is no coconut tree that sways by chance but is swayed by the wind') speaks of being influenced by an 'external force'. In this research, parents revealed that there were factors that swayed them to support their children in their swimming pursuit. Being different, being recognized and bringing honour to the family propelled parents to support their children in this sport. Intentional forces such as the aquatic centre access, the drowning incidences, and the need to keep their child away from trouble all influenced swimmers to remain in competitive swimming. The embracement of Western ways such as recognizing a swimmers' growth, identity and agency as a swimmer also encouraged the parents to keep their children in swimming. Swimmers, too, voiced their desire to make their parents proud, as they competently straddled two competing cultures and allowed their individual identity to grow in a collectivist society. All of these factors have shaped what swimming is today and how swimmers have emerged from a predominantly rugby-dominant culture.

But just as a coconut tree sways towards the ocean because of the wind, the wind changes course, which causes the tree to lean towards the land. The wind shifts, as does the parents' support of their child continuing in swimming due to financial pressures, peer pressure within the family, fear of being

different, school priorities and cultural obligations. When the parents' perspective towards the engagement with swimming shifts, the swimmer no longer had an advocate. Regardless, when the wind blows offshore, the parent can sway towards the sea, albeit momentarily, only seeking tentative growth in the shallow waters. It is critical to recognize that the parents' roots are deep in the land. Thus, the perspective from the shoreline due to *maua'a*, a concept of staunchness, strength and rootedness, needs to be included for future sports development research in Samoa.

In further reflection, there is also the consideration of urban development, infrastructure and Western constructs, that are now rooted in the spaces and places of Samoa. The aquatic centre begs for further investigation to acknowledge that the facility is rooted in the land, surrounded by the cultural implications. Is it appropriate for Western structures to be included in a multiperspectival proverb research framework? That is a question that needs further exploration however must be acknowledged that Samoa's landscape has moved beyond the sea, the rivers, the trees and the mountains and has developed to include Western facilities and buildings.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

Limitations to this study can provide avenues for further research in this field. Evidently, the participants chosen for this study all have strong membership and history with competitive swimming in Samoa. They represent only one smaller yet insightful perspective on the sport. Researching further into other communities within Samoa to understand their views, values and understanding of the sport is needed. However, in the selection and scope of the participants, these key research findings offer possible considerations for many others in similar situations.

Another limitation is that participants for this project were recruited from within the context of Samoa and excluded diasporic Samoans in places like Aotearoa New Zealand. Although some participants had experiences previously or currently living in Samoa, the research question was centred within the context of Samoa, not necessarily Samoans who live outside of Samoa. The focus of the research was for Samoans living in Samoa. Future studies on the diasporic Samoan swimmer would offer further insights to the challenges of participating in competitive swimming.

I used a Samoan proverbial framework, which is hinged on the cultural and traditional elements of the *fa'aSamoa*. The findings are specific to Samoa, but future research could be extended to understanding the socio-cultural influences of sport participation within the region and other indigenous communities.

Finally, research on the swimming facility would assist in further policy development, curriculum development and swim teacher development. The site of the pool plays a critical role in the

development of the sport thus needs further investigation at the micro level to understand the political, cultural and structural agencies impacting the development of swimming.

Chapter 11: Critical Reflections

It's only when the tide goes out that you learn who's been swimming naked.

Warren Buffett

This final chapter was the most difficult chapter to write yet the most rewarding. As discussed in detail within Chapter 4 in the Methodology, I could not hedge around my positionality within this thesis. I am admittedly intertwined with the research question, the participants, the place and the culture. So, during my third year, I dived into reflexive writing and submitted the article to Qualitative Inquiry (QI). What followed was a strong, comprehensive and supportive review and endorsement from the Editor of Qualitative Inquiry, for which I am forever grateful. My article, *Embracing vulnerability: The critical practice of reflexivity as a non-Pacific researcher using indigenous methodologies* was accepted and published in Qualitative Inquiry.

The writing process is difficult even on the best of days but sending my writing for others to read is equivalent to me prancing around naked in broad daylight. The process has not become easier though I am learning how to step into these spaces with a bit more boldness. I concluded that if my work can contribute to the autoethnographic field, especially within the Pacific region, then I need to embrace the discomfort and share my lessons learned.

The research reported in this chapter has been presented at the following conferences:

Suzie Schuster (*University of Waikato*) Embracing vulnerability: The critical practice of reflexivity as a non-Pacific researcher using indigenous methodologies, The International Society of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise (QRSE) International Conference (QRSE) July 26th- 28th hosted by the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Durham University, UK.

Article B:

Schuster, S. (2022). Embracing Vulnerability: The Critical Practice of Reflexivity as a Non-Pacific Researcher Using Indigenous Methodologies. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10778004221116099.

Article B: Embracing vulnerability: The critical practice of reflexivity as a non-Pacific researcher using indigenous methodologies[2]

Abstract

This paper focuses on the challenges I have encountered during my Ph.D. journey regarding positionality and the complexities of being an insider-outsider researcher. I am originally from the global North, living in the global South and conducting research with communities in Samoa, my home of 30 years, though geographically located in New Zealand due to border closures. This autoethnographic reflection elaborates the complexities of being both an insider and outsider engaging in research focused on competitive swimming in Samoa, using Pacific methodology of *talanoa*. The article aims to highlight my competing identities and how I negotiated these within the data collection process. It concludes that it is necessary for non-Pasifika researchers to be cautious if using indigenous methods as there are ever-changing dynamics within cross-cultural fieldwork that requires adopting an intentional vulnerability within the research space.

Pacific Methodology Demands Reflexivity

Markham (2017) succinctly summarizes why reflexivity is critical for research. He declares "before we can know what we are looking at, we have to know where we're looking from" (Markham, 2017, para. 8). In this paper, I seek to explore the challenges as an American woman researching aspects of Samoan sport phenomena from a distance in New Zealand using Pacific methodologies, namely *talanoa* and *e-talanoa*. I focus on the processes of reflexivity and self-awareness as critical elements in conducting Pasifika research. While much research has been aimed at how to use Pacific methods by both Pacific and non-Pacific researchers, this article does not intend to scrutinize the chosen indigenous methodology of *talanoa/e-talanoa,* but rather how the use of *talanoa* served as a catalyst for me to locate myself within the research.

Talanoa and E-Talanoa: the catalysts to understanding self

"Of course, I will use *talanoa*", I gamely respond to my colleagues back home in Samoa. I hadn't anticipated the uncomfortable yet necessary journey I would encounter with that simple response regarding this very complex research method (S. Schuster, self-reflexive field notes, 2022)

Talanoa is loosely defined as talking about nothing (Vaioleti, 2006 in Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014). It is an oratory tradition practiced in many Pacific Island countries such as Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Niue, Hawai'i, the Cook Islands and Tonga (Prescott, 2008). Vaioleti (2006) states

---

[T]Text is consistent with journal guidelines: APA 6 reference style and US spelling.

that *talanoa* can be referred to as a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether formal or informal (p. 26). While the *talanoa* scholarly concept stemmed from a Tongan perspective, Vaioleti (2006) signals that *talanoa* in Samoa is a "practice of multi-level and multi-layered critical discussions and free conversations" (p. 24). The *talanoa* refers to a conversation (Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014), or dialogue (Halapua, 2003), characterized by empathy (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014), mutual respect/deference (Vaai, 2014) and valuing of the relational space (Anae, 2010; Anae, 2016). Gordon, Sauni, Tuagalu, & Hodis's (2010) use of *talanoa* revealed that "they feel this process is aligned with all the other safe processes of engaging in Pacific discussions and consultations and leads to their having a more meaningful role in the research process" (Gordon et al., 2010, p. 3). Fa'avae, Jones and Manu'atu (2016) lend insight for novice researchers using *talanoa* concepts. Two critical elements were highlighted expanding on the need to develop cultural competency and be aware that the open engagement of *talanoa* brings ethical complications within the methodology (Fa'avae et al., 2016). Stewart-Withers, Sewabu and Richardson (2017) addressed the position and use of *talanoa* to conduct relevant, ethically sound, and respectful research in the field of cross-cultural and cultural sport management. Their findings encourage novice researchers "to not shy away from looking to learn about and use approaches such as *talanoa*" and to ensure they are collaborating with local researchers who are fluent in the cultural protocols (Stewart-Withers et al., 2017, p. 61). While Stewart-Withers et al. (2017) reinforced the prudent approach in using *talanoa* as a decolonization tool, I am acutely aware that the process is not simple nor straightforward as a prescriptive process. I argue that the implication of using indigenous methodology within a Pacific context as a non-Pacific researcher demands analyzing oneself both recursively and critically in relation to the context and process of inquiry.

Recently, the research landscape has been filled with negotiations due to the ever-increasing challenges of global mobility and diaspora. New considerations for virtual data collection are now part of a researcher's toolkit, unlike traditional ethnographic studies of living in the research community. This has forced scholars and researchers to engage in digitized methods and electronic-based research as a primary methods of data collection (Dhalin, 2021). However, Pasifika methodology inherently centers on people, relationships, shared space, and physical presence (Vaioleti, 2006; Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Faleolo, 2021). To consider using this relational-based Pasifika methodology in a virtual space is troubling, especially for a non-Pasifika researcher.

Fortunately, in recent scholarship, Faleolo (2021) articulates the challenges of conducting *talanoa* via a virtual platform but insists that it is an acceptable format due to the constant travelling challenges posed by the pandemic. Her research also claims that the *vā* (spaces) developed between the researcher and the participant constitutes a place where trusting and safe relationships exist. Iosefo (2020) further elaborates that this *vā* (spaces) is where "identity is constructed and reconstructed" (Iosefo, 2020, p. 45). As I find myself located outside of Samoa, using a methodology that is best

undertaken within the local, natural space in Samoa, I am aware that my location within the *talanoa* process warrants the need for deep self-reflection to ensure privilege of positionality does not compromise the integrity of the interactions or *vā* (space between people). At times, positionality can be clumsy but demands deep introspection when undertaking cross-cultural research. Faleolo (2021) claims that social-cultural spaces are not bound by space or time and can be nurtured and maintained using *talanoa* and now *e-talanoa* (Faleolo, 2021, p. 126-127). While Faleolo (2021) eloquently discusses her position within the Pacific Islander community and her deep understanding of *talanoa* and *vā*, I hesitated to embrace this *e-talanoa* with the same confidence due to my dualistic role as an insider and an outsider with the added disadvantage of being geographically placed outside of Samoa. I needed to unearth my location and identity within this research before critically self-reflecting on my recent experiences using *e-talanoa* methods.

The problem with positionality

I must be honest. I was only going to give a cursory glance to my self-reflexive journals and move through the process of writing with clandestine maneuvers, expertly dodging the mirror so I wouldn't have to look at my reflection, my memories, and my vulnerabilities. However, as my research unfolded, I had a startling realization that my positionality within the methodology can offer a research perspective for those who delicately sit on the margins as well as in the middle of research in their adopted country of citizenship (S. Schuster, self-reflexive field notes, 2021)

While undertaking my Ph.D., there were unexpected discoveries within the journey that have revealed a deeper understanding of self, my participants, and my research topic. Framing my research with an interpretive Pasifika paradigm, I felt challenged locating myself within the study, not because I sit on the margins of the research, but because I sit in the center of the research question. Insider-outsider positionality can become blurred as a researcher occupying both cannot retreat into a distanced role (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009) as the researcher must acknowledge that they are part of the research and part of the space where the study is located. My research focuses on unravelling the socio-cultural and sociohistorical elements that challenge the development of competitive swimming in Samoa. I have never had the time to critically reflect on all the factors that push and pull, not only on the sport but all the elements that push and pull upon my various roles in Samoa and how my own position needs to be scrutinized in relation to my research practices. I place myself as an American by birth, a Samoan by marriage, a researcher by requirement, a National Swim Coach by passion, a tertiary lecturer by design, a mother by blessing and a wife of a Samoan Matai. All these identities present challenges in understanding my position and my positions alongside my participants. Savvides, Al-Youssef, Colin & Garrido (2014) attests that identity and a sense of belonging "emerge from the fluent engagement between researchers and participants" (p. 413). However, I claim that my extant identity and sense of belonging existed well before I moved into professional research spaces.

This paper is more of a cautionary tale as much as it is a confessional tale from the perspective of where I sit within the research, the context and location. My identity indicates that I have lived in Samoa for close to 30 years. I am part of this community. I sit there, yet I don't sit there. Choosing to use *talanoa* and *e-talanoa* (Faleolo, R. 2021) from a location outside of Samoa while working in a tense academic environment fraught with colliding ideologies such as decolonization, ownership, agency, empowerment, and authority have me gingerly stepping through an ethical minefield. It is a caution for future non-Pacific researchers who may be considering engaging in Pacific research as much as it is a warning to myself. Research within the Pacific is not straightforward as there is a complexity even for someone who has lived there for 30 years. I have encountered innumerable challenges especially as both a sport practitioner and researcher in Samoa. Presently, in the academic field, there is a pushback on researchers who have been "nourished by European myths, histories and contemporary representations" (Connell, 2003, p. 554). I have unearthed this in my previous publication where outsiders write about indigenous participants with either a romanticized Western view or a homogeneous, sanitized view (Schuster, 2021). Neither are correct nor do any favors for Pacific-based research. However, in the same vein, it is challenging to use indigenous methodologies, which require consciously embracing reflexive practices and being intentional throughout the process.

Methodology

Why do I call myself a non-Pasifika researcher? Those outside of Samoa, who do not know me, only see my skin color, hear my accent, and feel my presence. Those on the inside, who know me, see me otherwise. My position along the continuum changes as frequently as the Pacific currents. I do not feel the need to insert myself into space reserved for indigenous Samoans. Instead, I must consciously embrace vulnerability and humility to enter this Pasifika space (S. Schuster, self-reflexive field notes, 2021).

I will draw on my past and present experiences using reflexivity to reveal self-awareness of my identity and the acceptance to negotiate between my dominant roles of American and Samoan selves within my research. The method uses reflexive analysis drawing on journal entries, personal memoires, data sources and *talanoa* transcripts. The results are presented in personal stories, vignettes, and journal excerpts. I present memories that initially positioned me in Samoa and use self-reflexivity to analyze my position within present-day research. I attempt to capture my identity through stories leaning on Holman Jones (2016) ethnographic recommendation to allow story and theory to reciprocate the critical self-reflective process. Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) describe autoethnographic writing as a path for research and writing to describe and analyze one's own experiences to give way to a deeper understanding of a cultural experience, and this writing style embraces the researcher's emotions and subjective positioning. Black and O'Dea (2014) assert that "we cannot see or open up the personal/professional/social worlds we seek to understand or engage

with without research methods that allow for subjectivity, messiness, murkiness, emotions, complexity, expression, imagination and multiplicities" (p. 1). I resonate with Holman Jones (2007), who speaks to the intersections of personal narrative fused with socio-cultural exploration to create an autoethnographic account. Denzin (1997) coined these accounts as epiphanies, interactional moments and performance ethnographies which is now an accepted research method labeled as performative autoethnographic text (Holman Jones, 2007). "This autoethnographic text strives to be performative and evokes how life stories are implicated in the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they are told, questioned and struggled over" (Holman Jones, 2007, p. 1). Researchers build their argument to use autoethnography to critique practices, contribute to existing research, embrace vulnerability with a purpose and form relationships with audiences to create responses (Denzin, 2014, p. 20). Within the Pacific context, critical autoethnographic work has produced a platform for Pacific researchers to examine the *vā* which has strengthened their voices, too often unheard or marginalized (Fa'avae, 2018; Iosefo, 2016, 2020). Thus, this explorative space of autoethnography within an indigenous context has me drawing on Iosefo's (2016, 2020) groundbreaking autoethnographic contributions, especially she as a Samoan autoethnographic scholar. Her work adeptly places the *vā* (space between people) within the center of autoethnographic writing by magnifying that the "*vā* is ever present when identity is being constructed and deconstructed, maintaining that the "*vā* and identity is fluid" (Iosefo, 2020, p. 45). Honoring Pacific critical autoethnographic research(ers) is to acknowledge their ontology and epistemology. Also, it is to honor their rightful position within the *vā* layered with the necessary complexity of their lineage, background, and ancestors (Iosefo, 2016, p. 191). Therefore, I will use autoethnography to reveal my original location in Samoa, and how this personal narrative has helped me become a better researcher in present-day practices.

Closed Borders and Open Memories

The uniqueness of locating myself in this paper rests on the challenges of being geographically outside my research location, with an acute awareness of my duality of being both an insider and outsider to Samoa. Pasifika-led research on adopted homelands and identity (Seiuli, 2016, p. 53) explores the discomfort of this positionality. Migrating and living in another country while sustaining a relationship in the mother country is fixed with cultural negotiations such as identity, allegiance, shifting values and relationships (Seiuli, 2016). Specifically, Samoans maintaining their world view of cultural values of respect, *alofa* (love), *tautua* (service) and *fa'aaloalo* (respect) while living in a Western country is demanding. I witnessed my Samoan husband navigate the spaces of living in America for graduate studies while honoring homeland allegiance and family priorities. However, my husband readily returned to Samoa, shedding himself of the challenges of living outside his homeland. His reclamation of a single identity is where our differences lie. For almost thirty years of living in Samoa, I have never been able to disrobe my American garb, just as I have not removed myself from

my evolving identity in Samoa. Both homelands are part of who I am, creating an intense space of critical self-reflexivity as a researcher.

However, adding to the complex concept of identity, my husband agreed that I needed to undertake my Ph.D. in New Zealand, where I would have the academic support and peer networks for this journey. Although the pursuit of the Ph.D. pushed me off the center mark of actively coaching my squads, I committed to relocating to New Zealand with the anticipation of flying back and forth over the three years to continue coaching and engaging in my research fieldwork. The global pandemic brought new challenges, and I felt a palpable disconnect from my home in Samoa, including my team, colleagues, and husband. The unfortunate circumstances of closed borders prevented my return home for data collection. I was forced to approach my data collection and *talanoa* sessions using Zoom platforms, an interface that blanketed me in an emotional malaise. I viewed it as an obstacle with the sinking realization that New Zealand was initially a good idea, but I would now be physically divorced from my research environment, participants, and home.

Before I engaged in my data collection, I found myself sitting in a void, an atmosphere that did not provoke familiarity with the islands. Loss of self, location and identity repositioned within me. It was the first time I had felt adrift and longed to be anchored at home in Samoa again. However, in this stark, unfamiliar space, my memories have become heightened. My geographic distance from all that was familiar propelled me to deep dive into the memories, the feelings, the frustrations, the passions, and the swirl of emotions which pushed the stories to the forefront so I could write one of my stories.

A Memory of Competing Identities: Baskets, Braids and Rocks

Only now, almost 30 years of living in Samoa, have I received the gift of space, time, and self-reflection to understand that both my past and present are critical to understanding the very essence of my research question (S. Schuster, self-reflexive field notes, 2021).

I thought my journey to understanding myself began in Samoa in 1993, but in retrospect, my journey began with my childhood as a swimmer and young athlete in Michigan. During my formative years, I was a competitive swimmer. As years went on, I continued to swim and play other university sports and finally completed my formal tertiary education. The usual dictates of my upper-middle-class suburban upbringing typically offered a linear path towards acquiring a job, finding a spouse, marriage, and replication of suburban living. However, I never fancied the assumed, smoothed stone path. At age 23, I was accepted into the Peace Corps and moved to the South Pacific to work at the Samoa National hospital.

On arrival in Samoa in 1993, I was based in Sili Savaii. Never had this curiously rural village positioned inland along a deep flowing river, hosted Peace Corps Volunteers. Fifty-one groups had

gone before us, learning the language, immersing in the *fa'aSamoa*, sharing ideas, knowledge, stories, and lives that would forever impact host families, children, villages and schools and our own lives most of all. I remember how the rhythm and pace of our days seemed to be set by the movements of the river. The river was the central location within the village – a place where everything was done and where everything was spoken. It was a place for playing, fishing, washing, *tatala* (talking) and *faikala* (gossiping), support, encouragement, refreshment, and of course for water. It was the lifeline of the village. While memories of swimming and playing with the children in the river planted the initial seed of exploring swimming experiences in Samoa, my reflections reinforce the necessity of locating myself in this research.

Every day in the village, I was always dressed up wearing my host mother's *puletasi* (dress), boasting bold flowers and clashing bright colors. My host sister would tend my hair and weave it into a tight *fili* (braid). I would be escorted to the *Fale Komiti* (committee house), where our makeshift language school was held. At 23, I had travelled the world only to be chaperoned every minute of my day in the village. My independence was packed away, not needed in this way of life; my hair, like myself, fighting the constraints.

One day in *Aoga Gagana Samoa* (Samoan Language School), we were asked to present a cultural observation. Some demonstrated how to kill a pig, others showed how to grate a coconut. I remember how my closest friend sang a duet in both languages with her ageing host grandfather to the ukulele- the tinkling of "My Bonnie lies over the ocean". Even today, I have tears prickling behind my eyes, remembering the simple melody washing over us, the volunteers, and our host families, bringing an acute revelation that we had the chance to become part of this community with these families who openly accepted us into their home.

Truthfully, I was no Bonnie lying over the ocean. I was barely treading water as the life in Samoa as a young American seemed so ill-fitting. My braid was so tight to my skull, uncomfortable most times, likened to my daily discomfort of being immersed in a culture so unlike my own American culture. My hair would only stay in the weave momentarily until tendrils would unfurl and escape the bonds of the braid and hang haphazardly around my head. My host siblings would find my brush each day and attempt to put it into place, but it never stayed.

I remember more about that day in the village and our cultural presentations. Timoteo presented "10 ways to use a *ma'a* (rock)". He brought a basketful of rocks he had collected at the river and simply articulated his story. *"A rock can be used to kill a pig; a rock can be used for an umu (earth oven); a rock can be used for the foundation of the fale* (house)*; a rock is used to wash the laundry by the river."* He chimed on about the variety of uses of the Samoan *ma'a*. That memory washes over me with a sense of déjà vu. Was it possible that back in 1993, I was collecting rocks, pieces of knowledge, building relationships, embracing experiences that would create a path to this

dissertation? I know the *ma'a* are not mine. They belong in the islands, found within the rivers, the shoreline, the land, and the sea. Am I now confident enough to share these questions and ideas with my research cohorts? How is swimming seen in Samoa? What challenges exist in developing this sport? My questions tumble over like my basket of rocks spilling over and onto the ground. Perhaps sharing the questions, the concerns, and the passion propels me into embracing the Pacifika methodology.

Below, I will draw upon two of my experiences of *e-talanoa* interactions. The insights are explorative, and I bring together the concepts of recognizing my position, accepting myself within the process, and acknowledging that when using Pasifika *talanoa* methodology, a necessary vulnerability is critical to becoming a humbler and more responsive researcher.

Vignette 1: E-talanoa and the Distance Dissolved Between Us

She is in Sydney en route to Samoa

I am in Hamilton, in my university office

Methodology. This word is so sterile, sanitary, like it has been washed of all personality, layers, color, and life. It is a method to gather, collect, to get my data.

It seemed wrong. It put me in a starchy researcher mode likened to wearing a lab coat and everything affixed with it: perfunctory, calculated, methodical, starchy, white.

This is not me! Oh no! I realized I may have overstepped into this research maze. I am conversant, I am casual, I am emotive, and I thrive on relationships. How can a Zoom interview evoke the true essence of what I wished to explore?

But there is also my studious side. The side that insists that I follow protocol and establish the professional path to ensure the scheduled Zoom meeting happens without a glitch.

9:30am Panic sets in. Is my Zoom recording function working? What if it doesn't work?

9:35am, I am still slightly panicking as I rush around the faculty corridor looking for someone to help me.

9:40am My supervisor helps me tee up a fake meeting to ensure all is working- test run, trial the record button. It works, and I instantly reflect that I panicked unnecessarily. However, I don't think so. I have a part of me that respects people's time which presses me to panic. I know that time is valuable, a commodity, given freely in the islands. However, time is given with the understanding of respect for one another. I cannot ask for someone to Zoom with me, to carve out precious time, without me ensuring that I, as a researcher, can fluidly capture our conversation, so it flows, it's

allowed freedom, without the conversation being punctuated with technical interruptions. This is important. I understand the value and the respect that must be present in the conversation, so it goes unhindered.

The meeting isn't for another 2 ½ hours. I work. I read. I write. I wait. I wait and wait and wait and wait- I have not forgotten the essence of time but have forgotten the lack of timeliness within the culture.

11:50 I start the meeting

11:55 No one has joined me

11:59 Is she is coming onto Zoom soon?

12:01 Maybe she forgot

12:05 I will send a push notification- that isn't too pushy, is it?

12:20 I'm still the only one in the meeting. I resist the physical urge to check that I have sent the correct meeting ID number

12:22 Oh well. I can always reschedule. That is ok. Disappointed, but nothing that can't be remedied.

12:23 She has joined the meeting! She appears with little fanfare, adjusting her camera and her microphone. She appears with no rush, no distress but with a smile as wide as the ocean that separates us. A greeting as warm as the sun- "Hi Mate."

The meeting didn't start late- she was right on time- how easily I forgot the fluidity of time. This would have been expected and embraced naturally if the interview had been in Samoa. Meet up at noon can mean, see you at 12:23. That would have been the norm. Why did I think that our physical geographic locations of Australia and New Zealand and using a Zoom platform would change the concept of time- start time was noon or around noon- or sometime after? I allowed my new engagement of *talanoa* via Zoom to interfere with my peace of mind. It created unwanted anxiety, forcing me to believe that computer interventions would not allow our meeting to start and develop organically. I was so wrong. It was an incredible interaction.

I have known her since the mid-1990s, which is quite a long time. We have known each other as friends, colleagues, educators and have multiple relationships- as an employee, coach, boss, parent, and partner within the swimming fraternity. Our multi-layered relationships brought immense depth to our conversation. Starting with an open "*o a mai oe*?" ("how are you?"), we unwrapped each conversation regarding the family, the children, the travel, and the expectations of returning to Samoa after a self-imposed absence. We moved into questions that had threads of queries regarding

swimming. Her childhood experiences, her mother's opinions, her children's involvement, and her husband's influence on swimming.

The conversation moved naturally as an ebb and flow of the tide- flowing from one topic to another. But the conversation did not marinate in the method of the questions and answers. It was a conversation likened to soup simmering on the stove, with bubbles of conversation popping up here and there, with both of us savoring the aroma of the conversation between us. The conversation was also like a dance, movements and reflections historically, culturally, and contemporarily using words to fully understand that swimming is now a permanent part of our story. Just as our relationship to one another cannot be separated with boundaries or positioned along a chronological timeline, her experiences of swimming, family, children, Samoa, prayer, and love for one another and our children cannot be separated from her insights, proclamations, and encouragement of swimming in Samoa.

At one time, she has a side conversation with her brother, as she is staying in his home. This casualness reaffirms that the technology of Zoom and the physical distance from one another has no negative impact on our conversation. It is natural, unbound, and easy to continue the conversation. At another time, her cell phone rings. She pauses to take the call, not excusing herself from the *talanoa* session, the microphone, or the camera. She casually turns the phone to me and introduces her new granddaughter. My long-time friend adds another thread to her story- trusting me to share another part of her- a vulnerable part- so raw, to be so open to a difficult season of her young daughter having a baby. It was not in her plan nor the family's plan. But her acceptance and, moreover, her willingness to share this with me reconfirms why I am doing this research, this journey. It reconfirms with me why I can do this. This *talanoa* process allowed an entry into spaces, relationships, and stories regarding the research and, more importantly, the people.

All self-doubt dissipates. All thoughts of inadequacy are gone. I am her friend, as we have shared much throughout our lives. She can speak both candidly and critically of me as her children's coach. She can do that without condemnation, and I can hear that too. It will give so much essence to this research and to these stories. I really can't imagine using *talanoa* without understanding the importance of relationships, the value of social history with one another. The respect for the many roles, the currents of life, the challenges unseen, and the acceptance of one another. Not to change them but to commend them for the roles we have played out.

2:23 pm, It has been 2 hours, and we have only travelled through a portion of the topics I wanted to cover. There was more coffee to be had, more stirring of the soup pot, more simmering of topics I wanted to bubble up. The things of this world pulled at us- me another campus appointment, and she a doctor appointment for covid travel approval. Gone was our time to be together- to taste the conversation that piqued new ideas for me on this Ph.D. journey.

A Swell of Emotion When We Disconnected

It was intimate. Revelation after revelation like waves lapping upon the shore. Having known her for all my 27 years in Samoa was necessary. It would be impossible to reach this level of intimacy if I was an outsider. *Talanoa* would not have worked. I was to be in the situation and within the conversation. Allowing it to meander like a river does - stretching, widening, bending. Being flexible was another lesson learned. As much as I have retained my sense of self, I would be dishonest if I didn't admit that Samoa and years of living in a culture so opposite to my own had impacted me. Like a shell upon the beach, it is worn from the turbulence, the saltiness, and the years spent in the sea. I too have become like that shell. Yes, in good humor I am still white and still hard, but my edges are softer, the grooves are worn, the contours not so sharp. Perhaps allowing myself to embrace reflexive processes and explore how I am situated within my life, my participants' lives, and the world of swimming, can help define me more broadly rather than too precisely.

The first interview was complete. But now the research question doesn't seem so direct, simple, and linear- what enables and inhibits competitive swimming participation in Samoa- it is now a loaded question, with dips and peaks, with insights so culturally relevant that only someone on the inside can understand. This research question is as weighted as "How are you?" between two old friends.

Vignette 2: All is Well, but Why am I Here and Not There?

After my critical reflection on the challenges and successes of my first *e-talanoa* session, I eagerly set up a session with a close colleague in Samoa. I bubbled with anticipation, believing that this time together would yield much information. I was not hesitant, nor did I doubt the computer, the Zoom invite link, my data recording device. Everything was in order, and I patiently waited for her to connect. The connection appeared…first the voice, then her face, then just the voice. The connection was breaking. It fluttered in and out. I pushed down my rising frustration with the faulty connection. Finally, we had a solid connection, and we smiled at one another. She was located outdoors, in an open building. The elements were all around her, pushing to the front of the screen. The rain hitting the roof, the wind bending the banana leaves, and the echo of her voice diminishing within the vastness of the garden.

Admittedly, I became dismayed. It was not a suitable environment for my voice recorder. Too many interruptions were impairing the device from picking up her words. I sighed. I fidgeted. I scanned my voice recorder to check if it picked up our conversation. It was not. I pressed the record button, hoped for the best, and focused on her presence. We began to speak about the children, school, the education system, our families, and of course, swimming. The tension eased from my neck. I stepped into the flow of the conversation and pushed my concerns about the recordings to the side. At that moment, I

repositioned myself in the space we shared. I enjoyed the conversation, the flow of our laughter, the stories of our past, the ease of our friendship.

However, I still felt off-kilter. Although we were together and had so much to talk about, I couldn't help but feel that I wanted to climb into the conversation physically. I wanted to be there, in her fale (Samoan house with no walls), in her garden, with a cup of *moegalo,* (lemon leaf tea) and have our conversation together. I felt cheated if I was to be honest. I envied her being back home, with the sights, the sounds, the smells, the flavors of Samoa. I drew on my memories to pull me closer into her space. I felt greedy, but the emotion was so strong that I inched as close as possible and allowed her to carry the conversation. I delighted in the retelling of the tales we have spoken of before, and I felt disappointed that our years of hard work still resulted in constant challenges in developing swimming. Same issues, just a different year as we laughed with a tinge of frustration. The talanoa continued for almost two hours, neither of us feeling a sense of urgency to close the conversation. However, Samoa made that decision for us. The winds picked up strength, and the rain pushed sideways, rendering it impossible for us to remain in our shared world. We ended with a prayer, just as we had opened with one, praying for one another to have God's guidance upon us and God's protection upon our families.

Stepping Away Will Allow Growth

When we disconnected, I felt a sense of sadness. Had I made the right decision to move to New Zealand to research something that is so intimate to me, which is completely located in Samoa? Did this *talanoa* session reveal new truths and insights that I otherwise would have missed if I had been home in the islands? After months of deliberation and excavation of my mind, memories, emotions, and shared stories with my participants, I reaffirm that stepping away, positioning myself outside of Samoa, has allowed me a deeper insight and closer access to my participants. I quip that I would have collected the data if I remained in Samoa, but I may have missed the delicate flow, the necessity of critical self-reflection, and the importance of awareness of my positionality and vulnerability. The coach in me compares it to swim training. Doing the hard yards means focusing on the process and not the product; it means concentrating on how I feel in the water and how I move in the water; it means exposing myself in my bathing suit and assessing my skills to improve. I do that in swimming, so now I can see how I need to do this in my research. The use of *talanoa*, especially *e-talanoa*, has allowed the minutiae to float to the surface, grabbing my attention, so I can become a more reflective, vulnerable researcher unafraid to let the currents of relational interactions move freely, unhindered, and without distinct agendas.

Let Positionality Move Freely and Don't Hide from Discomfort

In the *talanoa* sessions, my American self was present. The dominant self who craves time, schedules, and structure was there within the *talanoa* session like an uninvited guest at a dinner party. However, I didn't attempt to ignore that self. Instead, I have acknowledged that identity is part of who I am. I am now aware that I can move between these locations of self to ensure I am more culturally grounded and responsive. Cultural groundedness necessitates blending, understanding, and co-existing in a culture different from one's original culture. A non-Pacific researcher must understand the continuous task of negotiating personal locations when engaging in Pacific-based research. It is necessary to locate all our identities, not just the one we think fits the research context.

Within both *talanoa* sessions, I note that my Samoan self allowed a more intense space to develop. The self that chose calm over panic accepted the flow of the conversation and invested deeply in the shared space. Throughout the research process, I revealed my true nature and allowed my vulnerabilities to emerge organically. In one *talanoa* session, my participant was frank with me, evaluating my coaching performances and critically dissecting what I could have done better. I didn't shy away from the words as they were said in love. I couldn't shy away from the critique as there was only us in that space, no other distraction to hide behind. Admittedly, it was uncomfortable for me, but it revealed rich, unexpected data.

In the first *talanoa* session, my research participant repeated that *"Samoa isn't necessarily made for the Suzie's of the world".* I knew what she was saying. It is not a perfect fit for me to live in Samoa. My American self acknowledges this and would want to defend myself, my position, and my words. However, my other self would testify that Samoa is necessary for the Suzie's of this world. Samoa has softened my edges, quelled my idiosyncrasies, and molded me into a more thoughtful and caring human being. It is imperative to allow the discomfort to circulate between you and the participant. Everything is said in *alofa* (love) and pausing within the discomfort can create reflective spaces and deeper insights than filling the moment with justifications.

In the second *talanoa* session, the participant profoundly stated, *"Suzie, I think you have always been misunderstood".* This line is reoccurring throughout our time together. I did not feel that I had privilege or power in this interaction. I felt exposed and vulnerable. I never wanted to be misunderstood, but her position from Samoa allowed her to speak freely while I was unanchored in New Zealand. She admitted that she viewed me as only an American with a singular focus on developing a winning team. I understand what she was saying. I come from a place of privilege due to my Western upbringing that has given me years of experience in competitive swimming. I have a different perspective regarding competitive swimming and admit that I have the ambition to develop the program and elevate its recognition within the sporting community in Samoa. I am the first to admit that I am a tough coach, and I demand a lot from my swimmers, families, and coaches.

However, she acknowledged that I was misunderstood. She sees that my demands upon the swimmer were couched in *alofa* (love). Somehow this time together allowed our positions within the community to fall away so she could see more of me. I realize now that I unveiled myself during *talanoa*. My defined walls were dropped, and I allowed her to see my vulnerability. This allowed us to speak freely with one another about all our successes and disappointments. In Samoa, my relationship and positionality move like the tide. Sometimes I am in the middle, coaching and training the swimmers; other times, I am on the outer edges, evaluating and providing feedback to her program; other times, we are swimming together, in a shared space, encouraging one another, supporting one another, and generating new ideas with one another.

The tide turned mid-conversation, and she spoke from a place of humility. She repeated that I am the expert, and she did not have much to offer. I smiled as I knew this could not be true and encouraged her to share more. Her perspective, presence, and insights were far beyond what I could see from my position. It was evident that the space we shared was complicated, with the tendency to defer to one another or to challenge each other. Consequently, our space had enlarged over time with the stories guiding the flow of this research.

Be Vulnerable and Share the Relational Space, Even if You Don't Want To

There has been a push into new margins with *talanoa* and the non-Pacific researcher (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Stewart-Withers et al., 2017). While their findings reinforce the tenants of empathy, *alofa* (love), and respect when using *talanoa* methodology, I experienced that *talanoa* also demands a necessary vulnerability from a non-Pacific researcher within the process. I argue that without acknowledging vulnerability, a non-Pacific researcher may escape the discomfort of self-analysis. Without exposing and undressing one's identity through self-analysis, the non-Pacific researcher limits the engagement, the experience, and the rich data found within the *vā,* the space between, researcher and participant. The complex nature of navigating within spaces that are not rightfully our own and where we gain temporary membership can reveal emotional responses, vulnerability, and a sense of discomfort, which are essential markers within the data collection process. Black and O'Dea (2014) explain that researchers must capture the allowances that are taken when immersing in data collection.

Through *e-talanoa*, the reflexive accounts illustrate the intricacies of the culture presented within the conversations. The framework itself espouses the concept of time, space, relationships, respect, and voice, but the researcher needs to have a heightened sensitivity and awareness to these elements and how they are woven into the conversations without pressure, persistence, or pretense. For example, the concept of time was of no consequence with my participants though I confronted an internal battle of my two selves regarding timeliness, punctuality, and schedules. Space was another critical tenet that must be examined as it was necessary to acknowledge that space was shared with family,

grandbabies, the rain, and the wind. This acknowledgment allows the relationship to cultivate a safe space to share personal, intimate, and sensitive stories which have nothing to do with the research question and everything to do with the research process. Lake's (2015) personal reflection on autoethnographic reflection signals that the interview or interaction should not be seen as an opportunity to extract information as it pertains to the research question, but moreover "as an opportunity for reflexive discussion and idea-sharing" (p. 684). Respect and cultural protocols were used through offering prayers, deferring to participants' thoughts and memories, and expressing value in their opinions, especially when they did not align with my own. Deference, respect, and the shared values of faith must also be included within the interaction. Cultural groundedness necessitated blending, understanding, and co-existing in a culture different from the American culture. It is essential to understand the negotiations and challenges when engaging in Pacific research.

Allow Emotions into Your Research Space

Relationships, memories, and emotions are all tied to the *talanoa* experience. Dowling (2012) attests that using an interpretive paradigm is intimately connected to our subjective, cognitive, and emotional understandings of the realities presented (p. 40). Too often in research, emotion is purposely constrained and controlled. Without connecting to my emotions for Samoa, swimming, and my participants, I know I would have failed to engage in true *talanoa* for my research as emotion is the very essence of *talanoa*. It led my *talanoa* sessions, as I did not deny the presence of emotion nor try to control it. As the memories surfaced, the emotions pushed them to the forefront, and allowed the stories to produce unmitigated laughter, broad smiles, reflective thoughts, heartfelt tears, and the hesitancy in revealing oneself. Allowing emotions to rise within the *vā* (space) requires a level of vulnerability both as the researcher and the participant. Pacific researchers emphasize that this space is "relationally driven practice, calling on researchers to immerse themselves in the journey (Iosefo et al., 2020, p. 23). Allowing the conversations to flow and embrace the quieter moments within the interaction brings feeling to the unfolding stories. Lean in to hear the lingering emotion that still connects you to each other even when the computers are turned off.

Be Aware of the Overpowering Nature of Your Non-Pacific Self

Tempering the stronger, less flexible self within Pacific research is critical. As a swim coach, I know the formula to produce stronger and faster swimmers. The best approach is direct, linear, off the clock, all with continuous propulsion. This approach yields a faster swimmer, but it may not develop a responsive, flexible swimmer. If I aim to have a responsive swimmer or become a responsive researcher, I must be willing to feel the water, float within the sets, allow the water to carry me, change my tempo, adjust my strokes, and alter my intentions. To be a better Pacific-based researcher, I must accept that not everything has to be controlled by time, bounded by structure like the pool walls, and progress linearly like the dictates of the lane ropes. Just as swimming requires finding

comfort in the water before becoming well versed in strokes, it is the same when engaging in *talanoa*; successful engagement calls for the non-Pasifika researcher to be well versed in relational respect, reciprocity, shared space, and cultural protocols. However, most importantly, it demands embracing the discomfort in the unbound concept of time, pace, rhythm, and dialogue while accepting a position of vulnerability.

A New Researcher Emerges

I always saw myself on the edges of life in Samoa. The edges of the culture, skirting around discomfort, purposely sitting on the edge so as not to drown in another culture so unlike my own. But this reflective process has confronted me, forced me to stop and maybe drown before I could move forward as a better researcher (S. Schuster, self-reflexive field notes, 2021)

I look at my hair and what it meant back then and still see myself like that today. The culture can feel constraining, but I understand and appreciate cultural uniformity, ideologies, and perspective. However, I had difficulties staying within the weave, as it pulled only in one direction. My hair, like me, naturally escapes, begs to be unbound and to be left alone. I have always been aware of the internal push and pull between my insider and outsider positionalities. I have never been satisfied with being one or the other; therefore, I have allowed the internal conflict to take up residence. Accepting that these dominant selves are present in my life and my research is critical in this research journey. Like the braids of a young 23-year-old, the years are now braided together, weaving my marriage, extended family, home, four children, and roles beyond mother and wife. I have woven my passion for swimming, coaching, teaching Sunday school, and PE. Some of the weaves are tighter than others; some pull harder for my attention. Some strands dominate my days, such as being time conscious, scheduled, and goal-oriented. Nonetheless, it is essentially who I am and how I came to be.

Admittedly, it has taken me a long time to become unclothed, exposed, and examined through critical self-reflection and not just where but how I am situated in this research. The unusual position of being located outside of my intended research environment forced me to cultivate a deeper and more meaningful analysis of myself through self-reflection and through the *e-talanoa* sessions. I may not be the same as I was 30 years ago, but I still struggle with issues of time, space, relationships, shifting power and positionality, but recognizing this is critical as it opens me up to more significant insights. This element of vulnerability can assist other researchers who find themselves in cross-cultural research though heeding the advice that indigenous methodology is not straightforward. Moreover, the methodology is ill-fitting if the researcher lacks connection, presence, and location within the local community. If a researcher can position themselves with the context of the research and considers employing indigenous methods, it is critical to measure professional skills sets, take stock of personal imperfections, address vulnerabilities and allow emotions to surface within the self-reflective process. Ultimately, this unnatural method of *e-talanoa*, within a cross-cultural and cross-

oceanic setting, led to my revelation that *e-talanoa* and geographic distance were unexpected gifts forcing me to accept and celebrate the intersections of my dual positionality throughout the research process. This article serves as a reminder to wade lightly and respectfully in the shallow waters that hold a milieu of indigenous research methods while purposely submerging in self-reflexivity before, during, and after the research process to ensure effective and useful scholarship for and with Pacifica communities.

So, I took my baskets of rocks and tipped them out, to *talanoa* about, during our time together. There is no path carved out for this sport yet. There is only a faint trail that waits for rocks to define its pathway. Together, we decided which rocks were to create the path of competitive swimming in Samoa. I think I would add to Timoteo's presentation and now say, "The *ma'a*, it can be used to make a path for others to follow" (S. Schuster, self-reflexive field notes, 2021).

Epilogue: The Journey Continues

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

Mother Teresa

It may be that this journey will continue. Through this process I have learnt more about myself as a researcher than I had expected. The findings brought new insight, appreciation and respect for those who have participated in this research. Also, a newfound level of gratitude for past, current and future swimmers has been etched indelibly. Since the inception of this project, some swimmers have remained in the sport, some have moved laterally, finding more pleasure in water polo and triathlon and others have hung up their togs for good, turning away from the swimming world completely. While I inwardly sigh knowing the future will demand more work to build membership, my *alofa* and *fa'aloalo* for my swimmers, past and present, has grown. The inroads they paved, the challenges they overcame, and the conflicts they negotiated astound me. To now have the stories written brings honour to their commitment to this sport. Moving between the spaces of practitioner and researcher, I believe this process has improved my communication, coaching, relational awareness and knowledge. While this topic may remain as coffee conversation to many, the stories, findings, and revelations revealed can sit, shoulder to shoulder, with the major sports research, as the research is relevant, authentic and provides a springboard for future culture and sport research.

References

Nothing is better than reading and gaining more and more knowledge.

Stephen Hawking

Airini., Anae, M., Mila-Schaaf, K., Coxon, E., Mara, D., & Sanga. K. (2010). *Teu le va – relationships across research and Policy in Pasifika education. A report for the Ministry of Education*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Amelia, S. E. (2012). Methodology of learning swimming in the first part of life through a positive approach. *Ovidius University Annals, Series Physical Education and Sport/Science, Movement and Health*, *12*(1), 88-96.

Anae, M. (2010). Research for better Pacific schooling in New Zealand: Teu le va–a Samoan perspective. *MAI review*, *1*(1), 1-24.

Anae, M. (2016). Teu le va: Samoan relational ethics. *Knowledge Cultures*, *4*(03), 117-130.

Anderson, J. C., Funk, J. B., Elliott, R., & Smith, P. H. (2003). Parental support and pressure and children's extracurricular activities: Relationships with amount of involvement and affective experience of participation. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *24*(2), 241-257.

Andreff, W., & Szymanski, S. (2006). Sport in developing countries. In W. Andreff, J. Borland & S. Szymanski (Eds.), *Handbook on the economics of sport*, (pp. 304-315). Edward Elgar.

Basterfield, L., Reilly, J. K., Pearce, M. S., Parkinson, K. N., Adamson, A. J., Reilly, J. J., & Vella, S. A. (2015). Longitudinal associations between sports participation, body composition and physical activity from childhood to adolescence. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, *18*(2), 178-182.

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, *15*(2), 219-234.

Berry, J. W. (1999). Emics and etics: a symbiotic conception. *Culture & Psychology*, *5*(2), 165-171.

Berukoff, K. D., & Hill, G. M. (2010). A study of factors that influence the swimming performance of Hispanic high school students. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education, 4*(4), 409-427.

Besnier, N. (2012). The athlete's body and the global condition: Tongan rugby players in Japan. *American Ethnologist, 39*(3), 491-510.

Besnier, N. (2014). Sports, bodies, and futures: An epilogue. *The Contemporary Pacific, 26*(2), 435-444.

Besnier, N. (2016). Humour and humility: narratives of modernity on Nukulaelae Atoll. *Etnofoor, 28*(1), 75-95.

Bishop, R., & Glynn, T. (1999). Researching in Maori contexts: An interpretation of participatory consciousness. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 20*(2), 167-182.

Black, A. L., & O'Dea, S. (2014). Building a tapestry of knowledge in the spaces in-between: Weaving personal and collective meaning through arts-based research. In K. Trimmer, A. Black & S. Riddle (Eds.). *Mainstreams, Margins and the Spaces in-between* (pp. 29-51). New York, NY: Routledge.

Boyd, D. (2008). Autoethnography as a tool for transformative learning about white privilege. *Journal of Transformative Education, 6*(3), 212-225.

Bradbury-Jones, C., Sambrook, S., & Irvine, F. (2008). Power and empowerment in nursing: a fourth theoretical approach. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 62*(2), 258-266.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making Human Beings Human: Bioecological Perspectives on Human Development*. Sage.

Brooks-Gunn, J., & Duncan, G. J. (1997). The effects of poverty on children. *The future of children*, 55-71.

Burns, T. (1992). *Erving Goffman*. Routledge.

Bush, A., Collings, S., Tamasese, K., & Waldegrave, C. (2005). Samoan and psychiatrists' perspectives on the self: qualitative comparison. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, *39*(7), 621-626.

Button, C., Button, A. J., Jackson, A. M., Cotter, J. D., & Maraj, B. (2020). Teaching foundational aquatic skills to children in open water environments. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education, 13*(1), 1-24.

Cameron, E. (2012). New geographies of story and storytelling. *Progress in Human Geography*, *36*(5), 573-592.

Chafetz, J. S., & Kotarba, J. A. (1995). Son worshippers: The role of little league mothers in recreating gender. *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, *18*(1), 217-41.

Chambliss, D. F. (1989). The mundanity of excellence: An ethnographic report on stratification and Olympic swimmers. *Sociological Theory*, *7*(1), 70-86.

Chick, G., & Dong, E. (2005). Cultural constraints on Leisure. In E. J. Jackson (Ed.). *Constraints to Leisure* (pp.169-185). Venture.

Clarke, R. (2013). *Water: The international crisis*. Routledge.

Clément, J. (2014). Participating in the global competition: Denaturalizing "flair" in Samoan rugby. *The Contemporary Pacific*, *26*(2),369-387.

Coakley J. (2002). Using sports to control deviance and violence among youths: Let's be critical and cautious. In Gatz M., Messner M. A., Ball-Rokeach S. J. (Eds.), *Paradoxes of youth and sport* (pp. 13-30). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Coakley, J. (2011). Youth sports: What counts as "positive development?". *Journal of sport and social issues*, *35*(3), 306-324.

Cock, S. (2012). *The sportization of swimming: A sociological examination of the development of swimming as a modern competitive sport, c.1595-1908* [Unpublished dissertation]. University of Chester, United Kingdom.

Colwin, C. (1992). *Swimming into the 21st century*. Leisure Press.

Colwin, C. (2002). *Breakthrough swimming*. Human Kinetics.

Corfield, P. J. (2008). All people are living histories–which is why history matters. *Making history*. Retrieved from: www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/why_history_matters

Cote, J. and Hay, J. (2002). Children's involvement in sport: A developmental perspective. In J. M. Silva & D. E. Stevens (Eds.) *Psychological foundations of sport* (pp. 484-502). Allyn and Bacon.

Côté-Arsenault, D., & Morrison-Beedy, D. (1999). Practical advice for planning and conducting focus groups. *Nursing Research, 48*(5), 280-283.

Cowling, W. E. (2009). Island lives: The writing of Sia Figiel (Samoa) and Celestine Hitiura Vaite (Tahiti). *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue*, (12), 29-41.

Crane, J., & Temple, V. (2015). A systematic review of dropout from organized sport among children and youth. *European Physical Education Review*, *21*(1), 114-131.

Crawford, D. W., Jackson, E. L., & Godbey, G. (1991). A hierarchical model of leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences*, *13*(4), 309-320.

Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, *39*(3), 124-130.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research method: Choosing among five approaches.* Sage.

Darby P. (2001). The new scramble for Africa: the African football labour migration to Europe. *The European Sports History Review. 3*(1), 217-244.

DeLuca, J. R., & Andrews, D. L. (2016). Exercising privilege: The cyclical reproduction of capital through swim club membership. *Sociological Inquiry*, *86*(3), 301-323.

Delva, J., Johnston, L. D., & O'Malley, P. M. (2007). The epidemiology of overweight and related lifestyle behaviors: Racial/ethnic and socioeconomic status differences among American youth. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 33*(4, Supplement 1), S178-S186.

Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. Sage.

Denzin, N. K. (2007). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Denzin, N. K. (2014). *Interpretive autoethnography*. Sage.

Denzin N. K. & Lincoln Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research, 2*(1), 1-20.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.

Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., & Smith, L. T. (2008). Introduction: Critical methodologies and indigenous inquiry. In N. Denzin & L. T. Smith (Eds.). *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies* (pp. 1-20). Sage.

DePond, M. (2019). Southland surf: Hawaiians, surfing, and race in Los Angeles, 1907–1928. *Southern California Quarterly*, *101*(1), 45-78.

Dixon, H. E., & Bixler, R. D. (2007). Failure to learn to (really) swim: Inflated self-efficacy? *Recreational Sports Journal*, *31*(1), 14-20.

Dowling, F. (2012). A narrative approach to research in physical education, youth sport and health. In F. Dowling, H. Fitzgerald, & A. Flintoff (Eds.), *Equity and difference in physical education, youth sport and health: A narrative approach* (pp. 55-78). Routledge.

Du Plessis, R., & Fairbairn-Dunlop, P. (2009). The ethics of knowledge production–Pacific challenges. *International Social Science Journal*, *60*(195), 109-114.

Dukes, R. L. (2002). Parental commitment to competitive swimming. *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology*, *30*(2), 185-198.

Dunlap, H. L. (1951). Games, Sports, dancing, and other vigorous recreational activities and their function in Samoan culture. *Research quarterly. American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation*, *22*(3), 298-311.

Dunlop-Bennett, E. (2019). *Through their eyes: A Samoan perspective on child wellbeing* [Doctoral thesis, University of Otago]. http://hdl.handle.net/10523/9242

Dunlop-Bennett, E., Bryant-Tokalau, J., & Dowell, A. (2019). When you ask the fish: Child wellbeing through the eyes of Samoan children. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, *9*(4), 97-120.

Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *8*(1), 54-63.

Eagleton, T. (1983). *Literary theory: An introduction.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Edelman, M. W. (2006). The state of our children. *National Urban League. The State of Black America*, 219-227.

Edwards, R., & Usher, R. (1996). What stories do I tell now? New times and new narratives for the adult educator. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *15*(3), 216-229.

Einarsdóttir, J. (2007). Research with children: Methodological and ethical challenges. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, *15*(2), 197-211.

Einarsdóttir, S., Rounds, J., & Su, R. (2010). Holland in Iceland revisited: An emic approach to evaluating US vocational interest models. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *57*(3), 361.

Ella, S. (1897). 'O le tala ia taema ma na– fanua. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, *6*(3 (23), 152-155.

Ellis, C.& Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed. pp. 733-768), Sage.

Ellis C, Adams T. E. & Bochner A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research 36*(4): 273–290.

Ergler, C. R. (2017). Advocating for a more relational and dynamic model of participation for child researchers. *Social Inclusion, 5*(3), 240-250. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v5i3.966

Evans, A. (2017). To 'just be relaxed and with your own thoughts': Experiences of aquatic activity amongst individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia. *Loisir Et Société / Society and Leisure*, *40*(2), 175-192.

Evans, A. B., & Allen-Collinson, J. (2016). From ‘just a swimmer’ to a ‘swimming mother’: Women’s embodied experiences of recreational aquatic activity with pre-school children. *Leisure Studies*, *35*(2), 141-156.

Evans, A. B., & Sleap, M. (2012). “You feel like people are looking at you and laughing”: Older adults' perceptions of aquatic physical activity. *Journal of Aging Studies*, *26*(4), 515-526.

Evans, A. B., & Sleap, M. (2015). Older adults’ lifelong embodied experiences of leisure time aquatic physical activity in the United Kingdom. *Leisure Studies*, *34*(3), 335-353.

Evans, A. B., Allen-Collinson, J., & Williams, R. (2017). Risky bodies, risky spaces, maternal 'instincts': Swimming and motherhood. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 52*(8), 972-991.

Fa'avae, D. (2018). Giving voice to the unheard in higher education. *Mai Journal, 7*(2), 127-138.

Fa 'avae, D. T. M., Faleolo, R., Hepi Havea, E., Enari, D., Wright, T., & Chand, A. (2022). E–talanoa as an online research method: extending vā–relations across spaces. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples, 18*(3), 391-401.

Fa'avae, D. T. M., Lealaiauloto, B., Baice, T., Fonua, F., & Fonua, S. M. (2022). Indigenous education within urban contexts and negotiations in the diaspora: talanoa vā in the moana. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education, 16*(1), 43-56.

Fa'avae, D., Jones, A., & Manu'atu, L. (2016). Talanoa'i 'a e talanoa—Talking about talanoa: Some dilemmas of a novice researcher. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples, 12*(2), 138-150.

Fairbairn-Dunlop, P. (1991). *E au le inailau a tamaitai: Women, education and development, Western Samoa* [Doctoral thesis, Macquarie University].

Fairbairn-Dunlop, P., & Coxon., E. (Eds.) (2014) *Talanoa: Building a Pasifika research culture*. Dunmore Press.

Faleolo, M. M. A. (2003). *Talanoa ile i'a: talking to Pacific Island young people in West Auckland about health.* [Unpublished master's thesis, Massey University]. http://hdl.handle.net/10179/10774

Faleolo, M. (2009). Cultural valid social work E\education: A Samoan perspective. In C. Noble., M. Henrickson., and Y.I. Han (Eds.). *Social work education: Voices from the Asia Pacific* (pp. 149– 172). The Vulgar Press.

Faleolo, M. (2013). Authentication in social work education: The balancing act. In C. Noble., M. Henrickson, & Y.I. Han (Eds.). *Social work education: Voices from the Asia Pacific* (pp.105-132). Sydney University Press.

Faleolo, R. (2021). Talanoa moe vā: Pacific knowledge-sharing and changing socio-cultural spaces during COVID-19. *Waikato Journal of Education. Special Issue: Talanoa Vā: Honouring*

Pacific Research and Online Engagement, *26*, 125-134. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15663/wje.v26i1.763

Faletolu, T.A. (2010). Assumed Voices of Samoa. Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work. [Online] Available from https://anzswjournal.nz/anzsw/article/view/32

Farrelly, T., & Nabobo-Baba, U. (2014). Talanoa as empathic apprenticeship. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, *55*(3), 319-330.

Ferris-Leary, H. E. (2013). *An analytical perspective on Moana research and the case of Tongan Faiva.* [Doctoral thesis, University of Auckland]. http://hdl.handle.net/2292/21498

Figiel, S. (1996). *The girl in the moon circle*. University of the South Pacific.

Finlay, L. (2002). Negotiating the swamp: the opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. *Qualitative Research*, *2*(2), 209-230.

Fitzpatrick, K. (2013). Brown bodies, racialisation and physical education. *Sport, Education and Society*, *18*(2), 135-153.

Floyd, M. F., & Shinew, K. J. (1999). Convergence and divergence in leisure style among Whites and African Americans: Toward an interracial contact hypothesis. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *31*(4), 359-384.

Fonua, P. (2005). Talanoa, talking from the heart. *Matangi Tonga*, Vava'u Press.

Fraser-Thomas, J., & Côté, J. (2006). Youth sports: Implementing findings and moving forward with research. *Athletic Insight*, *8*(3), 12-27.

Fraser-Thomas, J., & Côté, J. (2009). Understanding adolescents' positive and negative developmental experiences in sport. *The Sport Psychologist*, *23*(1), 3-23.

Fraser-Thomas, J. L., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. (2005). Youth sport programs: An avenue to foster positive youth development. *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy*, *10*(1), 19-40.

Fraser-Thomas, J., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. (2008). Understanding dropout and prolonged engagement in adolescent competitive sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *9*(5), 645-662.

Gadamer, H. G. (2013). *Truth and method.* Bloomsbury.

Gallacher, L. A., & Gallagher, M. (2008). Methodological immaturity in childhood research? Thinking through participatory methods. *Childhood*, *15*(4), 499-516.

Galuvao, A. S. A. (2018). In search of Samoan research approaches to education: Tofā'a'anolasi and the Foucauldian tool box. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *50*(8), 747-757.

Garth, H., & Hardin, J. (2019). On the limitations of barriers: Social visibility and weight management in Cuba and Samoa. *Social Science & Medicine*, *239*, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112501

Gearing, R. E. (2004). Bracketing in research: A typology. *Qualitative Health Research, 14*(10), 1429-1452.

Gilchrist, J., Sacks, J. J., & Branche, C. M. (2000). Self-reported swimming ability in US adults, 1994. *Public health Reports (1974), 115*(2-3), 110-111.

Giles, A. R. (2005). A Foucauldian approach to menstrual practices in the Dehcho region, Northwest Territories, Canada. *Arctic Anthropology, 42*(2), 9–21.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (2017). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Routledge.

Glasgow, A., & Rameka, L. K. (2017). Māori and Pacific infant and toddler cultural pedagogy: Reclaiming a cultural lens. *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies*, *6*(1), 80-95.

Golob, M. I., Giles, A. R., & Rich, K. M. (2013). Enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of water safety education for ethnic and racial minorities. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, *7*(1), 39-55.

Goodin, R. E. (2000). Democratic deliberation within. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, *29*(1), 81-109.

Gordon, B., Sauni, P., & Tuagalu, C. (2013). Sport means 'family and church': Sport in New Zealand Pasifika communities. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Health, Sport and Physical Education*, *4*(1), 49-63.

Gordon, B., Sauni, P., Tuagalu, C., & Hodis, F. (2010). *Sport and recreation in New Zealand Pasifika communities*. Wellington, New Zealand. Jessie Hetherington Centre for Educational Research Victoria University of Wellington.

Gould, D., Feltz, D., & Weiss, M. R. (1985). Motives for participating in competitive youth swimming. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, *16*(2), 126-140.

Government of Samoa, National Sport in Education Policy (NSEP), 2019-2029, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. Final Draft School Governance Policy (mesc.gov.ws)

Government of Samoa, National Sports Policy, 2019, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture. https://www.mesc.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/MESC-National-Sports-Framework-2018_20.09.2018FINAL.pdf

Government of Samoa, Samoa Development Strategy 2019-2020, Ministry of Finance. https://www.mof.gov.ws/services/economic-policy-planning/national-development-plans-for-samoa/

Government of Samoa, Samoa NCD Control Policy 2018-2023, Ministry of Health. https://www.health.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/1Samoa-NCD-Control-Policy-2018-2023.pdf

Greendorfer, S. L. (1977). Sociology of sport: Knowledge of what. *Quest*, *28*(1), 58-65.

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *3*(1), 42-55.

Gunther, S., Emery, S., Lasike, V., Marsh, J., Pauta, M., Peini, S., & Timu-Parata, C. (2009). Mental health and well-being: A Pacific nursing perspective. *Whitireia Nursing Journal*, 16, 35–37.

Halapua, S. (2003). Walking the knife-edge pathways to peace-commentary including excerpts from peace conflict and development: Walking the knife-edge pathway in multiculturalism to peace. *Address delivered at the Inaugural Public Lecture of the Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara Friendship Foundation*, 7-8.

Hardin, J. (2015). Christianity, fat talk, and Samoan pastors: Rethinking the fat-positive-fat-stigma framework. *Fat Studies*, *4*(2), 178-196.

Hargreaves, J., & McDonald, I. (2000). Cultural studies and the sociology of sport. In J. Coakley, & E. Dunning (Eds.). *Handbook of Sports Studies*. (pp. 48-60). Sage.

Harold, J. (2003). Flexing the imagination. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 61, 247-257.

Harold, R. D., Eccles, J. S., Yoon, K. S., Aberbach, A. J., & Freedman-Doan, C. (1991, April). *Parents hold a key to" The Land of Opportunity* [Conference session]. Bienniel meeting for the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, WA, United States. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jacquelynne-Eccles/publication/233896538_Parents_Hold_a_Key_to_The_Land_of_Opportunity/links/0046352b8da9660f24000000/Parents-Hold-a-Key-to-The-Land-of-Opportunity.pdf

Harris, J. (2006). The science of research in sport and tourism: Some reflections upon the promise of the sociological imagination. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, *11*(2), 153-171.

Hapeta, J., Stewart-Withers, R., & Palmer, F. (2019). Sport for social change with Aotearoa New Zealand youth: Navigating the theory–practice nexus through indigenous principles. *Journal of Sport Management*, *33*(5), 481-492.

Hassall, G. (2005). Alternative dispute resolution in Pacific Island countries. *Journal of South Pacific Law*, *9*(2), 1-12.

Hastings, D. W., Zahran, S., & Cable, S. (2006). Drowning in inequalities: Swimming and social justice. *Journal of Black Studies, 36*(6), 894–917. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934705283903

Heard, E. M., Auvaa, L., & Conway, B. A. (2017). Culture X: Addressing barriers to physical activity in Samoa. *Health Promotion International*, *32*(4), 734-742.

Hellstedt, J. (1995). Invisible Players: A family systems model In: S. M. Murphy (Ed.). *Sport psychology interventions.* Human Kinetics.

Hepler, T. J., & Chase, M. A. (2008). Relationship between decision-making self-efficacy, task self-efficacy, and the performance of a sport skill. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *26*(6), 603-610.

Hereniko, V. (1999). Representations of cultural identities. In P. Grace, E. Hau'ofa, D. Hanlon, D. S. Long, P. Lyons, S. T. Marsh, R. Nicole, S. Schwarz, P. Sharrad, C. Sinavaiana-Gabbard, and R. Stella (Eds.). *Inside out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific* (No. 119) (pp. 406-434). Rowman & Littlefield.

Hertz, R. (1997). *Reflexivity & Voice*. Sage.

Hokowhitu, B. (2003a). 'Physical beings': Stereotypes, sport and the 'physical education' of New Zealand Māori. *Culture, Sport, Society*, *6*(2-3), 192-218.

Hokowhitu, B. (2003b). Race tactics: The racialised athletic body. *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic* Dialogue, (1), 21 -34.

Holman Jones, S. (2007). Autoethnography. In G. Ritzer (Ed.). *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* (pp.102). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosa082

Holman Jones, S. (2016). Living bodies of thought: The "critical" in critical autoethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *22*(4), 228-237.

Holman Jones, S., and Harris, A. (2018). *Queering Autoethnography*. Routledge.

Hooper, A. (1998). *Pacific Islands stakeholder participation in development: Samoa*. The World Bank.

Horton, P. (2012). Pacific Islanders in global rugby: The changing currents of sports migration. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, *29*(17), 2388-2404.

Horton, P. (2014). Pacific Islanders in professional rugby football: Bodies, minds and cultural continuities. *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science*, *3*(3), 222-235.

Houlihan, B. (2008*). Sport and society: A student introduction* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Howitt, D., & Cramer, D. (2011). Thematic analysis. In G. Van Hove & L. Claes (Eds.). *Qualitative research and educational sciences: A reader about useful strategies and tools* (pp. 179-202). Ashford Colour Press.

Hoyle, R. H., & Leff, S. S. (1997). The role of parental involvement in youth sport participation and performance. *Adolescence*, *32*(125), 233.

Huffer, E. (2006, October 30). *Cultural rights in the Pacific–what they mean for children* [Conference session]. Rights and Culture in the Pacific Seminar, Suva, Fiji.

Huffer, E. (2007). Regionalism and cultural identity: putting the Pacific back into the plan. In S. Firth (Ed.). *Globalisation and governance in the Pacific Islands: State, society and governance in Melanesia* (pp. 43-55). ANU Press.

Huffer, E., & Qalo, R. (2004). Have we been thinking upside-down? The contemporary emergence of Pacific theoretical thought. *The Contemporary Pacific*, *16*(1), 87-116.

Husserl, E. (1913/1962). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*. Trans. WR Boyce Gibson. Collier.

Iosefo, F. (2016). Third spaces: Sites of resistance in higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *35*(1), 189-192.

Iosefo, F., Harris, A., & Jones, S. H. (2020). Wayfinding as Pasifika, indigenous and critical autoethnographic knowledge. In F. Iosefo, S. H. Jones, & A. Harris (Eds.). *Wayfinding and critical autoethnography* (pp. 15-27). Routledge.

Irwin, C., Irwin, R., Martin, N., & Ross, S. (2010, April 1). *Constraints Impacting Minority Swimming Participation: Phase II Qualitative Report* [Conference session] USA Swimming. University of Memphis, Memphis, TN, United States.

Irwin, C., Irwin, R., Ryan, T., & Drayer, J. (2009). The mythology of swimming: are myths impacting minority youth participation? *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, *3*, 10-23.

Irwin, R., Drayer, J., Irwin, C., Ryan, T., & Southall, R. (2008). *Constraints Impacting Minority Swimming Participation*. Report presented to USA Swimming (pp. 1-27). University of Memphis.

Ito, G. H. (2014). Barriers to swimming and water safety education for African Americans. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, *8*(3), 4.

Ivey, J. (2013). Interpretive phenomenology. *Pediatric Nursing*, *39*(1), 27.

Jackson, E. L. (1991). Leisure constraints/constrained leisure: Special issue introduction. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *23*(4), 279-285.

Jackson, E. L. (2005). Leisure constraints research: Overview of a developing theme in leisure studies. In E. L. Jackson (Ed.). *Constraints to leisure* (pp. 3–19). Venture.

Jackson, E. L., Crawford, D. W., & Godbey, G. (1993). Negotiation of leisure constraints. *Leisure Sciences*, *15*(1), 1-11.

Jarvie, G., & Maguire, J. (1994). Classical Marxism, political economy and beyond. In G. Jarvie & J.Maguire (Eds.). *Sport and leisure in social thought* (pp. 86-107). Routledge.

Jasper, M. (1996). The first year as a staff nurse: the experiences of a first cohort of Project 2000 nurses in a demonstration district. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *24*(4), 779-790.

Jellinek, M., & Durant, S. (2004). Parents and sports: Too much of a good thing? *Contemporary Pediatrics*, *21*(9), 17-20.

Jones, S. H., Adams, T., & Ellis, C. (2016). Introduction: Coming to know autoethnography as more than a method. In S. H. Holmes, T. Adams, & C. Ellis (Eds.). *Handbook of autoethnography* (pp. 17-48). Routledge.

Ka'ili, T. O. (2008). *Tauhi Va: Creating beauty through the art of socio-spatial relations.* [Doctoral thesis, University of Washington].

Kabutaulaka, T. (2015). Re-presenting Melanesia: Ignoble savages and Melanesian alter-natives. *The Contemporary Pacific*, *27*(1), 110-145.

Kamu, L. (1996). *The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel*. South Pacific Association of Theological Schools.

Kanemasu, Y., & Molnar, G. (2017). Double-trouble: Negotiating gender and sexuality in post-colonial women's rugby in Fiji. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *52*(4), 430-446.

Kanemasu, Y., Johnson, J. D., & Molnar, G. (2019). Fiji's women rugby players finding motivation in a 'hostile'environment. Routledge.

Keane, L., Sherry, E., Tamala, F., Bauman, A., Freeston, J., & Richards, J. (2017). "A Tale of Two Islands": Cross-sectional associations between physical activity and subjective well-being by urbanicity in Samoa. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, *20*, e120–e120. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2017.01.209

Kellett, M. (2011). *Researching with and for children and young people*, Background Briefing Series Nr. 5. Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University.

Keung, S. (2018). *Te taha hinengaro: Using talanoa to facilitate an interconnected analysis of psychosocial development shared by Māori and Pasifika young men in Rugby League* [Doctoral thesis, Auckland University of Technology]. http://hdl.handle.net/10292/11941

Keung, S. (2019). The Value of Relationships, Trust and Energy in Athlete Development. *Studies*, *37*(3), 318-330.

Khoo, C., Schulenkorf, N., & Adair, D. (2014). The opportunities and challenges of using cricket as a sport-for-development tool in Samoa. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 6*(1), 76-102.

King, C. R., (2009). Prologue: Exchange, diaspora, and globalization. *The International Journal of the History of Sport, 26*(16), 2311-2313.

Kleindienst-Cachay, C. (2011). Balancing between the cultures: Sports and physical activities of Muslim girls and women in Germany. In T. Benn, G. Pfister, & H. Jawad, H. (Eds.). *Muslim Women and Sport*. (pp. 92-108). Routledge.

Kooken, W. C., Haase, J., & Russell, K. M. (2007). "I've been through something". Poetic explorations of African American women's cancer survivorship. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 29*(7), 896-919.

Koser, K., & Laczko, F. (Eds.) (2010). *World migration report 2010.The future of migration: Building capacities for change*. https://doi.org/10.18356/4c12813b-en

Kwauk, C. T. (2012). Obesity and the healthy living apparatus: discursive strategies and the struggle for power. *Critical Discourse Studies. 9*(1): 39-57.

Kwauk, C. T. (2014a). No longer just a pastime: Dport for development in times of change. *The Contemporary Pacific, 26*(2), 303-323.

Kwauk, C. T. (2014b). *Playing for the future: Sport and the production of healthy bodies in policy and practice League* [Doctoral thesis, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis].

Kwauk, C. T. (2016). 'Let them see a different path': Social attitudes towards sport, education and development in Sāmoa. *Sport, Education and Society*, *21*(4), 644-660.

Lake, J. (2015). Autoethnography and reflective practice: Reconstructing the doctoral thesis experience. *Reflective Practice*, *16*(5), 677-687.

Lakisa, D., Adair, D., & Taylor, T. (2014). Pasifika diaspora and the changing face of Australian Rugby League. *The Contemporary Pacific, 26*(2), 347-367.

Larkin, M., & Thompson, A. R. (2011). Interpretative phenomenological analysis in mental health and psychotherapy research. In A. Thompson & D. Harper (eds), *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners* (pp. 99-116). John Wiley & Sons.

Larkin, M., Shaw, R., & Flowers, P. (2019). Multiperspectival designs and processes in interpretative phenomenological analysis research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *16*(2), 182-198.

Lawson, H. A. (2005). Empowering people, facilitating community development, and contributing to sustainable development: The social work of sport, exercise, and physical education programs. *Sport, education and Society*, *10*(1), 135-160.

Levermore, R., & Beacom, A. (2009). Sport and development: Mapping the field. In *Sport and International Development* (pp. 1-25). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Lekoko, R. N. (2007). Story-telling as a potent research paradigm for Indigenous communities. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *3*(2), 82-95.

Lewis, C. S. (2002). *On stories: And other essays on literature*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Lewis, C. S. (2005). *The magician's nephew (adult)*. Zondervan.

Light, R. (2010). A cross-cultural study on meaning and the nature of children's experiences in Australian and French swimming clubs. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Health, Sport and Physical Education*, *1*(3-4), 37-43.

Light, R. L., Harvey, S., & Memmert, D. (2013). Why children join and stay in sports clubs: case studies in Australian, French and German swimming clubs. *Sport, Education and Society*, *18*(4), 550-566.

Lilomaiava-Doktor, S. (2004). *Fa'aSamoa and population movement from the inside out: The case of Salelologa, Savai'i* [Doctoral thesis, University of Hawaii at Manoa]. http://hdl.handle.net/10125/11605

Lilomaiava-Doktor, S. (2020). Oral traditions, cultural significance of storytelling, and Samoan understandings of place or fanua. *Native American and Indigenous Studies*, *7*(1), 121-151.

Lilomaiava-Doktor, S. I. (2009). Beyond migration: Samoan population movement (malaga) and the geography of social space (vā). *The Contemporary Pacific*, *21*(1), 1-32.

Lindstrom Bremer, K. (2012). Parental involvement, pressure, and support in youth sport: A narrative literature review. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *4*(3), 235-248.

Macpherson, C., & Macpherson, L. A. (2017). Culture and the commodification of water in Samoa. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, *58*(1), 86-98.

Mael, F. A. (1995). Staying afloat: Within-group swimming proficiency for Whites and Blacks. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *80*(4), 479-490.

Markham, A. (2017, February 28) *Reflexivity: Some techniques for interpretive researchers.* Annette Markham. https://annettemarkham.com/2017/02/reflexivity-for-interpretive-researchers/

Marsters, C. (2017). *Young Pacific male athletes and positive mental wellbeing* [Doctoral thesis The University of Auckland]. http://hdl.handle.net/2292/34248

Marsters, C., & Tiatia-Seath, J. (2019). Young Pacific male rugby players' perceptions and experiences of mental wellbeing. *Sports*, *7*(4), 83.

Masoe, P., & So'o, I. (2011). *The talatalaga a aiga model.* Wellington.

Mayall, B. (2000) The sociology of childhood in relation to children's rights. *The International Journal of Children's Rights, 8*(3), 243–59.

McCarthy, P. J., & Jones, M. V. (2007). A qualitative study of sport enjoyment in the sampling years. *The Sport Psychologist*, *21*(4), 400-416.

McCool, J. P., Moran, K., Ameratunga, S., & Robinson, E. (2008). New Zealand beachgoers' swimming behaviours, swimming abilities, and perception of drowning risk. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, *2*(1), 7-15.

McMahon, J., & McGannon, K. (2017). Re-immersing into elite swimming culture: A meta-autoethnography by a former elite swimmer. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *34*(3), 223-234.

McNarry, G., Allen-Collinson, J., & Evans, A. B. (2019). Reflexivity and bracketing in sociological phenomenological research: Researching the competitive swimming lifeworld. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *11*(1), 138-151.

McPhearson, C. & McPhearson, L. (1990). *Samoan medical beliefs and practice*. Auckland University Press.

Mead, M. (1928). The role of the individual in Samoan culture. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, *58*, 481-495.

Meleisea, M. (1987). *The making of modern Samoa: Traditional authority and colonial administration in the history of Western Samoa*. University of the South Pacific, Suva.

Meleisea, M. (1995). To whom gods and men crowded: chieftainship and hierarchy in ancient Samoa. In J. Huntsman (Ed.). *Tonga and Samoa: Images of gender and polity* (pp. 19-34). Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies.

Meleisea, M., & Meleisea, P. S. (Eds.). (1987). *Lagaga: A short history of Western Samoa*. University of the South Pacific.

Meo-Sewabu, L. (2014). Cultural discernment as an ethics framework: An Indigenous Fijian approach. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, *55*(3), 345-354.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2004). *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic writings*. Routledge.

Merton, R. K. (1972). Insiders and outsiders: A chapter in the sociology of knowledge. *American Journal of Sociology*, *78*(1), 9-47.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Mills, C. W. (1959). The promise of sociology. *Seeing ourselves*, 1-5.

Milner, G. B. (1966*). Samoan Dictionary.* University Press.

Mitra, R. (2010). Doing Ethnography, being an ethnographer: The autoethnographic research process and I. *Journal of Research Practice*, *6*(1), M4.

Molnar, G., & Kanemasu, Y. (2014). Playing on the global periphery: Social scientific explorations of rugby in the Pacific Islands. *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science*, *3*(3), 175-185.

Moran, K. (2006a). *Re-thinking drowning risk: The role of water safety knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in the aquatic recreation of New Zealand youth* [Doctoral thesis, Massey University]. http://hdl.handle.net/10179/642

Moran, K. (2006b). Water safety knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of Asian youth in New Zealand. In S. Tse, M. E. Hoque, K. Rasanathan, M. Chatterji, R. Wee, S. Garg, & Y. Ratnasabapathy (Eds.). *Prevention, protection and promotion. Proceedings of the second International Asian*

Health and Wellbeing Conference (pp. 91-101) Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation (CAHRE), The University of Auckland.

Moran, K. (2007). Water safety knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of young Pasifika New Zealanders. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, *42*(1/2), 161-169.

Moran, K. (2008). Rock-based fishers' perceptions of water safety. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education, 2(*2), 128–139.

Moran, K. (2010). *The Shaping of Swimming and Water Safety Education in New Zealand*. Tradewinds Publishing Ltd.

Moran, K., & Wilcox, S. (2013). Water safety practices and perceptions for " New" New Zealanders. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, *7*(2), 136-146.

Moran, K., & Willcox, S. (2010). New settlers, old problem: facilitating water safety education for new residents in aquatically oriented New Zealand. *Pacific-Asian Education Journal*, *22*(2), 49-60.

Morris, M. W., Leung, K., Ames, D., & Lickel, B. (1999). Views from inside and outside: Integrating emic and etic insights about culture and justice judgment. *Academy of Management Review*, *24*(4), 781-796.

Morrow, V. (2001). Young people's explanations and experiences of social exclusion: Retrieving Bourdieu's concept of social capital. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *21*(4-6), 37-63.

Mulitalo-Lauta, P. T. (2000). *Fa'asamoa and social work within the New Zealand context*.Dunmore Press.

Mutch, C. (2005*). Doing educational research: A practitioner's guide to getting started*. NZCER press.

Ngunjiri, F. W., Hernandez, K. A. C., & Chang, H. (2010). Living autoethnography: Connecting life and research. *Journal of Research Practice*, *6*(1), 1-17.

Norwood, D. M. (2010). *I am not my hair... or am I? Exploring the minority swimming gap.* [Doctoral thesis, University of Tennessee]. https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/835

O'Regan, B. (2006). *Ietoga: Samoan educators' educational journeys.* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Christchurch College of Education, Canterbury.

Paice, C. (2021). *Barriers to Effective Conversation about the Menstrual Cycle between Athletes and Support Staff* [Doctoral thesis, Griffith University]. https://doi.org/10.25904/1912/4428

Pala'amo, A. F. (2017). *Fetu'utu'una'i le vā: Navigating relational space: an exploration of traditional and contemporary pastoral counselling practices* [Doctoral thesis, Massey University]. http://hdl.handle.net/10179/11813

Panapa, L., & Phillips, M. (2014). Ethnic persistence: Towards understanding the lived experiences of Pacific Island athletes in the National Rugby League. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, *31*(11), 1374-1388.

Paulhus, D. L., & Vazire, S. (2007). The self-report method. In R. W. Robins, R. C. Fraley, R. F. Krueger (Eds.). *Handbook of Research Methods in Personality Psychology*, *1*(2007), 224-239. Guilford Press.

Pharr, J., Irwin, C., Layne, T., & Irwin, R. (2018). Predictors of swimming ability among children and adolescents in the United States. *Sports*, *6*(1), 17.

Pinel, C. J., Mehta, R., & Okholm Kryger, K. (2022). The impact and experienced barriers menstruation present to football participation in amateur female footballers. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, *40*(17), 1950-1963.

Poasa, K. H., Mallinckrodt, B., & Suzuki, L. A. (2000). Causal attributions for problematic family interactions: a qualitative, cultural comparison of Western Samoa, American Samoa, and the United States. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *28*(1), 32-60. doi:10.1177/0011000000281003

Ponessa, J. M. (1992). Student Access to Extracurricular Activities. *Public Affairs Focus*, *23*, 1-10.

Porter, G., Townsend, J., & Hampshire, K. (2012). Children and young people as producers of knowledge. *Children's Geographies*, *10*(2), 131-134.

Pratt, R. G. (1984) *Pratt's Grammar and Dictionary Samoan-English, English Samoan*, R. McMillan.

Prescott, S. M. (2008). Using talanoa in Pacific business research in New Zealand: Experiences with Tongan entrepreneurs. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *4*(1), 127-158.

Price, N. (2007). *Game of two halves: Preparing young elite rugby players for a future beyond the game* [Doctoral thesis, University of Wollongong].

Prout, A., & James, A. (1997). A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood? Provenance, promise and problems. In A. Prout, & A. James (Eds.). *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: contemporary issues in the sociological study of children* (pp. 1-28). Routledge.

Pulotu-Endemann, F. K. (2009, September). *Fonofale model* [Conference session]. Pacific health promotion models: A partnership between the Health Promotion Forum of New Zealand & Pasifika. Massey Wellington Campus, Massey University, New Zealand.

Pulotu-Endemann, F., Suaalii-Sauni, T., Lui, D., McNicholas, T., Milne, M., & Gibbs, T. S. (2007). Pacific mental health and addiction cultural and clinical competencies framework. Auckland: Te Pou O Te Whakaaro Hui, The National Centre of Mental Health Research and Workforce Development.

Quan, L., Crispin, B., Bennett, E., & Gomez, A. (2006). Beliefs and practices to prevent drowning among Vietnamese-American adolescents and parents. *Injury Prevention, 12*(6), 427-429.

Rangiwai, B., Enari, D., Masae, C., Paea, D., Tahilanu-Mapili, L., & Vailahi, V. (2021). Lost in translation: Reflexive thematic analysis in research with Pacific peoples. *Te Kaharoa*, *14*(1), 1-8.

Rasmussen, D. & Fuamatu, F. (2012). Aspects of sports development. In M. Meleisea & E. Meleisea *Samoa's journey 1962- 2012: Aspects of history*. (pp.208-225). Victoria University Press.

Rasmussen, D. (2010). *Implementing the Samoan Secondary Schools Health and Physical Education Curriculum: A Peg in the Ground.* [Master thesis, University of Canterbury]. http://dx.doi.org/10.26021/9386

Ravulo, J. (2016). Pacific epistemologies in professional social work practice, policy and research. *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development*, *26*(4), 191-202.

Reiners, G. M. (2012). Understanding the differences between Husserl's (descriptive) and Heidegger's (interpretive) phenomenological research. *Journal of Nursing & Care*, *1*(5), 1-3.

Richards, J., Sherry, E., Philpott, O., Keane, L., Schulenkorf, N., & Bauman, A. (2016). Evaluation protocol: Netball to promote physical and mental health in Samoa and Tonga. *Journal of sport for development*, *4*(7), 1-11.

Richards, J., Sherry, E., Tamala, F., Schuster, S., Schulenkorf, N., & Keane, L. (2022). Netball Shoots for Physical and Mental Wellbeing in Samoa: A Natural Experiment. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(5), 2663–. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19052663

Richardson, L., Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). Writing a method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 923-948). *Writing: A method of inquiry*, 923-948.

Right to Play 2008, Sport for development and peace: Governments in action, Canada

Rodriguez, L., & McDonald, B. (2013). After the whistle: Issues impacting on the health and wellbeing of Polynesian players off the field. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Health, Sport and Physical Education*, *4*(3), 201-215.

Rolfe, G. (2002). A lie that helps us see the truth: Research, truth and fiction in the helping professions. *Reflective Practice*, *3*(1) 89-102.

Ross, S. R., Irwin, C. C., Irwin, R. L., Martin, N. T., & Ryan, T. D. (2014). The development of swimming skills for African American youth: parent and caregiver perceptions of barriers and motivations. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, *8*(3), 219-239.

Rowland, G., Rowland, S., & Winter, R. (1990). Writing fiction as inquiry into professional practice. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *22*(3), 291-293.

Salguero, A., Gonzalez-Boto, R., Tuero, C., & Marquez, S. (2003). Identification of dropout reasons in young competitive swimmers. *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*, *43*(4), 530-534.

Samu, T. W.(2006) Revisiting the "Pasifika Way" for a new School of Pasifika education. *Center for Pacific Islands Studies Occasional Paper 43*, 137. http://hdl.handle.net/10125/15600

Sanga, K. (2004). Making philosophical sense of Indigenous Pacific research. In T. Baba, O. Mahina, N. Williams, U. Nabobo-Baba (Eds.). *Researching the Pacific and Indigenous peoples*, (pp. 41-52). Auckland University Press.

Sanga, K., & Reynolds, M. (2017). To know more of what it is and what it is not: Pacific research on the move. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Research, 1*(2), 198-204.

Sauni, P. (2009). The lie of the land: Vygotsky is Samoan. (Unpublished conference presentation), *The International Careers Conference.* Wellington New Zealand.

Sauni, S. L. (2011). Samoan research methodology: The Ula-a new paradigm. *Pacific-Asian Education Journal*, *23*(2), 53-64.

Savvides, N., Al-Youssef, J., Colin, M., & Garrido, C. (2014). Journeys into inner/outer space: Reflections on the methodological challenges of negotiating insider/outsider status in international educational research. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, *9*(4), 412-425.

Schaaf, M. (2006). Elite Pacific male rugby players' perceptions and experiences of professional rugby. *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue*, (7), 41-54.

Schoeffel, P. (1978). Gender, status and power in Samoa. *Canberra Anthropology*, *1*(2), 69-81.

Schoeffel, P. (1984). Women's work and development in the South Pacific. In L. Melville (Ed.). *Women, aid and development, women and development network of Australia* (pp. 45-52). Canberra.

Schoeffel, P. (1987). Rank, gender and politics in ancient Samoa: The genealogy of Salamāsina O Le Tafaifā. *The Journal of Pacific History*, *22*(4), 174-193.

Schoeffel, P. (1995). The Samoan concept of feagaiga and its transformation. In J. Huntsman (Ed.). *Tonga and Samoa: Images of gender and polity*, (pp. 85-105). MacMillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies.

Schulenkorf, N., & Adair, D. (2014). Sport-for-development: The emergence and growth of a new genre. In *Global Sport-for-Development: Critical Perspectives* (pp. 3-11). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Schulenkorf, N., Sherry, E., Richards, J., Siefken, K., & Tauhalaliku, U. (2022). Health interventions as vehicles for increased sport participation for women and girls: Socio-managerial insights from a Netball-for-Development Program in Tonga. *Journal of Sport for Development*.

Schuster, S. (2020). Partnership and practices - Samoa national sport federations role within teacher education program. In M. Bobrík, B. Antala, & R. Pělucha (Eds.). *Physical education in universities:Researches–best practices–situation* (1st ed., pp. 421-432). Slovak Scientific Society for Physical Education and Sport and FIEP.

Schuster, S. (2021). From voyager to swimmer: Transboundary intersections influencing the history of competitive swimming in Samoa. *The Journal of Sāmoan Studies, 11*(1), 33-50.

Schuster, S., & Lauina-Viliamu Fa'amatuainu, K. (2019). Early childhood education in Samoa: Preservice curriculum and concerns regarding play. In B. Antala, G. Demirhan, A. Carraro, C. Oktar, H. Oz, & A. Kaplánová (Eds.). *Physical education in early childhood education and care:Researches–best Practices–situation* (1st ed., pp. 409-420). Slovak Scientific Society for Physical Education and Sport and FIEP.

Schuster, S., & Schoeffel, P. (2018) Girls and sports in Samoa: Culture, policy and practice in urban and rural communities. In G. Molnar, S. N. Amin & Y. Kanemasu (Eds.). *Women, sport and exercise in the Asia-Pacific region: Domination, resistance, accommodation* (pp. 111-123). Routledge.

Schuster, S., Schoeffel, P., & Heard, E. M. (2018). Perspectives on health and physical education curriculum in Samoa. In S. Popović, B. Antala, D. Bjelica, & J. Gardašević (Eds.). *Physical Education in Secondary School: Researches-best practices-situation* (pp. 335-344). Faculty of Sport and Physical Education, University of Montenegro.

Scott, S. (2009). Reclothing the emperor: The swimming pool as a negotiated order. *Symbolic Interaction*, *32*(2), 123-145.

Scott, S. (2010). How to look good (nearly) naked: The performative regulation of the swimmer's body. *Body & Society*, *16*(2), 143-168.

Seiuli, B. M. S. (2016). We are not brown-palagi: Navigating cultural boundaries in Samoan research. *Journal of Indigenous Wellbeing*, *1*(1), 1-15.

Shaw, S. M., & Dawson, D. (2001). Purposive leisure: Examining parental discourses on family activities. *Leisure Sciences, 23*(4), 217–231. doi:10.1080/01490400152809098

Sherry, E., Schulenkorf, N., Seal, E., Nicholson, M., & Hoye, R. (2017). Sport-for-development in the South Pacific region: Macro-, meso-, and micro-perspectives. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *34*(4), 303-316.

Shields, N., & Synnot, A. (2016). Perceived barriers and facilitators to participation in physical activity for children with disability: a qualitative study. *BMC Pediatrics*, *16*(9), 1-10. DOI 10.1186/s12887-016-0544-7

Shields, N., Synnot, A. J., & Barr, M. (2012). Perceived barriers and facilitators to physical activity for children with disability: a systematic review. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, *46*(14), 989-997.

Shinew, K.J., Floyd, M.F., & Parry, D.C. (2004). Understanding racial differences in leisure activities and constraints: Exploring an alternative framework. *Leisure Sciences, 26*(2), 181–200. doi:10.1080/01490400490432109

Shore, B. (1982). *Sala'Ilua a Samoan mystery*. Columbia University Press.

Silverman, D. (1998). Research and social policy. In C. Seale (Ed.). *Researching society and culture*. Sage Publications.

Simanu-Klutz, M. L. (2011). *A malu i fale,'e malu fo'i i fafo Samoan women and power: towards an historiography of changes and continuities in power relations in le nu'u o teine of sāoluafata 1350--1998 cE* [Doctoral Thesis, University of Hawaii at Manoa]. http://hdl.handle.net/10125/101635

Sirard, J., Pfeiffer, K., & Pate, R. (2006). Motivational factors associated with sports program participation in middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 38*(6), 696-703.

Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (Eds.). (2016). *Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi-org.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/10.4324/9781315762012

Smith, B., McGannon, K. R., & Williams, T. L. (2015). Ethnographic creative nonfiction: Exploring the whats, whys and hows. In G. Molnar & L. Purdy (Eds.). *Ethnographies in sport and exercise research* (pp. 59-73). Routledge.

Smith, E. (2009). *Race, sport and the American dream* (2nd ed.). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press

Smith, G. S., & Brenner, R. A. (1995). The changing risks of drowning for adolescents in the US and effective control strategies. *Adolescent Medicine, 6*(2), 153-170.

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2007). Pain as an assault on the self: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the psychological impact of chronic benign low back pain. *Psychology and Health, 22*(5), 517-534.

Smith, J. A., & Shinebourne, P. (2012). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In H. E. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. E. Rindskopf, & K. J. Sher (Eds.). *APA handbook of*

research methods in psychology, Vol 2: Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological (pp. 73-82) American Psychological Association, Washington DC. doi:10.1037/13620-005

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies. Research and indigenous peoples*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Snyder, E. E., & Spreitzer, E. A. (1973). Family influence and involvement in sports. *Research Quarterly. American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation*, *44*(3), 249-255.

Stallman, Robert Keig; Junge, Malfrid; and Blixt, Turid (2008) The Teaching of swimming based on a model derived from the causes of drowning. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education* 2(4), 372-382.

Starek, J., & McCullagh, P. (1999). The effect of self-modeling on the performance of beginning swimmers. *The Sport Psychologist*, *13*(3), 269-287.

Steinhardt, F., Ullenhag, A., Jahnsen, R., & Dolva, A. S. (2020). Perceived facilitators and barriers for participation in leisure activities in children with disabilities: perspectives of children, parents and professionals. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *28*(2) 1-15.

Stewart, D. W., Shamdasani, P. N., & Rook, D. W. (2007). *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. Sage.

Stewart-Withers, R., & Brook, M. (2009). Sport as a vehicle for development: The influence of rugby league in/on the Pacific.

Stewart-Withers, R., Sewabu, K., & Richardson, S. (2017). Talanoa: A contemporary qualitative methodology for sport management. *Sport Management Review*, *20*(1), 55-68.

Stewart-Withers, R., & Hapeta, J. (2020). An examination of an Aotearoa/New Zealand plus-sport education partnership using livelihoods and capital analysis. *Journal of Sport for Development*, *8*(15), 50-65.

Suaalii-Sauni, T. M., Wendt, M. A., Fuamatu, N., Va'ai, U. L., Whaitiri, R., & Filipo, S. L. (Eds.). (2014). *Whispers and vanities: Samoan indigenous knowledge and religion*. Huia Publishers.

Suaalii-Sauni, T., & Fulu-Aiolupotea, S. (2014). Decolonising Pacific research, building Pacific research communities and developing Pacific research tools: The case of the talanoa and the faafaletui in Samoa. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint, 55*(3), 331-344.

Tagoilelagi, F. A. F. (1995). *The role of the Samoan culture (fa'asamoa) in the development of its childrens' literacy skills* [Doctoral thesis, University of Auckland].

Tamasese, K. (2002). Honouring Samoan ways and understandings: Towards culturally appropriate mental health services. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy & Community Work*, (2) 64–71.

Tamasese, K., Peteru, C., Waldegrave, C., & Busch, A. (2005). Ole taeao afua- the new morning: A qualitative investigation into Samoan perspectives on mental health and culturally appropriate services. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 39(2), 300–309.

Tamasese, K., Peteru, M. C., & Waldegrave, C. (1997). *The new morning: A qualitative investigation into Samoan perspectives on mental health and culturally appropriate services: A Research project carried out by the Family Centre*. The Centre.

Tcherkézoff, S. (2019). A bus ride in Samoa during the 1980s: Hierarchy, stratification and individualism in the fa'aSāmoa. *Journal of Samoan Studies*, *9*, 30-46.

Tengan, T. P. K., & Markham, J. M. (2009). Performing Polynesian masculinities in American football: From 'rainbows to warriors'. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, *26*(16), 2412-2431.

Thaman, K. H. (2002). Shifting sights: the cultural challenge of sustainability. *Higher Education Policy*, *15*(2), 133-142.

Tiatia, J. (2008). *Pacific Cultural Competencies. A Literature Review*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Tierney, W. G. (2003). Undaunted courage: Life history and the postmodern challenge. In N. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* (pp. 537-554). Sage.

Treasure, D. C., Monson, J., & Lox, C. L. (1996). Relationship between self-efficacy, wrestling performance, and affect prior to competition. *The Sport Psychologist*, *10*(1), 73-83.

Tuafuti, P. (2011). Multiple challenges in research within the fa'asamoa context. *Pacific-Asian Education*, *23*(2), 33–42.

Tuagalu, C. (2011). Young people's perceptions and experiences of physical activity in Apia, Samoa. *Pacific Health Dialog*, *17*(1), 55-64.

Tuagalu, T. C. (2009). Young male and female perceptions and experiences of physical activity in Apia, Samoa [Master's thesis, University of Waikato]. https://hdl.handle.net/10289/3952

Tualaulelei, E., & McFall-McCaffery, J. (2019). The Pacific research paradigm: Opportunities and challenges. *MAI Journal*, 8(2), 188-204.

Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2010). Bracketing in qualitative social work. *Qualitative Social Work*, *11*, 80-96.

Tunufa'i, L. (2013). *E Agatonu a Manu'a o Fesili: investigating the attitudes of an Auckland Samoan population toward the New Zealand criminal justice system* [Doctoral thesis, Auckland University of Technology].

Tupuola, A. M. (1993). Raising research consciousness the fa'a Samoa way. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, *3*, 175-189.

Tupuola, A. M. (2006). Participatory research, culture and youth identities: An exploration of indigenous, cross-cultural and trans-national methods. *Children Youth and Environments*, *16*(2), 291-316.

Uperesa, F. A. (2010). *Fabled futures: Development, gridiron football, and transnational movements in American Samoa* [Doctoral thesis, Columbia University].

Uperesa, F. A. L. (2014). Fabled futures: Migration and mobility for Samoans in American football. *The Contemporary Pacific*, *26*(2), 281-301.

Uperesa, F. A. L., & Mountjoy, T. (2014). Global sport in the Pacific: A brief overview. *The Contemporary Pacific*, *26*(2), 263-279.

Vaai, U.L. (2014). The prayer of a fa'atosaga: Fa'aaloalo in Samoan indigenous religious culture. In T.M. Suaalii-Sauni, M.A. Wendt, N. Fuamatu, U.L. Va'ai, R. Whaitiri, and S.L. Filipo (Eds.). Whispers and vanities: Samoan indigenous knowledge and religion. Huia Publishers. https://huia.co.nz/huia-bookshop/bookshop/whispers-and-vanities-samoan-indigenous-knowledge-and-religion-e-book/

Vaioleti, T. (2013). Talanoa: Differentiating the talanoa research methodology from phenomenology, narrative, Kaupapa Maori and feminist methodologies. *Te Reo 56*, 191-212.

Vaioleti, T. M. (2006). Talanoa research methodology: A developing position on Pacific research. *Waikato Journal of Education*, *12*, 21-34

Vaka, S., Brannelly, T., & Huntington, A. (2016). Getting to the heart of the story: Using talanoa to explore Pacific mental health. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, *37*(8), 537-544.

Van der Ryn, M. (2016). Which way is front? Spatial orientation complications in contemporary Samoan villages. *Structure and Dynamics*, *9*(1), 114-135.

Vickers, M. H. (2010). The creation of fiction to share other truths and different viewpoints: A creative journey and an interpretive process. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *16*(7), 556-565.

Vygotsky, L. (1962). Thought and language. In E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar ,Eds. And trans). *Studies in Communication*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wall, M., & Côté, J. (2007). Developmental activities that lead to dropout and investment in sport. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, *12*(1), 77-87.

Wall, S. (2008). Easier said than done: Writing an autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *7*(1), 38-53.

Waller Ph D, S. N., & Bemiller JD, J. (2018). Navigating rough waters: Public swimming pools, discrimination, and the law. *International journal of aquatic research and education*, *11*(1), 10.

Waller, S. N., & Norwood, D. M. (2009). The Complexities of de-constructing the constraints to African American female participation in swimming: A rejoinder to Irwin et al. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, *3*(4), 3.

Waller, S., & Norwood, D. M. (2011). What African Americans can do to bridge the swimming gap: A call to action. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, *5*(4), 10.

Walsham, G. (1995). Interpretive case studies in IS research: nature and method. *European Journal of Information Systems*, *4*(2), 74-81.

Wanner, T. (2021). Foreign aid, the soft power of sport, and the Sustainable Development Goals: An analysis of Australia's sport for development in the Pacific program. In *Physical Activity in Low-and Middle-Income Countries* (pp. 109-126). Routledge.

Webb, C., & Kevern, J. (2001). Focus groups as a research method: a critique of some aspects of their use in nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *33*(6), 798-805.

Wells, L. (2021). The story of the bungalow Alice Springs, 1914-1929: A decolonised, creative non-fictive treatment with a focus on the women and children. *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal, 27*, 81-103.

What a time to be alive. (18/11/22) The Guardian Retrieved 10 January 2023 www.theguardian.com › world › 2022‘What a time to be alive’: rugby league fever grips Samoa after...

Wiltse, J. (2007). *Contested waters: A social history of swimming pools in America*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Woodard, M. D. (1988). Class, regionality, and leisure among urban Black Americans: The post-civil rights era. *Journal of Leisure Research, 20*(2), 87–105.

Wyness, M. (2013). Children’s participation and intergenerational dialogue: Bringing adults back into the analysis. *Childhood, 20*(4), 429-442.

Yin, R. K. (2015). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. Guilford Press.