

**Ke Mau Ki Pale O Tokelau:  
Hold Fast To The Treasures of Tokelau;  
Navigating Tokelauan Agency  
In The Homeland And Diaspora**

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

The term “Indigenous knowledge” specifically captures selections of understandings that emerge from different geographical locations, collective and individual histories and education

-Ingimundarson 2012, 6.

Traditional knowledge is local knowledge; it is knowledge that is fostered by a group of people through generations of living in close contact with nature

-Hunter 2007, 3.

My research looks at the Tokelauan educational platform in the homeland and in two diasporic communities located in New Zealand and Hawai‘i. Each geographic location has a different story to tell about the homeland and/or diaspora and different ways of showing native agency in certain political structures that are associated with the educational system. I highlight the pathway taken in each location as a culture aims to perpetuate Tokelauan language and traditions via an Indigenous educational platform through force-driven issues beyond their control.

There has been a shift towards implementing Indigenous models of education and recognizing this type of curriculum as legitimate becomes important. This different format highlights and enhances traditions and languages that fall outside the Western hegemony of curriculum that is seen through the subjects such as English and Math and becomes more conducive to native populations where tradition and beliefs are observed in a curriculum. If Indigenous cultures are to thrive, then the explanation of how this world works needs to include a concept of native agency.

In the last decade, there has been an emphasis on replacing a curriculum that is Western in nature and replacing it with a platform that is more appropriate for native people that will encompass the native culture, traditions, values and language. With this shift towards

implementing Indigenous models of education, this type of curriculum becomes pivotal in cultural reclamation and revitalization in the Pacific, an emphasis on replacing the educational platform becomes pivotal in this syncretic world that we live in so that the curriculum can be culturally appropriate for native people.

The research I present is based on extensive literature review that I have conducted over nineteen months, extending from October 2012 to April 2014. My research question is: “What are the pathways used by Tokelauans in the homeland and in the diaspora that asserts native agency in a curriculum that is colonial in nature?”

I argue that by having an educational platform that is interdisciplinary, cohesive and tailored to the characteristics of the Tokelau culture, the long term range is seen as favorable for the perpetuation of their culture. I show this by sharing the history of Tokelau and I show the connection to culture through their cosmology and traditions. I then fast forward to the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries where I focus on the time from 1953 to 2014 and use comparative case studies as my basis of analysis. I chart the history of the New Zealand-based Volunteer Services Abroad (VSA) ten year engagements with the Government of Tokelau where I critically analyze the development of education in the homeland by highlighting the findings in a recent study that has ultimately contributed to the structural educational framework in 2014.

For comparative purposes, I follow the two largest diasporic communities of Tokelauans with one being in the North Island of New Zealand and the other in Wahiawa, Hawai‘i. I look at the situation in New Zealand and focus on the system already in place for the Maori population through the Department of Education and chart the emergence of having Tokelauan language and agency in the schools today. I then take my study to Hawai‘i where I chart the beginnings of

a grass roots community center in Wahiawa, and compare the two diasporic communities and their shared and interactive relationship.

I add to the discussion of how “to inspire alternative contexts to end the domination and oppression that are the residue of colonialism. A constructive understanding of contexts also gives us greater mastery in reconstructing a more equitable society and more equitable human relationship” (Battiste 2000, 14). For the bigger picture, I show the dynamics behind each country’s system and how the different Tokelauan communities have found a way to navigate around the colonizers’ educational platform to form a system that is conducive to their own cultural needs. This ultimately perpetuates and strengthens their culture while in the homeland or in the diaspora.

I argue that by recognizing the native ways of learning in the infrastructure of the schools, and by providing an education that adheres to an Indigenous person’s own inherent perspectives, experiences, language, and customs, the outcome can only be favorable and beneficial for the future of Tokelauans no matter where they choose to live while at the same time being an example for other native peoples in their plight for survival with a deeper sense of identity through such platforms.

The first purpose of my research is to understand the people of Tokelau by understanding their history, cosmological beliefs and origins, and the ramifications that have affected all four island atolls in terms of migration and living in the diaspora. To appreciate where these native communities are today in terms of a curriculum in education is to see where they have come from and what paths had to be negotiated in order to reach a shared collaboration for their future interests.

The second purpose is to highlight the significance of a platform that helps to re-conceptualize a curriculum that is culturally appropriate in the education system. It is important to identify key and successful tools for the survivance of the native peoples in Oceania. “Native survivance is an active sense of presence over historical absence, deracination, and oblivion” (Vizenor 2008, 36). There is a consciousness today of recognizing Indigenous knowledge and is seen by native people as benefiting not only the native community but also non-native communities as well. “The nature of survivance is unmistakable in language, native stories, natural reason, active traditions, customs, and narrative resistance and is clearly observable in persons’ attributes such as humor, spirit, cast of mind, and moral courage in literature,” (Vizenor 2008, 1) and adds a new vision of seeing the world through different lens.

The third purpose of my research is to identify and learn from the pathways taken from the Tokelauan population in their homeland and in the diaspora and understand the dynamics and force-driven issues between the colonial powers and these native communities.

Our reasons for doing so could have been motivated by factors such as filling in the gap where previous studies by non-native scholars have not been able to do so, providing a critique of authorized discussions on Pacific islands, and reaffirming our struggle to reclaim our identity and cultures through the process of research and writing (Winduo 2009, 86).

### **Positionality**

I descend from the island of Maui (Hawai‘i) and I am from the Ahupua‘a ‘O Hali‘imaile. My father is Native Hawaiian from O‘ahu, Hawai‘i where I was born into a genealogy that is traceable and goes back sixty eight generations to po (darkness). I am a descendant of the Mo‘i clan that represents and consists of the ‘I clan and Keawe clan, respectfully. The Mo‘i clan denotes chiefly status and makes up the monarchy family/royalty family in ancient Hawai‘i. My mother is of Pakeha and Indian descent from Rotorua, New Zealand. The connection to her

genealogy is null due to being raised in an orphanage and foster homes, and not knowing the full realm of her ancestry.

I identify with my Native Hawaiian side due to being born and raised on Maui, where I grew up being active in sports, such as, swimming, paddling canoe and sailing; as well as dancing hula and partaking in traditional customs. I was also surrounded by a supportive village that practiced cultural traditions and was/is active in protesting against the illegal occupation in Hawai‘i. I grew up without realizing that not every child in Hawai‘i grew up in this manner and I became conscious of this fact when I moved to O‘ahu to attend the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa immediately after high school.

With the kuleana (responsibility) that I have to my genealogy and the community that I come from on Maui, to seeing the concerns from my mother in regards to her identity, I have found myself re-entering school at an older age to learn and understand the discourse in the education system that constrains native people today through a disconnect in Western curriculum. In this day and age, with a rise in consciousness of native identity, I have found myself reverting to my Hawaiian traditions and wanting to learn more about who I am through a shared sense of native agency. I look to other native peoples to see what they are doing today in order to thrive by regaining, reclaiming, and ultimately living their lives true to their genealogy and ancestors. I feel by studying other native peoples and seeing how they have achieved success and failures better helps me to see as a Native Hawaiian where we are going in the future. Through collaboration with other native people and a shared sense of perpetuation for the culture, we can learn from each other as we are connected by the ocean and through the language.

## Theoretical Framework

My conceptual framework comes out in chapter three and has guided me throughout my research in this portfolio. In order to understand where native people are today in terms of native agency, a consciousness of the colonizing framework has to be discussed in a critical dialogue. I look to Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and his theory of 'The Cultural Bomb' to understand the concept used by the colonizing agency.

The effect is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves (Thiong'o 1981, 3).

The cultural bomb distances the native people from their homeland by disconnecting the belief that the person really has a connection to their place of origin. For education, the example lies where the native agency is not in the schools and the native children are learning the colonizers history instead of their own, thus further distancing the native people from their homeland while in the diaspora and/or even in the homeland.

Through this process of learning Western history and language, the possibility of reclaiming native rights appears non-existent. To conform to colonization starts to be a realistic option and the native person starts to assimilate to the system that has the most power.

“For colonialism, this involved two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer” (Thiong'o 1981, 16). The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized” (Thiong'o 1981, 16).

This theory leads me to the education system and the idea that to control a people's culture is to control their education and language. This then makes the native people see the

world in a certain way. They start seeing it being reflected in the culture of the language and education of imposition. In order to rectify this dynamic, a conscious change back to the language is necessary through an educational platform that focuses on integrating native perspectives along with traditions. The area that we question today leads many to a basic question about national perspective and relevance in an Indigenous curriculum, and that question is: from what lens do we look at the world?

### **Significance**

My research is significant because it shows the most recent and updated information that pertains to the Tokelauan community living in Tokelau, New Zealand and Hawai‘i today. Literature is a substantial part of my research because I have seen where I can add more to the discussion as it relates to all native people and the plight that we are going through. I think this portfolio will be of interest to certain audiences, such as the Tokelauan communities in Tokelau, New Zealand, and Hawai‘i. I also think this research will be important for those that are interested in immigration studies, Pacific Islands studies, language and native identity studies, cultural studies, indigenous educational platforms, education, and those people interested in decolonizing methodologies, just to name a few. The intended audience of my work is for those individuals with a consciousness of native concerns of perpetuation of culture and who can relate to an “Oceanic” way of thinking.

My research offers information that is key to future critical dialogue when discussing indigenous educational platforms and raises a consciousness about implementing a curriculum that is conducive to cultural values and traditions. I also look at a grassroots effort in New Zealand and Hawai‘i and focus on the force-driven issues that each colonizer enforces to the native people of their land and the path that the native population had to take in order to navigate

a sense of agency in the diaspora. Force-driven issues is a term that is used in literature today to explain the effects that come when a group of people are forced in to situations that go against their cultural norm. Force driven issues can be seen as a top-down approach where the group with the less power and control feels forced to react to, for example, through events that occur to the native population from the colonial forces that attempt to control their actions through assimilation.

This research offers a lens into a Pacific Islander studying another Pacific Islander group, thus highlighting critical issues through a native lens; thereby seeing native people being active participants in writing their own stories/history through a shared sense of agency.

### **Chapter Outline**

My first chapter, this chapter, consists of the 'Introduction' that goes over the reasons why I am writing about the Tokelauan educational platform in three geographic locations. My intention with this chapter is to allow the reader to have a small window in to my own epistemology and from there understand why I am writing about another native group of people. I explain the structure of my portfolio as I introduce the theoretical framework that has aided me in researching these platforms. By drawing a picture of understanding in the first chapter I hope to have that as a understanding for the significance of the chapters to come. I emphasize a realistic outlook as to what native people have to do in order to show native agency in their educational system.

Chapter two, I introduce the cosmogony and belief system of Tokelauans living in Tokelau. I share the history of Tokelau as it will give a clear idea to others of where Tokelau is geographically, who they are as a people, interactions with colonization, and the political history behind where they are today. It is in this chapter that the foundation for my portfolio is shared

and a deeper sense of who they are will convey the importance of having an indigenous educational platform that is conducive to this ethnic population.

Chapter three is divided in to two parts; the first part is based on a case study that explains the transition of the education system in Tokelau that now has a school on all three atolls as of 2014. The case study outlines the process and growing pains that has been overcome and shows how these experiences has led to a success story for Tokelau in respects to new opportunities of higher education. I then move my focus to New Zealand and trace the pathway of their education system that initially started in church halls and community centers and leading to having their Tokelauan language translated in to the New Zealand curriculum. A great example of how a grassroots beginning can accomplish so much for a native community through a shared collaboration with the colonial powers that be in place.

I reintroduce Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's theory of 'The Cultural Bomb,' and discuss the politics in New Zealand and the infra-structure of the education system. I bring a different context to this discussion through song and poetry to show the different platforms that have existed all along and is now incorporated in Indigenous educational platforms.

Chapter four, I discuss the Tokelauan community in Hawai'i by looking at a case study that started the Tokelauan language revitalization project for the community, and I show the grassroots effort through a shared collaboration amongst the communities in an attempt to find answers on language revitalization. My focus is center around Te Lumanaki O Tokelau i Amelika Language and Culture School in Wahiawa, and outline their path to where they are today in terms of native agency. I then bring the two diasporic communities together, New Zealand and Hawai'i, and share the relationship that exist between the two today.

Chapter five, I round everything up for a conclusion where I discuss my findings and share my thoughts on the wider picture of having an educational platform conducive to native traditions for native people. I show different ways of navigating through colonial waters by showing native agency in these different communities and countries. “Decolonizing Pacific studies is about reclaiming Indigenous oceanic perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom that have been devalued or suppressed because they were or are not considered important or worthwhile” (Thaman 2003, 2), thereby giving a voice and a lens to native agency. I offer a native lens by recognizing indigenous education as a legitimate form of education today. I attempt to raise an awareness of the bigger picture in respects to shared collaboration, learning from other native and/or ethnic groups, and the importance of an educational platform that can connect the native child to their cultural foundation.

My research and work is but one perspective and I do not claim to know all the answers to perpetuation of culture. This research has taught me that a critical dialogue is needed in order to learn how to navigate to the future and everyone collaboratively should be a part of this process that ultimately leads the future of native children in to a better space of native agency and cultural pride.

## Chapter Two

### *Understanding Tokelau And Her People*

In this chapter I present the cosmogony and geographical lay-out of Tokelau so that the reader can understand the connection that the native people have with their origin and land. This foundation continues to be a part of their cultural DNA while in the homeland and most importantly in the diaspora. Therefore, this chapter sets the stage to the way native people see the world through their native lens.

I argue that this knowledge of cosmogony and geography is necessary and becomes part of the foundation to native agency in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. By understanding this foundation is to understand the desire of perpetuating a culture and reactions to colonial structures through a native lens. This chapter is ultimately used in raising the consciousness of knowing one's own history and ways of seeing the world today in terms of learning how to navigate between the two worlds, the colonial world and the native world. I show this by discussing the cosmology of Tokelau as seen through a spiritual realm that is told through an oral history and the origins of Tokelau as seen through a western realm. This basis gives another way of looking at the world as one story is seen through oral history and the other story is seen through a written history. This understanding relates to "how we see a thing – even with our eyes- is very much dependent on where we stand in relationship to it and is explained as the quest for relevance" (Thiong'o 1981, 87-88).

The dynamics appear when migration and relocation becomes necessary to a group of people that have to leave their homeland for numerous reasons. For the population that continue to live in Tokelau, it is easy to exist in harmony because the cultural foundation exists where the language continues to be predominantly spoken, the landscape connects the people to the oral

history and beliefs of their people through names, stories, and cultural practices that connects the land to the cosmology where there is an overall sense of who they are based on living in that environment.

For those that had to leave their homeland, that connection is hard to obtain while in the diaspora unless there is a conscious awareness of native agency and cultural perpetuation. They are forced to speak another language or language of imposition (Thiong'o 1981, 17), while living in someone else's homeland and therefore, will start to learn another culture as oppose to knowing their own. The landscape is different and the stories that connect one to their cultural is not apparent as they live in a place that does not represent their people. What is desired is to once again be connected to the homeland while in the diaspora. The question that could be asked is how does a diasporic community reclaim and reconnect to the foundation of their culture? Therefore, cosmogony is an important area of knowledge to know as this connection ties the people to the foundation of the culture.

The above concept is related to how we see the world and can be explained through the story of the visit to an elephant from seven blind men (Thiong'o 1981, 88). Each person is different in how they relate to their culture based on their epistemology, history of migration and ways of looking at the world while away from the homeland. I mention the story of the elephant because it explains the dynamics of diasporic communities where there is no one-way of doing things based on viewing the situation from different perspectives. Seven blind men went to see an elephant because they each had a different perception of what an elephant should look like. They each touched the elephant and were able to connect to that certain area that they were touching. However, because they were not touching the same area, the understanding touched only one aspect of the elephant. Upon returning home, each person could talk about the area that

they touched as matter of fact, however were not able to talk about the other areas of the elephant due to not experiencing it. The confusion was still apparent even though more was learned about this elephant through seven different lens. This concept relates to the diasporic position of how we view the world based on what we experience and become knowledgeable about. We can then relate this concept to Imperialism and how that relationship has affected native people and in turn how it has affected the way we look at our culture while in the diaspora as I mention later in this portfolio, how Native Hawaiians look at themselves while in their homeland; same force-driven issues of assimilation and marginalization, yet different dynamics.

### **Tokelau and her Atolls**

Tokelau or The Union Islands (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 119) lie in North-western Polynesia and was originally comprised of four reef atolls lying on a general Northwest-Southeast line, between latitude 8 degrees and 11 degrees South and longitude 171 degrees and 173 degrees West (MacGregor 1937, 5). They are located north of Samoa and east of the Ellice Islands (MacGregor 1937, 5). The four islands are: Olohega or Swain's island, once known as Quiros' Island; Fakaofu or Bowditch Island; Nukunonu or Duke of Clarence Island; Atafu or Duke of York Island (MacGregor 1937, 5).

Each atoll has its own story of creation and some of these origin stories are either about all three atolls or one or two of them, which gives no mention to one single origin account. However, the story that applies to all of the atolls is the story of how Lu raised the sky and placed the winds in the directions that would blow towards Tokelau, as does the story of how the different atolls were named (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 11).

There are two distinct types of legendary accounts on the origin of Tokelau and the people; the “evolutionary tracing of man from Gods evolved from distant and abstract elements, and the Western Polynesian belief in the path of origin” (MacGregor 1937, 16).

### **Story of creation from abstract elements**

The myth of the creation of the Tokelau atolls are said to belong to the Maui cycle of stories (MacGregor 1937, 16). Burrows gives the following account of the origin of the islands, probably a local adaptation of the story of the fishing up of Tonga, known by the first settlers on Fakaofu (MacGregor 1937, 16).

There were three brothers who lived in Tonga and whose names were Mauimua, Mauiloto, and Mauimuli (Maui the First, Maui the Middle, and Maui the Last). One day the three brothers went out fishing in their canoe far from land. Presently Mauimua’s hook got caught in the roots of a coconut tree on the bottom, so he hauled up a portion of the bottom to clear his hook. Thus an island was formed which so surprised the brothers that they called it Fakaofu. (Faka = in the nature of, ofu = surprise).

They then moved farther on and continued fishing, when Mauiloto’s hook got caught in the bottom, this time in the roots of a nono tree. He hauled up, and thus another island was formed. This they called Nukunono. (Nuku = island, nono = the name of a tree. Nukunono is said to have many trees about the village).

Again they moved on, and on this occasion Mauimuli’s hook got foul of the roots of a kanava tree. By hauling up, the island of Atafu was formed. (Atafu has more valuable kanava trees than the other islands). The origin and meaning of the name Atafu are not known (MacGregor 1937, 16).

There are two reasons why Olohega is not used in this adaptation, one is because of having its own unique story (MacGregor 1937, 16) and the second because the people from “Fakaofu did not regard this island and its former inhabitants as belonging to the Tokelau group (MacGregor 1937, 16).

### **Na Aho O Te Pohiha (The days of darkness)**

Ancient stories were pass down through oral history by the elders and usually started with the phrase *na aho o te pohiha* or the days of darkness. The birth of the Tokelau cosmos is similar to many other native stories of the cosmos. For Tokelau it is the story of Lu that is

believed to have been “derived from the Cook Islands” (MacGregor 1937, 17) and is “similar to central Polynesian tales (MacGregor 1937, 17).

Upon creation of the earth, the story is told that the sky and earth were about one yard separated from each other. “A man named Tikitiki and his wife Talaga who lived on the earth had no children until one day they had a caul child or a stillborn child” (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 14). The caul child was placed under a coconut shell where the parents would visit on a regular basis until one day the child appeared to have grown in size. The story continues soon after that the parents were startled one day by “a noise, looking over they saw that the wood en bowl that was used to cover the child was cast off and the child was crawling towards them” (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 15). To their amazement, the child came over and sat at the side of his parents (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 15), and named him Lu. It is said that Lu began to sing a song as he rested his feet against the sky.

Sapaipai ie, sapaipai ie	lift, lift
Te lagi o te Atua	The sky of God
E Lu tekena, e Lu tekena	By Lu’s pushing, by Lu’s pushing

As Lu sang “E Lu tekena” he straightened out his legs and pushed the sky up a little. Then he stood up and, still singing his song, pushed the sky with his hands. Then he used a tree, and finally he climbed up one tree and used another to push with.

When he could reach no higher he changed his song and called the winds to his assistance. All the twelve winds obeyed his calling and came to his assistance, and by their united efforts of blowing from all directions, blew the sky up to its present position (MacGregor 1937, 17).

After raising the sky, “he changed his song and called the called the winds to his assistance and all twelve winds obeyed his calling and came to his assistance, and by their united efforts of blowing from all directions, blew the sky up to its present position” (Ickes 2009, 37). The winds are counted and named in 12 points of the compass as follows:

Tokelau – Fakalua – Luatu (North winds)  
Tonga – Sulu – Tefa (East winds)

Sema – Lafalafa – Lakalua (South winds)  
 Laki – Fakatiu – Palapu (West winds)  
 (MacGregor 1937, 90).

As soon as he finished calling out those directions of the winds, his canoe sailed in the direction he wanted (MacGregor 1937, 90). Lu, became known as the sky lifter, namer of the twelve winds (MacGregor 1937, 90). Lu, the sky lifter, namer of the twelve winds, wrestled with the devil *Mafuike* (Earthquake), and like Hawai‘i’s Maui, also brought the gift of fire to the people of the world (Ickes 2009, 37).

### **Peopling of the Tokelau Atolls**

The following accounts for the peopling of Fakaofu as it is believed that a dead *uluu* drifted ashore at Fakaofu and rotted on the beach that soon produced maggots (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 18). It is believed that a *talanga* bird flew down from the sky and pecked a maggot open, upon which rain fell upon the fish and from the maggot a man came to life (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 18). This man was called Leua te Ilo or Te Ilo (The Maggot), who is the forefather of the Fakaofu people (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 17).

The first man is said to be Te Ilo, and his two sons as Kava and Singano, from whom the people of Fakaofu are descended from and another account gives Kava as the first man to be created and Senga, the first woman (MacGregor 1991, 18). Other stories cite a tale in which Kava and Singano are the first men, created directly from stones, which is connected to the belief that Kava Vasefanua, the historical chief of the island, was born from fatu (stone) (MacGregor 1937, 18). The common theme is that “all historical chiefs of the island took the name of Kava as an official title (MacGregor 1937, 26). Even though there are a few different stories and beliefs, the legends attribute the beginning of the Fakaofu people to settlers from other islands (MacGregor 1937, 18).

The longest list of Fakaofu chiefs contains 19 names where according to the genealogy of the Nukunonu and Atafu Kings, this line began in 1633 where the chieftainship was passed from father to son, thereby putting the rule of Kava Vasefanua at about 1647, closely checking with the time of Kava, the head of the line of Nukunonu and Atafu chiefs (MacGregor 1937, 26). Kava married a woman belonging to the early people of Nukunonu thus uniting both islands (MacGregor 1937, 26). Through this genealogy, the history of the Fakaofu people of the Tokelau islands then becomes a very recent event in the annals of the Polynesian peoples (MacGregor 1937, 26).

Compiled from the records of the European explorers, it is noted that their ledgers confirm the dates of the three chiefs along with their existence; Taupe was chief in 1841 when the US Exploring Expedition visited the islands; Te Taulu, in 1889, when Lister visited the island; and Savaiki, in 1916 when the last chief went out of official positions (MacGregor 1937, 24).

The chiefly line of Atafu came from Fakaofu and was a branch of the family which established the chiefs of Nukunonu and is recorded that the line of Nukunonu chiefs began between 1783 and 1808 (MacGregor 1937, 25).

### **Path of Origin**

There is an agreement on the first view of settlement which “refers to the sighting of land by the people who first voyaged and settled on Fakaofu” (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 1). The story describes voyagers coming close to land and as they came closer they could see the land over the waves. The land initially looked like a pandanus leaf from the sea and as they came closer it looked like “the tail end of a leaf, or a lead tip” (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 1) and so the “land was named Toke (tail) lau (leaf)” (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 1).

However, when discussing the origin there are three theories that are discussed. Through the proven navigation skills of ancient Polynesians, origin routes could have been settled from any direction; however, the strategic location has remnants of the culture of peoples that moved through them by place names in Tokelau, such as Rapa and Pukapuka; suggesting an influence and migration along an easterly path (MacGregor 1937, 5).

A second theory of origin explains that while Tokelau “does not lie within the path of the main line of (Eastward) migration, it is in the path of a second (Southern) route that originates east of the Gilberts Islands and runs from the Phoenix Islands, through Tokelau and directly South to Samoa” (MacGregor 1937, 5).

A third position claims that it is entirely possible that “the people who voyaged to Tokelau set forth in a Northerly direction from which blows the wind that is known as Tokelau in many places of Polynesia (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 1).

### **Fakaofu**

Fakaofu is composed of about 60 small islets which form a triangle 7.5 miles long and 5.5 miles wide (MacGregor 1937, 5). It lies in latitude 9 degrees 23' south and longitude 171 degrees 14' West (MacGregor 1937,5). The islets are connected by a reef which is awash at high tide (Ickes 1999, 59). The average elevation is 10 feet, the highest points being on the north and south islets and the most continuous land on the east (MacGregor 1937, 5).

The village is on the western side of the island due to the location of the canoe passage and water wells and it protected from the full force of the trade winds and the heavy seas (MacGregor 1937, 6).

## **Nukunonu**

Nukunonu lies 60 miles northwest of Fakaofu (MacGregor 1937, 7). The position lies in latitude 9 degrees 10' South and longitude 171 degrees 53' 30" West (MacGregor 1937, 7).

Nukunonu is the largest island in the group, being 24 miles in circumference and 1,350 acres in area (MacGregor 1937, 7). The longest land mass stretches along the eastern reef (MacGregor 1937, 7). The northern reef is bare and awash and a few islets are sprinkled across the southern side of the reef (MacGregor 1937, 7). The village is on a large islet along the southwest coast (Ickes 1999, 58).

There is no anchorage or passage through the reef to the village (MacGregor 1937, 7). In 1914 another hurricane made a deep cut through the southern end of the islet and created the present small islet, Motusanga, south of the village islet (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 43). Due to the lack of an adequate water supply, the population has always been relatively small and in 1925, it numbered 229 (Ickes 1999, 129).

## **Atafu**

Atafu, composed of 42 islets, lies in latitude 8 degrees 33' 30" South and longitude 172 degrees 30' West (MacGregor 1937, 8). It is the smallest atoll in the group, extending 3 miles North and South and 2.5 miles East and West, and having a land area of 550 acres (MacGregor 1937, 8). The highest land of Atafu is 15 feet above sea level (MacGregor 1937, 7).

## **Olohega**

Olohega lies in latitude 11 degrees 3' 30" South and longitude 171 degrees 5' 30" West, 110 miles South of Fakaofu and about 200 miles North of Samoa (MacGregor 1937, 8). The greatest elevation on the island is 20 feet (MacGregor 1937, 10) and has good soil that supports a far better vegetation than the gardens found on the northern atolls (MacGregor 1937, 10). The

geographical separation from the Northern Atolls is not always included within the Tokelau group (MacGregor 1937, 8).

It is now owned by the Jennings family, who have held it since 1856 (MacGregor 1937, 9-10). The depth of the lagoon and extent of the taro beds imply a population of several hundred people, at least, and a resident on the island for many generations (MacGregor 1937, 10), However, the atoll is mostly unused today.

### **Olohega meets another fate**

“Olohega is believed to be of the land of Fakaofu; there are historical accounts of Fakaofu and Olohega” (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 43). There are Spanish accounts of seeing the early people of Olohega were in 1606 where there were four accounts written of the visit and repeat references that were made of light colored skin and red hair of many of the natives (MacGregor 1937, 12). Quiros describes a young boy in detail:

Five natives came in a canoe, the middle one vigorously bailing the water out of the vessel. His red hair came down to the waist. He was white as regards color, beautifully shaped, the face aquiline and handsome, rather freckled and rosy, the eyes black and gracious, the forehead and eyebrows good, the nose, mouth, and lips well-proportioned with the teeth well-ordered and white (MacGregor 1937, 12).

The next documented visit to Olohega were by Europeans who came to the island in 1841 and because of this and based on the genealogical record of Tui Olohega, the Paramount Chief of Olohega, and succeeding settlements thereafter, the presence of Tokelauans on Olohega could conceivably be traced to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 37). The last chief from the Tui Olohega line was Pou and between the progenitor, Tui Olohega and Pou’s son Tuipagai, lie seven generations (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 37). In descending order there is Tui Olohega, Tapiutoga, Pihalogo, Pogiha, Lafuniu, Pou and Tuipagai (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 37). The Tui Olohega stock is estimated to have spanned 175 years.

After locating the seven generations of Tui Olohega (175 years) and counting back from “1699”, we arrive at the year 1524. This establishes the presence of Tokelau people on Olohega as predating the 1606 arrival of Pedro Ferdinand Quiros, the first European voyager to have recorded a landing on the island, which he called “Gente Hermosa” (Ickes 2009, 246).

In 1925, the US ceded the atoll based on the fact that the Jennings family were of American citizenship. After the second World War changed the face of the Pacific in many ways, some Olohega people left in search of education and opportunity (Glenn 2012, 15). Tired of the abuses on the copra plantation, in 1953 workers on Olohega enacted a work stoppage. In retaliation, the Jennings family contacted the Navy administrators in American Samoa, who saw to it that Tokelau people, eventually including some Tokelauan Jennings family members, were deported from the private island and refused the right of return (Glenn 2012, 15). Despite Tokelau’s claim to the atoll, Huntsman and Kalolo explain that:

Olohega has been surreptitiously appropriated under the 1856 Guano Act...by Eli Jennings, originally of Long Island, New York. Successive male Jennings asserted ownership thereafter, and because the original Jennings was an American citizen Olohega became attached to American Samoa rather than Tokelau. Claims of the Jennings family were problematic, as were all claims under the Guano Act...which had been made to virtually all the atolls in the Central Pacific (Huntsman & Kulolo 2007, 139).

Olohega is seen as culturally connected to Tokelau, however not politically connected to Tokelau today (Ickes 2009, 248). Many believe that Tokelau is not whole without Olohega (Huntsman and Kalolo 2007, 232). After many years, the maritime boundary dispute was settled and on December 02, 1980, the United States signed a treaty with New Zealand claiming sovereignty over Olohega due to the Jennings’ citizenship. The Treaty of Tokehega represents all four atolls; Toke represents Tokelau and hega represents Olohega, thereby continuing the belief that all four atolls belong together. As per the Treaty of Tokehega states:

After a “long and emotional wrangle” and by a narrow vote margin, [officials] agreed to move the reference to Olohega from Article one to the Preamble of the Constitution.

Consequently, Tokelau is constitutionally defined as “all the islands, internal waters, territorial seas, and other areas to which Tokelau is entitled at international law”, and the Preamble states: At the dawn of time the historic islands of Atafu, Nukunonu, Fakaofu, and Olohega were created as our home” (Kalolo & Huntsman 2007, 233).

Olohega is thus symbolically a part of Tokelau according to the constitution (Ickes 1999, 234) as the title suggests “Tokehega”.

Those deported from Olohega were brought to Pago Pago, American Samoa for refuge, however, were denied the ability to purchase or hold land and without connections to the traditional clan structure of Samoan society, therefore, many Tokelauans existed on the social fringes of Samoa before moving to Hawai‘i in the 1950’s and 1960’s to find work in commercial agriculture on O’ahu (Ickes 1999, 76). Chapter three will discuss the diasporic population in New Zealand and Chapter four will discuss the diasporic population in Hawai‘i, respectively.

There has been a change in governance with the loss of chiefs that took place due to the impact of the Peruvian slave ships to a governance based on the Taupulega, or Councils of Elders (Swain & Alu 2010, 6). On each atoll, individual families are represented on the Taupulega where it is the governing authority in Tokelau (Swain & Alu 2010, 6). The Taupulega ultimately directs the village activities and in turn delegates authority on national issues to the General Fono or Parliament of Tokelau (Swain & Alu 2010, 6).

Tokelau has been administered by New Zealand since 1925. In 1948, the Tokelau Islands Act married the two nations where New Zealand Annexed Tokelau, thereby making Tokelauans New Zealand citizens. “Each island group in the south Pacific has a different migration story” (Cowling 2008, 112). Many Tokelauans were encouraged to come to New Zealand in the mid-1960’s when a severe hurricane in Tokelau coincided with the need for industrial workers on the North Island of New Zealand. Tokelauan people are the sixth largest Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2007) with a population of 7,964 people today.

New Zealand conferred full citizenship to its territorial peoples. Therefore, the diasporic Tokelauans had the opportunity to make an immediate impact at the political level and in civic affairs. While the psychological impact of full citizenship may be difficult to measure, there is empowering weight behind state-validated belonging; for Tokelauans in New Zealand, this is reinforced by special status they have occupied at a discrete category in the New Zealand Census since 1974 (Ickes 2009, 456).

Life back on the atolls is quite structured and the villagers maintain customs such as the *inati* system for resource distribution (Swain & Alu 2010, 6). Today, Tokelau is only accessible by sea where a 500 mile or about a 30-hour sail from Apia, Samoa is accessed (Swain & Alu 2010, 6). This limited accessibility is due from key issues for the atolls such as isolation, limited resources, small scale, and vulnerability (Swain & Alu 2010, 6).

### **Western Contact**

Olohega was the first island in the Tokelau group to be seen by Europeans and was noted in the journals of “Quiros, leading the Spanish expedition across the Pacific in 1606, where they landed there in search of water for his ships” (Ickes 2009, 237). These men on the ship believed Tokelau to be a new discovery, even though people had greeted them (Huntsman 1991, 117).

From the first European sighting of a Tokelau atoll to being recognized in European records took 70 years to have recognition for all three of the atolls in European records. Byron landed at Atafu in 1765 and founded it to be uninhabited, naming it Duke of York’s Island (Ickes 1999, 158). Edwards, in 1791, also landed at Atafu and, after a thorough search again pronounced it to be without people (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 57). He then went on to discover Nukunonu, which he called Duke of Clarence’s Island; this was inhabited, but the people Edwards sighted there avoided meeting with him (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 57).

Paulding, in 1825, was thus the first European to report a direct encounter with Tokelau people – but, as is explained in a commentary on his account, Paulding did not know which atoll he was at (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 57). It was not until 1835 that Captain Smith of the whaler General Jackson reported that there were three atolls not widely known among European mariners (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 57). This meant that Fakaofu was “discovered” again by two ships of the United States Exploring Expedition in 1841 and named Bowditch Island and thereby they did not make the “discovery” they thought they had even though they reported at length the visits to Atafu and Fakaofu (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 57). Horatio Hale’s account of their visit is the fullest of these accounts and is the one reproduced here (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 57).

### **Myth as Practice**

The connection between the people and the food on the island go hand in hand and are connected to the cosmogony of Tokelau. In the story of Lu, coconut milk is given to the stillborn child and in return he is given life. A major sustenance on the atolls comes from the coconut where the juice is used for drinking water, the meat of the coconut is used for many different reasons such as food sustenance, body and medicinal oil, the fiber is used to build houses, canoes and fishing lines, and the shells are used as cups and carriers of water (Ickes 1999, 48). The roofs of the houses come from the leaves of the tree and many things can be weaved from the leaves such as baskets, skirts, and sails just to name a few.

Another connection to the cosmogony is through the fish, *Ulua*. In the story of Te Ilo, the first man, his life was made possible with the death of the Ulua. Today, fish is a big sustenance for the people on the atoll and is also used for rituals and the overall spiritual connection that comes from the sea.

I conclude this chapter with writing about the connection between cosmogony and food so that the reader can understand how different the dynamics must have been upon a new relationship with the colonizer. The life on the atoll is seen as having a circular fashion that connects the cosmogony to the people through food and mythical practice. The next chapter dives in to the dynamics of two cultures clashing and the force-driven issues that stem from these relationships.

## Chapter Three

### *Cultural Sustainability Through an Educational Platform*

In this chapter I focus on the educational platform in two geographical regions, Tokelau and New Zealand. I separate this chapter into two sections; the first half discusses the Tokelauan educational curriculum and the path that was taken through the Volunteer Services Abroad (VSA) that eventually led Tokelau to have their first *Tokelau National Strategic Plan 2010-2015*. The latter part of this chapter looks at the diasporic Tokelauan community in New Zealand and the path that this population has taken from 1966 to 2013 in terms of reconnecting and reclaiming a Tokelauan identity through educational programs that ensure cultural ties for the younger generations.

I argue that certain programs funded by New Zealand to help aid Tokelau and the diasporic community in New Zealand are colonial in nature and thereby forms a neo-colonial state that is dependent upon the regulations that come from the governing country. There is a double lens when critically analyzing this dynamic that has to deal with a colonial country introducing an educational curriculum to a population that learns from a different school of thought such as from the land and stories from the elders. For the Tokelauan population, this curriculum is seen as a foreign concept that is trying to change their ways. A small percentage of the Tokelauan population welcomes the financial support that will teach the younger generation the skills needed to become successful in the western world if they so choose to live outside of Tokelau. For the colonial powers, this is an attempt to assimilate the Tokelauan population to a neo-dependent state through an asymmetrical platform that is aimed at deconstructing the Tokelauan way of life and ultimately brings about a new way of living that is foreign to the older generation.

I show this argument by looking at two case studies that critically analyze the educational system in Tokelau and more importantly shows the path that was taken to ensure certain opportunities, whether welcomed or not. In New Zealand, I look at the path first used by the diasporic community and later look at New Zealand's school system where the Tokelauan language has been added to the curriculum. There are different dynamics from having an education in the homeland to the diaspora yet same force driven issues that stem from wanting what is best for the future generations of Tokelauans.

### **Education in Tokelau**

Due to its small population, and the lack of economies of scale, the Government of Tokelau has a limited capacity to provide facilities and services for its three atolls (Swain & Ulu 2010, 5). Over 90 percent of Tokelau's budget is dependent on the assistance it received from Aotearoa/New Zealand where a trust fund for Tokelau which is modeled after the operating funds for Tuvalu and Kiribati, was established in 2004 with the support from Aotearoa/New Zealand and other donors (Swain & Ulu 2010, 5). The revenue from this trust fund and its investments will help assist Tokelau with its budget in the future (Swain & Ulu 2010, 5).

Aotearoa/New Zealand assists in the development of infrastructure that includes development on schools and health facilities on the three atolls within the Economic Support Arrangement (Swain & Ulu 2010, 5). In the 1960s, Aotearoa/New Zealand Administration began to take more of a proactive role in Tokelauan education (Swain & Ulu 2010, 6). 1969 saw the arrival of the first contracted Teacher/Education Advisers (married couples) from New Zealand to "foster and improve curriculum and teaching practice" (Huntsman & Kalolo 2007, 34). Before the educational advisers arrived, suitable houses were prepared for them and built to the Ministry of Works specifications. Each couple was also provided with a powered boat, an

annual holiday to Aotearoa/New Zealand and access to duty-free goods (Swain & Ulu 2010, 6). His disclaimer for the entitlements received by the Educational Advisors was necessary to attract applicants, who expected to continue to live in the style to which they were accustomed in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Huntsman & Kalolo 2007, 34).

The VSA has been in existence since 1962 and send their volunteers all over the Pacific, Asia, and Africa with a focus on helping other countries to strengthen their infrastructure in the schools. In the 1980's, the Tokelauan government requested assistance from the VSA in hopes for a collaboration in building up the school system in Tokelau. "Education for Native students needed education paths that reflected their values and community aspirations, or at least Native students needed to be given the tools to accommodate Western education and translate it to contribute to community preservation, development, and nation building within certain contexts" (Champagne & Stauff 2002, 148).

In 2000, the VSA was prepared to help and sent their staff ready to teach with a method plan. The following paragraphs goes in to the objectives, methodology and results of the ten year study with an over view of the path taken in a ten year span.

The objectives taken in 2000 was made to meet the growing needs of the people in terms of education or at least that was the focus for New Zealand and as we find out in this chapter that the terms of education were not conducive for the lifestyle in Tokelau. A focus was on teacher training and the idea that the "local teachers currently lacked the teaching qualifications and experience to provide" (Swain & Ulu 2010, 11) at a level suitable to the growing needs of the region. The areas that were to be taught were "Commerce/Accounting/Economics, Vocational Training and English Language/Literacy," (Swain & Ulu 2010, 11) and these were to go along with the growing trend in the region of developing one's region through education. There was

also an insight for when they eventually left Tokelau to have trained local teachers to take over when that time arrived and so educating the village along with the government officials was important in order to maintain the work that they did would continue when they were gone. The ultimate goal was to leave the atolls in good hands of their own people while supporting growth in the leadership amongst the local teachers. In order for this big task to have been accomplished, the VSA realized that a “monitored and evaluated” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 11) study had to be in place.

The teachers aimed at following the “programme’s aims and objectives by strengthening teaching programmes, developing the teacher training programme, building organizational culture and promoting local leadership, and programme support to support organizational development” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 11) as a floor plan in sharing in a collaboration with the Tokelauan teachers.

The ultimate goal was to “contribute to strengthening teaching programs, developing the teacher training program, strengthen culture through promoting local leadership, and for the program to support an organizational development” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 11). The most important aspect to the collaboration was to “establish a partnership between the Government of Tokelau and VSA through meeting each year with the Ulu o Tokelau, the *Taupulega* on each atoll, Education Department staff, Principals and school staff” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 12) in order to maintain a respectful relationship amongst all parties involved in this joint effort.

As it becomes apparent in this literature, the terminology used for the VSA presents a one-sided relationship with the people of Tokelau and a shared collaboration is seen by the native people as pseudo-collaboration due to this outside group coming in and teaching a new way of learning that matches the concepts of the colonizer. There is no dialogue that discusses

this transparent one-sided relationship and therefore I feel inclined to add my own perception on this matter based on the literature. After reading the content, I walked away with the feeling that the VSA had no intention of allowing native agency to be a factor in the educational system and that they were there to help a people that needed to be helped in order to succeed in this world today. Obviously a point of discussion as this type of relationship continues for many other ethnic groups where the colonial powers aim at changing the native people.

### **The Various Methods Used**

Amongst the many methods used, quantitative data was used to give an accurate and precise picture of the results which allowed the student to gain a broad perspective on the data obtained. Archival research was also employed however only by the teachers from the VSA and so this caused another red flag as to what was researched and from whose lens was this information being delivered. A survey questionnaire was completed by the return volunteers to highlight the activities that worked and did not work. “The questionnaires were completed by 20 of the 26 volunteers and provided for 76.96% rate of return” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 18). The answers were useful to analyze the course of the educational platform and ultimately shaped the curriculum that is used today.

An ethnographic approach was employed where interviews played a big part of the methodology. The staff and leadership board were interviewed and among them there were “two from the Department of Education, two from the school principals and the remaining eight were the teachers” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 19). This would later help in either enforcing a certain skill to teach or guide the volunteer to teach something else, in which case this form of methodology proved to be very useful for the VSA but continue to leave out the community and leadership of Tokelau in such important methodologies.

The fourth method was from observations from the VSA teachers that was based on their experience their experience. The teachers experience brought knowledge and was seen as collaboration between Tokelau and VSA's teachers which "balanced with an evidence-based approach to the research utilizing a number of different methods to 'triangulate' findings" (Swain & Ulu 2010, 19).

### **Results and impacts achieved from this study**

There are mixed conclusions from this study with one conclusion supporting the results and sees the work done as a significant contribution to the village based on the objectives and results that the teacher trainer experiences. A pivotal part of having a good experience is having a volunteer that can be flexible in another culture and be able to blend in with their surroundings where a few teachers had a hard time with. The other conclusion supported the fact that the isolation from other countries led to poor "institutional support" (Swain & Ulu 2010, 37), which made it difficult to teach in their element and comfort-zone.

The bigger picture here is that the wider community was not supportive in this western style of education for their children, where the resistance was seen by the parents not attending the meetings with the VSA teachers that seemed to find problems and issues with the native-way of learning. The parents viewed this forced imposition as a foreign concept that was not interested in the native tools of learning but rather interested in changing the structure of learning in Tokelau to assimilate to the standards in New Zealand.

### **Learning from this experience**

When the Western lens clashes with an Indigenous lens, the need to find a medium is challenging. For the next program dealing with the education system, "understanding the local

cultures and attempting to look at things from their perspective, places volunteers in a better position” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 47). Below are the obvious differences:

<b><u>The Pacific Way</u></b>	<b><u>The Way of the Marketplace</u></b>
Communal (Extended family, clan, village)	Individual (Individual, nuclear family)
Consensual (Participation and shared decision making)	Confrontational (Take it or leave it)
Cooperative (Seeking positive outcomes for all)	Competitive (Winners and losers)
Reciprocal (Sharing creates obligations to each other)	Profit seeking (Only obligation is money)
Spiritual (Sacredness of food and products made by people)	Secular (Only the dollar is sacred) (Swains & Ulu 2010, 46).

“One important area of decision-making involves the need for an increased investment in the education of younger family members” (Cowling 2008, 111), and so due to the persistent need to develop a successful pathway for the children, the VSA volunteers thought their mission was a great success. Through the VSA lens, there was a lot of pressure for the volunteers because there wasn’t enough “time and opportunities to fulfil their role as teacher trainers (Swain & Ulu 2010, 37). The atmosphere was such that there was little to no support from the leaders in Tokelau to improve the situation and so the volunteers became unmotivated. More time was spent on being a “teacher rather than teacher trainer (Swain & Ulu 2010, 39).

There are five areas that stand out for the volunteers that need much more organizing and planning if the educational platform is to continue in Tokelau. A big factor will always be the distance to travel to Tokelau from other atolls and countries as the area is in a distinct part of Oceania that makes it difficult to travel to; Based on the demographics, a well-planned agenda needs to be set before the team arrives in Tokelau as it would not be feasible to travel back and forth; The training for the community and teachers becomes a necessary factor for change to

occur if the program should be successful; A focus on an Indigenous platform with traditional approaches will have to be explored further if the VSA volunteers wish for a supportive community; and overall, respect for the community has to be a priority if a cohesive outcome is desired.

The Tokelau Department of Education junior and senior levels are learning subjects in primary school such as: “languages: Tokelau, English; social studies; mathematics; science; health and physical education; visual and performing arts, and environmental science” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 11). At the next level (secondary level), an additional learning areas is added as options such as business studies and technology, home economics, industrial arts, and computer studies (Swain & Ulu 2010, 11).

An area that has a high focus is in the language courses. A child will have the native language as the foundation and starting at age three, the school will slowly implement English at a 20% spoken rate. From years four to six, the amount of English used in class will increase ten percent per year to make year six have a 50% English curriculum. The fifty percent English rate in school will stay at that number with a focus being on the native language as the first language to speak (Swain & Ulu 2010, 12).

The inspiration about this platform is that by the time the child has reached the eleventh year they can take courses via the website and connect via the satellite to the University of the South Pacific and after two years can be an eligible student taking classes while still living on their atoll in Tokelau. The significance of this very fact is a giant step forward for Tokelauans seeming as they have this opportunity to work for a college degree while living away from the college itself.

There are few qualified teachers in the local schools in Tokelau today (Swain & Ulu 2010, 12). Trained teachers have teaching diplomas from the teachers training colleges in Samoa, Tonga, the National University of Samoa, USP Suva or New Zealand (Swain & Ulu 2010, 12). Most teaching positions are filled by untrained teacher aides.

The teachers in Tokelau have teaching degrees from “colleges in Samoa, Tonga, the National University of Samoa, USP Suva and New Zealand,” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 12) however the need for more trained teachers is apparent as the conditions of living on an atoll are problematic to most people. It is seen more and more that untrained teacher aides are used in the schools because of the dynamic involved in training another person. The issues that are dealt with include “low budget, limited access to further professional training and development opportunities, women with family demands, the isolation from any other country, the expense and inconvenience of travel” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 12) makes for a problematic availability issue.

The best part about this ten year initiative and study is that through the growing pains of learning how to work as a team and teaching the children a different set of objectives in the Western setting, the fruit from the labor is seen in the three schools that have been established in Tokelau today; one school is located on each atoll and is respectfully governed by the *Taupulega* of that atoll. The three schools provide free education from “Early Childhood (ECE) to year 11” (Swain & Ulu 2010, 11). The most innovative aspect that has come out of the study is now there is a program for year 12 and year 13 that connects to the University of the South Pacific (USP). The following statistics are from April 30, 2010 and shows a great improvement to the schools with a big turnout from the villagers; Mataula School on Atafu Atoll has 136 students and 19 teachers, Tialeniu School on Fakaofu Atoll has 100 students and 17 teachers, and Matiti School on Nukunonu Atoll has 73 students and 15 teachers (Swain & Ulu 2010, 11).

The information from this case study becomes apparent that an asymmetrical relationship exists between VSA and the population in Tokelau. The course work becomes a foreign document for the Tokelauan population as the colonial powers attempt to change the structure in the homeland. As I had mentioned earlier, the financial support is appreciated because it allows the child many possibilities for a future outside of Tokelau if that is what is wanted; however by trying to find problems and issues with the schools and community in regards to education, it highlighted a bigger picture in which this study points to a colonial structure that is attempting to teach this population another way of being through this educational platform. These educational policies are neo-colonial in nature and aims to change Tokelau in to becoming a neo-dependent state.

Native agency is seen through the Taupulega which consist of the Chiefs and their governing powers in Tokelau. This aspect is key for the people of these atolls because this council represents their best interest and in this way their voices will be heard.

The aim of colonialism is to have domination over the mental universe of the colonized. The aim is to control a group of people by controlling their tools of identity through what is taught in the curriculum of their schools such as teaching the colonizers history, religion and literature as oppose to supporting the method already in existence and not trying to change those dynamics. Thus when teaching in a colonial approach, “learning, for a colonial child, becomes a cerebral activity and not an emotionally felt experience” (Thiong’o 1981, 17) that further distances the child from their traditions and culture. By teaching a native child a lesson plan from an external document, a “disassociation of the sensibility of that child from his natural and social environment” (Thiong’o 1981, 17) becomes apparent over time.

By having an inter-disciplinary approach to the curriculum allows the youth to learn and strengthen modern skills that will allow them to be competitive in the global market. This will only prepare the child to live in a syncretic world where both are necessary today in order to be able to navigate between both worlds. As noted in educational books, “the need to make education relevant and useful for Native students and communities so that they can see their own culture, identities, and interests in the school curriculum and their future paths of work and commitment to their communities” (Champagne & Stauss 2002, 148) becomes necessary for success in the world that we live in today.

### **Moving forward**

On July 01, 2010, the first Tokelau National Strategic Plan came into play due to this ten year VSA study on education in Tokelau (Toloa 2010, 1). The awareness of having an education system for the future is important as seen in this updated plan for the Department of Education in Tokelau. In writing the bi-laws on the education outlook for the next five years, a quote was stated that expressed the sentiments of the people and the leadership and goes as follows:

To raise educational achievement, promote equality of opportunity  
And outcomes for all students, and to improve the quality of educational  
services delivery (Toloa 2010, 39).

The Department of Education took over the national advisory role in 2004 which meant they were directly in charge of the “scholarships scheme and provided for curriculum advice and guidance to schools” (Toloa 2010, 39). With this type of leadership, the government realized that they had to get behind the teachers in the classroom in terms of influence and motivation. In doing so, the vision to team up the schools, the *Taupulega* and the Department of Education proved necessary in order to have success for all involved. With this idea in mind, a focus became clear that a list of interventions had to take place in order for this success to happen, such as a “teacher professional development program, school leadership workshops, teacher

performance review training and national assessment policy development and implementation” (Toloa 2010, 39).

There were a few changes made to this new plan due to the lessons learnt from the VSA study. A focus on a better relationship with the *Taupulega* became a pivotal change as collaboration between the two were necessary to ensure a successful outcome in any endeavor. The next change that needed to take place instantly was the ability to acquire and retain trained and qualified teachers. Seeming as there was a shortage in primary education, the focus looked at how to attain trained teachers for those younger classes and implement better resources in retaining these teachers as time moves on.

An innovative approach to the curriculum looked at vocational education and training as another option for the students in their future career paths. Also, a life class was considered as a way to stop “teenage pregnancy, alcohol and tobacco abuse and youth suicide” (Toloa 2010, 40) for the children in the schools today.

The objectives of the first national strategic plan is to “improve the quality of education provisions, strengthen human resources, improve governance, strengthen the structures of the education sector and strengthen the Tokelauan culture and language throughout the education sector” (Toloa 2010, 40).

The strategies are to “align the scholarships policy, develop a teacher supply, develop a structured program, develop a community-based education program, improve the standards, implement a special education program, develop village-based school governance and improve the quality of school leadership, management and systems” (Toloa 2010, 40). These objectives and strategies are realistic because the Government wants their people to be successful.

These goals are achievable through the plan that the government has set up. By 2015, the plan targets one hundred percent enrollment in the early childhood education system where the pressure is put on the Taupulega to enforce attendance. The schooling is free from ages five to fifteen. The schools are now a success story as of January 2012 when the update on the stats were taken to see how far they've come. "As of January 2012, the Primary level enrollment in Tokelau is close to one hundred percent" (Tokelau Millennium Development Report 2012, 16).

"One hundred percent completion rate for primary school level and with an increase in the population with an improvement of qualification from 2006-2011" (Tokelau Millennium Development Report 2012, 16). As well as "the literacy rate for the 15-24 year old group in Tokelau is very high and close to one hundred percent" (Tokelau Millennium Development Report 2012, 16).

There is no denying the future changes of Tokelau in respects to the educational platform. The VSA case study proved to be valuable for many reasons but most importantly to highlight the continued discourse of the colonial powers as seen in curriculums against native peoples. With the Tokelau National Strategic Plan in motion, an awareness of what to improve upon and what to not continue became apparent as collaboration became necessary for the success of the younger generation.

The new plan has a more interdisciplinary focus that incorporates a native perspective and less of an asymmetrical relationship. The relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau is not equal, yet there is still progress towards finding a more balanced collaboration between the two countries. Ultimately, the future of the people are dependent on their own community as they see a need to "train leaders and community members with contemporary knowledge of the world as it is and simultaneously translates that knowledge and brings the skills of higher

education to Native communities thereby helping in supporting a Native building and continuity of culture” (Champagne & Stauss 2002, 151).

### **Tokelauan diaspora in New Zealand**

In 1966, Tokelau had become over populated and faced a devastating cyclone that left their natural resources to be scarce. The Tokelau Resettlement Scheme became a necessity that allowed Tokelauans to migrate to New Zealand. Between 1966 and 1976, 528 Tokelauans migrated to New Zealand under this scheme where they worked in the forestry industry in Rotorua and Taupo, both located on the north island (Ickes 2001, 79). By 2001, fifty percent of the country’s Tokelauans lived in the wider Wellington-Hutt Valley region and continue today to be a popular area to live (Hooper & Huntsman 1996, 56).

The benefits that followed along after the move to New Zealand immediately came with “full citizenship rights and thus have voting rights in local and national elections” (Ickes 2009, 408). Under the United Nations, Tokelau is a Non-Self –Governing Territory where it is officially a New Zealand Territory today. Since the 1960’s, New Zealand has tried to decolonize Tokelau and at the most has been a good host country to a people that needed help in the 60’s. In the history of this relationship between the two countries, there has been two failed attempts to decolonize Tokelau. As of 2014, “the Assembly acknowledge the decision of the General Assembly in 2008 that consideration of any future act of self-determination by Tokelau would be deferred, and that New Zealand and Tokelau would focus on enhancing essential services and infrastructure on the atolls” (General Assembly 2014).

Although over two-thirds or seventy percent of Tokelauans are New Zealand-born today, there has been a marked increase in those who can hold everyday conversations in the Tokelauan language (Statistics New Zealand 2007). “This differs from the common language pattern in

migrant families, where the first generation is fluent in their native tongue, the second generation understands the language but is less fluent, and the third generation understands some of the language but prefers not to speak it” (Pene, Peita, Howden-Chapman 2002, 80).

The Tokelauan diasporic community has had to face multiple issues dealing with living away from the homeland. In this latter section of this chapter I argue that while living away from the homeland, the need to reconnect and reclaim one’s identity becomes a necessity in ensuring cultural ties. I show this by tracing the programs from 1966 to 2014 as this community is forced to set up pathways to ensure continuity of culture while in the diaspora.

### **The Beginning of Community Centers**

As native people living away from their homeland, the importance of community grew strong and soon the Tokelauan ethic of *maopoopo* (unity) led to the formation of *fakaloptopotoga* (associations) and *mafutaga* (clubs) in New Zealand (Ickes 1999, 145). “The initial act of leaving one’s parents, family, neighborhood, society and culture, and adopting a new life – and work-style is a crucial one” (Cowling 2008, 46). In a way to identify with their homeland and culture, community centers and churches served as a bridge for Tokelauans to identify with each other.

The population that came over to New Zealand arrived without any assistance. Many Tokelauans worked in the factories and made low wages. In return, living with the family was as common as the village life they knew well in Tokelau. To connect to one’s culture and language in the 1960’s many Tokelauans joined the Pacific Island Presbyterian Church (Ward 2013, 6).

The churches in Petone and Porirua became popular for gatherings and by 1976, programs were put together to learn their culture and language. In 2000, groups started to appear all over town with their own classes and were called the Porirua Mafutaga Tupulaga Tokelaga.

In 2001, Tokelauan was considered one of the biggest groups in New Zealand besides Samoan, Cook Islands, Tongan, Niuean, Fijian and Tuvaluan communities (Tagata pasifika 2006).

Even though the Tokelauan population increased by ten percent between 2001 and 2006 making up sixty nine percent of the total population (Tagata Pasika 2006), forty percent were not able to hold a conversation in their native language (Tagata Pasika 2006). This time period was an eye-opener for the Tokelauan culture due to these statistics and the realization that the language and culture were dying. A way to counter this statistic was to meet at church where eighty seven percent of Tokelauans was affiliated with a religion (Tagata Pasifika 2006).

When looking at the education level, sixty three percent had a formal education (Tagata Pasifika 2006) but weren't using it. The realization that the Tokelauan community was speaking their language at church sparked the community leaders into implementing programs at that venue.

In 2001, the first language school called Matiti Tokelau Akoga Kamata could be heard on Auckland's radio 531 Ipi and Wellington's Access radio (Early Childhood Education Website 2005). The empowerment and inspiration started to become apparent at this time due to the many schools, teams, churches, and community centers that started to appear and participate. Today, there are countless buildings for Tokelauan identity in these spaces mentioned above and due to this renaissance and movement of identity through reclaiming the language and culture.

### **A New and Improved Curriculum**

The National Curriculum in New Zealand is composed from The New Zealand Curriculum (The New Zealand Curriculum Online Website 2007). In 1974, the New Zealand Curriculum was translated into the Maori language for the native people and called it Te Marautanga O Aotearoa (<http://www.tmoa.tki.org.nz/Te-Marautanga-o-Aotearoa>). The purpose

was to provide guidance for Maori schools that focused on the literacy and numeracy in the curriculum. The only difference was the language because the content was identical. Soon to follow suit was the Maori Language Act 1987 (New Zealand Legislation Website 2013), which declared Te Reo Maori (The Maori language) an official language status along with legal settings.

This very act was a pivotal point in the schools for native people of New Zealand because it meant that the native language was being recognized. However even though the New Zealand curriculum was translated in to other languages, the content remained European in nature.

### **Curriculum In A Different Context**

In a very short span, the educational system started to see many leaps and bounds in their curriculum that focused more on native skills in the school setting. For example, In 2004 a documentary film entitled *New Zealand Long Lost Sons* (Maplesden 2004, 1) by Josephine Maplesden showcased the personal and cultural significance of a family traveling to Tokelau to reconnect to their roots. The parents migrated to New Zealand in the 1960's from Fakaofu Atoll at a time when it was popular to do so. They had two sons that grew up in Wellington and had never been to Tokelau until this filming. Up until this point, the sons only identified as being Tokelauan for census purposes and so the trip was seen as a way to teach others in the same situation the impacts of migration through this family.

The theme of this trip was to make the diasporic community aware of their cultural roots by examining certain ideas pertaining to cultural identity and force driven issues associated with migration. The ethnographic approach through interviews showed the impact of migration on the wider family unit and the Tokelau community itself where the viewer of this documentary was given an insight into the way of life on Tokelau and ultimately an appreciation for the significance of the homeland for this family.

This documentary was implemented in to the educational platform at Hamilton Girls High School in the Social Studies and Achievement Standards Curriculum that aims at level 5 (age 9 and 10) and level 6 (age 11); and the Media Studies Achievement Standards Curriculum that aims at level 2 (age 4 and 5) (Maplesden 2004,8). Levels 5 and 6 uses this documentary in-depth and a curriculum that follows this outline: Level 5 is Culture and Heritage and has the achievement objective of looking at ways in which cultural and national identity develop and are maintained (Maplesden 2004, 3). The other Level 5 is Place and Environment and has the achievement objective as to why people move between places and the consequences of this for the people and the places (Maplesden 2004, 3). Level 6 is How and why cultures adapt and change (Maplesden 2004, 3); the other Level 6 is Social Organization and analyzes the effects of changes in society on people's rights, roles and responsibilities (Maplesden 2004, 3).

The significance of this documentary is that it shows an educational platform from another context that is outside the colonial norm of education. The objectives were to show the migration, settlement, life, and interaction of British and other cultural groups in various areas of New Zealand over time by looking at the cultural expressions of the various groups living in New Zealand at the time. The objective was to look at why places are important to people. From this curriculum, the student would be able to describe the Tokelau Islands and give examples of places that exist in Tokelau that are significant to this family and to be able to ultimately explain why. An example could be that this documentary could be helpful with raising the consciousness of the issues and expand that level to finding other ways to teach native children that live in the diaspora. The wider lesson of teaching in a different context gives the student another way to see the world that they live in through the native lens. Many different versions of life in the diaspora pertain to remembering life in the homeland. This documentary is

just one example of how to learn from the dynamics of migration that encompasses a larger and wider picture.

This film gave a glimpse of life in Tokelau that allowed the child to see the world as his parents see the world. “How we see things, even with our eyes, is very much dependent on where we stand in relationship to it” (Thiong’o 1981, 88). Migration encompasses many different facets and ways of living while in the diaspora.

### **Multi-Polynesian Communities**

The first thing one notices when one looks at the history of Pacific Islander migrations is that this has always been a diasporic movement. It is important to know the terminology used in today’s migration process so that we understand the mindset involved in each. Aotearoa/New Zealand has by far the largest number of Pacific Island peoples among the industrialized nations (Spickard 2002, 16). In the US, the largest numbers of Pacific Islanders reside in Hawai‘i and California (Kester 2013, 1176).

The structures of the literary studies evolved in the colonial schools and universities had continued well into the independence era completely unaffected by any winds of cultural change (Thiong’o 1981, 93). The irony of all this was that these departments were being run in countries where the oral tradition, the basis of all genres of written literature be it a poem, a play, or a story, was beating with life and energy, and yet they were unaffected by the surging creative storm all around them (Thiong’o 1981, 93).

### **Different contexts**

Today, cultural formations and pride of origin are seen through different context such as poetry and music. This concept is not new to native peoples but rather reused again in a time that different contexts can better explain the emotions that come with living in a syncretic world.

Here are some examples of native writers and musicians that expressed their longing or allegiance for their homeland through creative theater. Legendary singer and composer, Israel Kamakawiwo'ole sings to oppressed Hawaiians in *Lover Of Mine* written by Gaylord Holomalia and Malani Bilyeu, that speaks of being away from the homeland of Hawai'i yet still longing for home.

Lover of mine, over the sea  
 Deep blue ocean waves in motion.  
 Where have you gone?  
 I look to the sea.  
 Some day you come home to me.  
 (Holomalia & Bilyeu 2002, 16).

A different outlook comes from the perspective of a woman living in the diaspora and the challenges she faced in attempting to fit-in to a multi populated community. A young woman by the name of Tupou who was born in the seventies and at an early age left to live in New Zealand with her parents for economic and educational opportunities. She had a hard time growing up in New Zealand as she was a different color and different ideology of what a Tongan girl should look like. Due to wanting to fit in, she chose to change her identity so that the other children at school would be more accepting of her. She eventually returned to Tonga for a year and became conscious of the fact that her cultural identity was important and started to write these poems as a form of identity as seen through a different context. Throughout her life she was well traveled and lived in many places in world and found that her poetry connected her to her native identity as coming from Tonga. The significance of this story is that it raises a consciousness of issues where the diasporic communities are left to construct an identity that ultimately connects them to their homeland.

When I speak of Tonga,  
 I speak of Me.  
 A person made up of multiple identities  
 Through my veins flow the blood of various cultures  
 But I only identify myself as one from Tonga.  
 There, my heart will always stay true,  
 For Tonga is my home;  
 My islands and My taboo.

(Spickard 2002, 17).

Pacific Islander identities are expressed in new syncretic style of music as for instance in the music of *Te Vaka* which sings of that sense of belonging to Tokelau. Majority of the members in this band descend from Tokelau and lived in New Zealand as adults. This group has an international following because of the direct connection with their homeland and the shared feelings of living in the diaspora. They've performed in over forty countries around the world and have seven albums to their credit. Other band members are from Tuvalu, Samoa, and Tokelau where the use of traditional instruments such as the log drum, is one of many local favorites with this band that offers a South Pacific Fusion style of music that connects to many people in the Pacific.

This song is popular because they are able to connect to the diasporic community that longs for their homeland in Tokelau. The song is entitled, "Papa E".

Listen Listen  
 While I tell you of the ways of the land  
 I shan't forget those familiar ways  
 Those joyous memories embedded in  
 The heart  
 In the heart of Papa e  
 In the land of Papa e

In my mind I often go there  
 To places that contain fondest memories  
 The friendliness the joy the laughter  
 The laughter of Papa e  
 In the land of Papa e

In this final display of resistance and remembrance in this different style of context, a prayer is told by an elderly Tokelauan in New Zealand to show the never-ending love for their homeland while in the diaspora:

Tokelau taku pele  
 Teu i te loto  
 E he galo koe i oku manatu  
 E galo au kae manatua  
 Ko toku hei mai anamua

Tokelau my beloved  
 Secure in my heart  
 Always in my thought though I have left  
 I still remember my garland  
 From ancient times.

(Vulu & Faiva 2010, 71).

These types of contexts are seen everywhere today as native people are proud to show their agency through poetry and song. These different forms of expression creates a setting where it reminds the participants of their origin by recalling such stories, histories, and heart felt feelings of longing, to a place that connects them to the foundation of recreating the sacred and oral world to the present moment in time.

### **Updated Curriculum**

In 2010, The Maori Language Act of 1987 added an additional 14 other native languages to the amendment and Tokelauan language was added to that list. The Tokelauan language belongs to the Polynesian branch of the Austronesian language family in a subgroup called the Samoic Outlier. The subgroup consists of two groups called Eastern Polynesian and Samoic-Outlier, where the Eastern Polynesian subgroup “includes Rapanui, Hawaiian, Marquesan, Mangarevan, Tahitian, Maori, Moriori, Tuamotuan, Rarotongan and various other Cook Islands Maori Languages” (Otsuka 2005, 21). The Samoic Outlier consists of its neighboring countries in the East, Tuvalu and Samoa. Other areas closely related to this group is in the North with the Cook Islands and to the West, with the Solomon Islands.

The standards set clear expectations that students need to meet in reading, writing, and mathematics in the first eight years at school (The New Zealand Curriculum Webpage). The vision of this program offers new knowledge and technologies as a way to secure a sustainable social, cultural, economic, and environmental future for their country of origin and New Zealand (The New Zealand Curriculum Webpage). A main focus in the vision is for the children to have a positive outlook in their own identity. In a place where migrant issues are relevant and cultural identity is important, the mere fact that the education system is in their own language is on the right track for future generations living in the diaspora as migrants (The New Zealand Curriculum Webpage).

The vision of this type of curriculum embodies the same type of lessons that Tokelau experienced with the VSA and their educational platform from 2000-2010. The curriculum continues to be colonial in nature because it teaches the same course work that is taught in the New Zealand curriculum.

The New Zealand Curriculum specifies eight learning areas: English, Art, Health and Physical Education, Learning Languages, Mathematics and Statistics, Science, Social Sciences, and Technology (The New Zealand Curriculum Webpage). As students start to talk their native language, they are able to connect to their native identity however the colonial presence is seen in the curriculum.

Its principal function is to set the direction for student learning and to provide guidance for schools as they design and review their curriculum (Education Review Office Webpage). A parallel document, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (*Te Marautanga O Aotearoa* Webpage), will serve the same function for Māori-medium schools. Although they come from different perspectives, both start with visions of young people who will develop the competencies they need for study,

work, and lifelong learning and go on to realize their potential. Together, the two documents will help schools give effect to the partnership that is at the core of our nation's founding document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi.

### **Significance of Amendment**

The significance of this amendment to The Maori Language Act of 1987 can be seen in two different ways. For the Tokelauan culture this is a way to reclaim and reassert their culture through language while in the diaspora. The Tokelauan people view the Government of New Zealand as a "benevolent provider, caring for, looking after, and protecting them" (Huntsman & Kalolo 2007, 130), however, if their people are to survive the language must be alive where they can "discover their various tongues to sing the song: A people united can never be defeated" (Thiong'o 1981, 3).

In not speaking one's own language, one becomes disassociated from his natural and social environment where it is reinforced in the teachings of history, geography, music, and so on in schools today that makes the native people see "the world in a certain way in which they start seeing it being reflected in the culture of the language of imposition" (Thiong'o 1981, 17). If native language comes to a stop, the people will not see the world through their native lens but through the world of the language of adoption through the colonizer. Basically, language is culture and culture is done through language; if there is no language, then the culture is lost and gone. The key is to look at the three examples of domination which are to change the language, the written form, and the education system. The level of consciousness today is to speak our own individual languages in order to thrive in our culture and perpetuate identity in a modern and syncretic style (Thiong'o 1981, 56). Therefore this amendment is key for the diasporic

community that ties the younger generation to their culture, the culture that they long to know while away from their homeland.

In comparing the dynamics in the homeland to the diaspora, the language is alive and spoken in Tokelau and the history, culture and traditions are intact. The culture is alive because of the oral stories connected to the language and the land. The population in the diapora is forced to set up pathways to ensure that connectivity to the culture and reclaiming their language becomes an important tool in connecting with their homeland.

The second way to see this added amendment is through the colonial aspect of power and assimilation. Even though the curriculum is in a native language, the content is still European in nature with European history and theories. The connection here is that in Tokelau, the VSA came in and tried to change the way of life through a European educational platform. In New Zealand, even though the Tokelauan language is used in the schools the same concept of teaching the European curriculum remains the same. Both places have and are trying to continue the colonial powers through education by funding these efforts that to some would appear to be bicultural in nature.

Biculturalism today is a very controversial term that is used by the colonial powers that be in hopes to tell the world that the native people and the colonial powers are in harmony on the same land. When in fact, that could be farthest from the truth and appearance. Biculturalism is about the relationship between the native people of the land and the colonial powers and so this term does not fit appropriately with the Tokelauan population. Another terminology used today is multiculturalism and in Hawai'i, the term used is the "melting pot", implying that all ethnicities live in harmony amongst each other. It is a controversial term as it considered a part of racism for not observing the differences between the ethnic groups of people, thus losing

native identity through a shared terminology that was built for that very purpose, to lose one's identity. An accurate term to use when describing many Polynesian people that speaks of the complexity and diversity of the individual cultures is "Multi Polynesian Communities". In this term, the many Polynesian cultures are given their agency back by recognizing that each ethnic group in Polynesia is different yet lives in the same geographic region.

I look at the native realities as they are affected by the struggle of two opposing forces in the world today; an imperialist tradition on one hand, and a resistance tradition on the other. The imperialist tradition today in Oceania maintains the power struggle between the native people and the government agencies and is maintained by internal and international diplomacy through the recognition of said power in this region. The economic and political dependence on this neo-colonial perspective reflects the culture enforced establishments and laws that govern these communities.

For native people, the ability to recognize the Imperialist tradition of power and enforcement is needed to understand the position that native peoples today as they are affected by an imperial history. The resistance to the power comes when the consciousness of one's own traditions and culture suffers and becomes threatened by an enforcing power. This dynamic affects the identity in a relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed; with native people being the oppressed. The way that I argue this viewpoint is to use a theory that describes this dynamic, and that is called the *Cultural Bomb*.

The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate  
a people's belief in their names, in their languages,  
in their environment, in their heritage of struggle,  
in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves  
(Thiong'o 1981, 3).

This is the mindset of the colonizer to the colonized. In order to counter this belief and to perpetuate native culture, the language has to be alive and thriving. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition and communication.

The language is a means of communication and so if a person speaks someone else's language than they will never understand it completely to reflect life as a native person. By not speaking one's own language, one will become "disassociated from his natural and social environment, a disassociation that is reinforced in the teachings of history, geography, music, and so on in schools today" (Thiong'o 1981,17). This then makes the native people see the world in a certain way in which they start seeing it being reflected in the culture of the language of imposition. If native language comes to a stop, the people will not see the world through their native lens but through the world of the colonizer's language of adoption (Thiong'o 1981, 17). I look at Thiong'o's theory because to learn how to move forward as a people, we must learn what the colonizer has done to change our ways. Language is a big factor today where not so much of the population is privileged enough to learn and speak our own language. This time is crucial to our understanding of what we need to do today for our future. With the consciousness of reviving and reclaiming our language and traditions, we can set up tools for all native peoples to follow and/or learn from for their own culture.

Per Kanalu Young, Thiong'o's "employment of a Native language in the construction of interpretive modes for examining the past reverses the effects" of colonialism (Young 1998, 21). This is the mindset of the colonizer to the colonized and in order to counter this belief and to perpetuate native culture, the language has to be alive and thriving. The colonizer's language over time and the oppression that results in confining Native thought within conceptual categories that are foreign leads indigenous people to think like foreigners (Young 1998, 21).

The classes fighting against imperialism even in its neo-colonial stage and form, have to confront these dynamics with the higher and more creative culture of resolute struggle. They have to speak the united language of struggle contained in each of their languages. “They must discover their various tongues to sing the song: A people united can never be defeated” (Young 1998, 3).

Language carries culture, and culture carries the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world (Thiong'o 1981, 16). “For colonialism this involved two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized” (Thiong'o 1981, 16).

This involves two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized (Thiong'o 1981, 16). Since the new language as a means of communication was a product of and was reflecting the real language of life elsewhere, it could never be as spoken or written properly to reflect or imitate the real life of that community, thus, learning for a colonial child, becomes a cerebral activity and not an emotionally felt experience (Thiong'o 1981, 17).

Since culture is a product of the history of a people which it in turn reflects, the child was now being exposed exclusively to a culture that was a product of a world external to himself and

ultimately he was being made to stand outside himself to look at himself. “Catching them young” as an aim is even more true of a colonial child; The images of this world and his place in it implanted in a child take years to eradicate, if they ever can be (Thiong’o 1981, 17).

Where his own native languages were associated in his impressionable mind with low status, humiliation, corporal punishment, slow-footed intelligence and ability or downright stupidity, non-intelligible and barbarism, this was reinforced by the world he met in the works of such geniuses he was forced to study in school (Thiong’o 1981, 18).

### **Looking forward**

Through the diasporic history of Tokelau and because of the initiatives carried out by the first generation to Aotearoa/New Zealand, there are so many more programs and events that are being done today in a collective manner for culture perpetuation and strength in Tokelauan identity.

From October 29 to November 04, 2012, New Zealand had their inaugural Tokelauan language week where the culture was celebrated and ultimately helped to ensure the growth and survival of Pacific languages. The theme for this event was *Ke Mau Ke Pale O Tokelau: Hold Fast To The Treasures Of Tokelau*. This was put into place to promote and protect the Tokelauan language as a treasure for Tokelauans in the diaspora. “It is our responsibility as Tokelau communities, leaders, churches, families, young parents and children to speak and use our language in our everyday lives” (Human Rights Commission, 2012).

With the need to flourish, a different type of pathway had to be taken in order to connect to the Tokelauan culture and traditions. These pathways have led the community to recognize community centers and churches as a vehicle to native agency. These examples fall back on the structures that were used in the 1960’s and 1970’s when they were the only source of connecting

to each other and those back in the homeland. Today there are many community centers and churches that speak Tokelauan language and share the values and traditions of their people back in Tokelau. Tokelauan agency is seen through many venues and contexts and can be seen and heard from radio programs, language weeks, and church and community centers all over New Zealand and more specifically on the north island. They are:

- Atafu Tokelau Community Group Inc.
- Fetufa Tokelau Akoga Kamata Early Childhood Centre; Auckland
- Four school holiday programmes: HEHA, DIA, Nikau Foundation, Te Umiumiga a Tokelau
- Kaiga o Fakaofu Society
- Manukau Institute of Technology
- Maraliki Tokelau Akoga Kamata; Auckland
- Ministry of Social Development
- Nukunonu Wellington Association
- Pacific Island Affairs
- Pahina o Tokelau Church
- Papalaulelei Church
- Russell School, Porirua
- St Bernards College, Lower Hutt
- Te Umiumiga a Tokelau Community Center; Hutt Valley, New Zealand
- The Auckland Tokelau Society Incorporated
- The Tokelau Catholic Sunday School Hutt Valley
- The Tokelau Community Rotorua Incorporated
- The Tokelau NIU FM Radio Program
- Tokelau Dunedin Community Center
- Tokelau ECE Centre
- Tokelau Language Week 2012 (first one):  
*Vaiaho o te Gagana Tokelau: Tokelau language*
- Tokelau Manawatu Community
- Tokelau Nurses and Health Workers Association
- Tokelau Taupo Community
- Tokelau Rotorua Community Center
- Tokelauan business plan for 2008-2010
- Tokelauan International Festival 2012
- Ulu O Tokelau Aliko Faipule Salesio Lui
- Vaka (canoe) Tokelau Building Project 2012
- Weltec Institute in Petone, Ministry of Social Development Scholarships

## Conclusion

In the beginning of this chapter I focused on the educational platform in Tokelau and looked at the case study that discussed the VSA and the schools in Tokelau. The focus on the study became obvious as the report was given about Tokelau, for Tokelau, and pertaining to Tokelau. There was no voice given to the community, teachers, *Taufulaga* and students of Tokelau thereby giving an impression that the VSA operated for the New Zealand government as opposed to helping the people of Tokelau. This fact remains to be a factor in Tokelau where the colonial powers are present in the continual discourse seen in the educational platform, culture, location, and subjectivities. Such experiences “frame and colonize their experiences and serve to position and represent them in particular” (Jipson 2001, 8) through the portrayal they create. In this case, through the educational platform.

The asymmetrical curriculum brought to Tokelau by the VSA saw the educational platform through the colonial lens. The funding is welcomed but to what extent when the purpose is to teach the Tokelauan people about another history unlike their own? The attempt to assimilate the population to a neo-dependent state did not go un-noticed and the un-support from the community showed the VSA that more has to go in to a collaboration than just a one-sided relationship, if that is what the effort was for. However, that is not the reason the VSA was in Tokelau. To want to help the people, a certain respect has to be given to any culture before moving a group of people in to a foreign land.

When looking at the Tokelauan diasporic communities in New Zealand, there were force-driven issues that called for Tokelauan agency that were seen in many areas such as church and community centers and over the past few years the agency is seen through radio shows that speak the Tokelauan language to the New Zealand curriculum translating the curriculum in Tokelauan.

The issues in New Zealand are intensified more than in Tokelau because the population is away from their homeland. In Tokelau, the population lives off of the land, speaks the language, connects everyday life to genealogy and culture. The population in New Zealand are forced to set up pathways for themselves to ensure a connection to the homeland while living in the diaspora. If they don't set up these pathways, the risk of a culture being forgotten is real and scary, and so the effort must be present in order to connect to their native identity.

## Chapter Four

### *Finding A Place To Fit In*

After discussing the educational platform in Tokelau and New Zealand, I bring my study to Hawai‘i. The population in Hawai‘i has a different history behind their migration however the force-driven issues are the same as the other diasporic communities in New Zealand. The difference in the community in Hawai‘i is that the population came from Olohega via American Samoa in 1953 in hopes of a better life. I argue that a grassroots effort, no matter how small the population, will find a pathway to native agency if the community leaders exemplify a collaboration and transnational approach with the community they live in. I look to two PhD dissertations that discuss the Tokelauan community in Hawai‘i and offer another outlook to a grassroots effort of bringing Tokelauan agency to Hawai‘i.

One cannot discuss the diasporic Tokelauan communities without discussing the history of migration and reasons for leaving the homeland in the first place. For the migration to New Zealand, it was because of the over-population of the atolls and devastating cyclone of 1966; for the migration to Hawai‘i, it started in 1925 with the annexation of Olohega to the United States (Ickes 2009, 210). This annexation was based on the Guano Acts, Joint Resolution 294, which claimed “the sovereignty of the United States over American Samoa is hereby extended over Swains island, which is made a part of American Samoa and placed under the jurisdiction of the administrative and judicial authorities of the government established therein by the United States” (Ickes 2009, 211).

The United States Navy left Eli Jennings III in charge of Olohega and the well-being of its people. In 1936, one hundred and ten people were living on Olohega and worked on the copra plantation. Eventually over time, an “abusive practice of compulsory labor” (Ickes 2009,

221) was seen in Olohega. In 1953, the population on Olohega became tired of living in a “feudal-type society where the plantations increasingly oppressive impositions became intolerable” (Ickes 1999, 255) for their families and a confrontation that eventually led to an eviction and banishment from the island for the entire population.

The people evicted from Olohega were brought to Pagopago, American Samoa without the ability to purchase or hold land and without connections to the traditional clan structure of Samoan society, many Tokelauans existed on the social fringes of Samoa before moving to Hawai‘i in the 1950s and 1960s to find work in the days of commercial agriculture on O‘ahu (Ickes 1999, 96).

The population arrived in Hawai‘i in 1953 to start a new beginning and to work in the plantation fields. Coming to Hawai‘i, this community brought with them the displacement, dispossession, and feelings of marginalization from Olohega and Samoa. A commonality that the native people of Hawai‘i face still today with the rich history of an illegal overthrow that ultimately lead to the same force-driven issues as displacement, dispossession, and marginalization. The same issues to deal with yet the only difference is that the Tokelauan population lives in Hawai‘i as a diasporic community and the native people of Hawai‘i, Kanaka Maoli, live on their homeland; both groups colonized and living with serious identity issues. It is important to point out that the Tokelauan ancestors of Wahiawa’s community, as a result of Jennings initial claim to Olohega, lived apart from the homeland for nearly 100 years before the migration to Hawai‘i; while members of the New Zealand community migrated directly from the homeland.

## **Diasporic Community in Hawaii**

To uncover certain continuing issues affecting the Tokelauan community in Hawai‘i, I look at a few sources to help understand the path this community took in such a small amount of time that has lead them to have a collaboration with many groups and schools in a valiant attempt to perpetuate their culture abroad. I look at two dissertations that have been written about the Tokelauan community extensively. The first dissertation is from Betty Ickes, A native Tokelauan woman with genealogical ties to Olohega who writes her master’s Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation on the many facets of Olohega and the diasporic community in Hawai‘i. The second dissertation is from Akiemi Glenn who writes her Doctoral Dissertation on the linguistics of the Tokelauan language and also writes extensively about the diasporic community in Hawai‘i. I then look at a case study that describes the collaboration between the Tokelauan community and the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Linguistic Department. The fruit from these sources led me to Te Lumanaki O Tokelau i Amelika Language and Cultural School that serves an example of native agency and dedication to culture for this diasporic community.

I argue that following the educational platform from the schools in New Zealand, this alternative way of teaching their native children the traditions through a language based educational platform is an example that runs through the diasporic Tokelauan communities. The educational system in these areas connects all three geographical sites to each other through a commonality in the education system and the consciousness to realize the importance of having a curriculum that will ultimately further their own people.

Permanently settled in Hawai‘i since 1953, the Wahiawa Tokelauans are now in to the third and fourth generations in Hawai‘i and have maintained a tight knit community amongst themselves.

Tokelau's present transnational community best models what Chappell describes as an alternative to "nation-states of illusory purity" (Chappell 2013, 93), "We may see peoples radiating outward from 'sacred sites,' not in wars of conquest, but in congeries of kin metaphors that can migrate while revering their symbols of identity at home" (Chappell 2013, 1194).

### **A Shared Culture of Marginalization and Dispossession**

In 1953, their arrival coincided with the largest waves of immigration to Hawai‘i from Samoa. Due to a cultural similarity to Samoans, many communicated to this population through the Samoan language which only further complicated their Tokelauan identity. The population that settled on O‘ahu worked in the plantations in agricultural duties and on the docks. Many of their children served in the US military to become citizens and/or pursued higher education to ensure employment and security for the family. As they assimilated into Hawai‘i’s local community, Tokelauan people experienced language and culture shift at a rate much more rapid than that of the other, larger immigrant ethnic communities (Ickes 2009, 86).

“The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, language and social practice – all may be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistances and hope” (Jipson 2001, 25).

Recognizing the history and development of Polynesia as a history of diaspora can inform analysis of the migrations and movements in the modern Pacific, but the contemporary diaspora has diverged from “traditional migratory patterns” (Spoonley 2000, 146) of pre-European inter-island contacts. Polynesians relocate to larger nation states because the histories of colonialism and forced migration after the European contact period have re-shaped the currents of human resettlement in the Pacific Ocean, creating social actors with “flexible

citizenship” (Ong 1999, 63) who sometimes migrate as communities or migrate in order to pursue inclusion in community (Small 1997, 42).

Polynesian migration in the modern era is motivated by the pursuit of an economic gain, yet it appears that in the case of Tokelauan population outside of the atolls, there is a quest for agency and native identity through continual connections with the homeland and the diasporic communities in New Zealand.

Ickes (1999, 23) identifies the phenomenon as “double consciousness” and the multiple positioning of Tokelauans in Hawai‘i and New Zealand reveals the diaspora to be a diasporic community in which trans-territorial discussions about language and culture and multiple and intersecting “economies of affection” (Henry 1999, 67) are necessary to understand Tokelauan history in this modern world. It is in this context that the multilingual community of Hawai‘i becomes a resource for articulating these sometimes-conflicting identities imposed by the colonial powers.

### **Te Lumanaki O Tokelau I Amelika Language and Culture School**

To counter the notion of being displaced/dispossessed/marginalized, Tokelauan community leaders founded Te Taki Tokelau (The Tokelau Guide) Community Training and Development, Inc. in 2003 (Glenn 2012, 17). Three years later, Te Lumanaki O Tokelau i Amelika Language and Cultural School was founded in 2004 by Dr. Betty Ickes in Wahiawa, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. Te Lumanaki started as a community center that would meet on Saturdays to get together and talk about their homeland. The curriculum initially planned 12 six-hour sessions, one per month, for the teachers. Topics included: instructional strategies; interactive tasks; multiple intelligences and assessment; how to build curriculum through the use of themes,

goals, and objectives; developing themes, goals and objectives for grades K-6, 7-12, and adult learners; and creating units and material for K-12 students.

In 2004, the approach to outreach took a turn at looking into an educational platform as a way to perpetuate and strengthen Tokelauan identity in the Hawai‘i diaspora. “This approach to learning things through explanation is an innovation in a society where people would have traditionally learned through observation or apprenticeship” (Hooper & Huntsman 1991, 112). However, the elders started noticing that the second and third generations of Tokelauans to Hawai‘i were speaking less and less of their own language and so the need to collaborate with other Oceanic people in learning techniques for language was seen as a necessary move.

### **The Language Revitalization Project**

In 2004, two students from the Linguistics Department at The University of Hawai‘i Mānoa campus started a project that looked at language revitalization and made four components to look in to. They were: the need for collaboration between linguists and community members and linguists with different areas of expertise; the balancing act between the community members and the researchers; publicizing the research; and protecting the language and/or languages of immigrant populations and their rights.

It was immediately recognized that the primary goal was to develop a formal integrated curriculum for Te Lumanaki School. In 2005, Te Taki was awarded a grant from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) for a Tokelauan language assessment survey project.

Although the directors of Te Taki were determined to investigate the linguistic situation in their community and had obtained funding to conduct authors, faculty members of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, in April 2005, Yuko Otsuka

and Andrew Wong gave a talk entitled *Tongan as an endangered language? A new look at language endangerment in Polynesia* at the UHM Anthropology Colloquium Series (Otsuka & Wong 2007, 244). The talk was co-sponsored by the Department of Anthropology and the Center for the Pacific Islands Studies and caught the eyes of Betty Ickes (Otsuka & Wong 2007, 244), a PhD candidate at the time in the History Department at the University.

Ickes sought collaboration with Otsuka and Wong to design a language-assessment survey. This survey would later be called the “Kalele Project.” The students agreed to create a questionnaire that would question language competence, use, and attitudes among Tokelauans in Hawai‘i. The purpose of the survey was to collect information to help identify problems that contribute to language loss in order to develop appropriate strategies to reverse the language shift in the community.

Of the 439 participants, 425 provided their self-reported proficiency in Tokelauan. First, as for the speaking ability, 83.1% of them answered that they speak Tokelauan a little or not at all; only 8% answered that their speaking ability is native-like (Otsuka & Wong 2007, 246). Turning to comprehension, 77.4% of them answered that they understood Tokelauan a little or not at all; those who rated their comprehension skills as native-like comprise 9.2% (Otsuka & Wong 2007, 246). These results confirmed that Tokelauan language is no longer the main language of the Tokelauan community in Hawai‘i (Otsuka & Wong 2007, 246-247). Tokelauan is the first language for only 7.2% of those who answered this question (377 in total) (Otsuka & Wong 2007, 247). Therefore, the conclusion to this study is that the transmission of Tokelauan language is on a rapid decline within the small community (Otsuka & Wong 2007, 247).

When looking at these results, the most obvious results were where the person was born, 58.3% of the population in Hawai‘i that could not speak the language were born outside of

Tokelau (Ickes 2009, 214). In contrast, 63.6% of those born in Tokelau and American Samoa spoke with proficiency in speaking the language (Ickes 2009, 214). An important factor in this survey showed that 81.7% of the population felt that the Tokelauan language represented Tokelauan identity and that 83.3% felt that children should learn their Tokelauan language (Ickes 2009, 214). This report becomes the first report on Tokelau people living in the United States since community members had been previously counted in census documents as “Other” Pacific Islanders or American Samoan, reinforcing the institutional invisibility of Tokelauans among Pacific Island migrant communities in Hawai’i (Ickes 2009, 214). Due to these results, the authors of this study referred Te Taki to the UH Mānoa Language Documentation Training Center, a student organization run by graduate students in the Department of Linguistics. Three graduate student, Akiemi Glenn, Katya Jenson, and Sara Olson, responded and took up the task of making a children’s dictionary (Otsuka & Wong 2007, 101).

A language shift is recognized not only by the elders but now by scholars who study linguistics. Language shift is caused by shifts in personal and group values and goals (Kulick 1992, 9). Urbanization and industrialization changes the view as to how people see themselves in this syncretic world today and the “revisions may eventually be responsible for a group’s giving up its vernacular language (Kulick 1992, 9). When reality is viewed in this manner, the study of language shift becomes the study of a people’s conceptions of themselves in relation to one another and to their changing social world, and of how those conceptions are encoded by and mediated through language (Kulick 1992, 9).

Indigenous ways of learning today are marginalized when there is a focus on written form that takes precedent over oral history, and thereby explains the failure of Indigenous students in the education system. "People do not understand the unseen, which is the reality of our lives;

they do not realize its power. They look only at the seen, which is illusion" (Hereniko 2000, 85). However, Hau'ofa counters his theory by stating that the truth can be "flexible and negotiable", thereby having more than one way of telling a story or myth in the process of cultural identity.

Indigenous peoples do not have cultures based on the Western enlightenment and are not immigrants who came to a new land seeking a new beginning. Indigenous worldviews are about peoples who have lived in their homeland for thousands of years, and who have distinct religious beliefs and traditions, and a unique culture that they seek to perpetuate. Indigenous people seek to perpetuate their culture and ways of life, as much as possible, however, they "are alienated and ill-suited to participate as willing students and parents within the nation-state's school system" (Okamura 2008, 128).

### **Trip Back To The Homeland To Encourage Pride Of Ethnicity**

As a way to connect this diasporic community with their homeland, a selection of three students and five adults traveled to Tokelau to have first-hand interaction with their homeland. The purpose of the trip was to build relationships with the Tokelauan community, to have an appreciation of the language and culture, and to take pictures for the online dictionary that would be used for the Tamoko Tokelau Language Education Series.

According to Betty Ickes, Te Taki's Executive Director and co-founder Te Lumanaki O Tokelau i Amelika language and Cultural School, the trip to Tokelau, and the stories brought back, also made an impact, capturing the imagination of the community.

This program has made a big impression on our kids. Hearing from the kids who traveled to Tokelau talking about the trip and using slang has made the culture more real, something they can touch and feel. There are new trends in our community - more social networking, more art, and more expression of culture. And many people in community speak the language better - we are using it more in the home, with our kids. Within the community, our level of comfort and understanding of language and culture is improving (Ickes 1999, 24).

### **Moving Forward for Tokelauans in the Hawai'i Diaspora**

The Tokelauan diaspora community contributes to the entire Tokelauan paradigm when it comes to looking at the educational outlook for the future generations. Since two dissertations have been published, there have since been new revelations in programs that are set up to mirror the diasporic communities in New Zealand. A few programs and events have since been founded in the last five years to continue the path to strengthen Tokelauan identity through programs that show a Tokelauan agency in Hawai'i.

The Tokelauan community and the diasporic communities in New Zealand appear to be on the same tract as each other in regards to showing agency in the diaspora. All three communities have had to learn how to navigate in the systems that each of them are in, in order to further the educational process for their people. Tokelau as a colony of New Zealand has the monetary assistance to aid in the future of the educational system in Tokelau. The communities in New Zealand have the precedent of the Maori Language Act to use as a pathway to having Tokelauan language and culture taught in their schools and community centers, ultimately helping the bridge the connection between their community and the homeland. The structure in New Zealand is different from the structure in Hawai'i where the colonizer's are different and with a different agenda. The population in Hawai'i has had to navigate through the Western context in order to find a connection to their homeland. It is through the connection to the community in New Zealand that they are able to connect to their homeland all together. The point is though that no matter the political environment, Tokelauans are thriving in the diaspora whether they live in Aotearoa/New Zealand or Hawai'i.

Because of the differences of colonizer's, the dynamics will be different; however, the intent is still the same. By following the educational platform in Tokelau and New Zealand, the

Community Center replicates the curriculum in their own space as opposed to having these benefits in the Hawai‘i school system. This is another act of connecting with their family from across the sea by replicating the process the best way they can.

When we look at the native population in Hawai‘i and see the discrepancies for them alone in their space and homeland. The alternate view, “we can be guided by Hawai‘i’s plantation past, the primary lesson our country can draw from it would be not to institutionalize the racism and discrimination against immigrants and Native Hawaiians” (Takaki 2008, 10). It also must be emphasized that eliminating racism and discrimination toward the establishment of racial equality requires far more than just getting along with others. In other words, what is needed goes well beyond individual members of society accepting others, intermarrying with them, and sharing a common culture; but rather recognizing their native identity through laws and statutes and investing in their future through an educational platform (Okamura 2011, 45).

Today, Te Lumanaki O Tokelau i Amelika Language and Cultural Community Center focuses on have those relationships that their brothers and sisters have across the sea by following Tokelau and New Zealand’s Educational platform in language and culture. In 2010, the Tokelau Language Curriculum was implemented into the community center at Te Lumanaki, along with the Tamoko Tokelau Language Education Series. In 2012, the Tokelauan community in Hawai‘i travels to New Zealand to partake in the Bi-Annual New Zealand Tokelau Easter Festival where the camaraderie with fellow Tokelauans allows for the connection between the two diasporic groups. On the home front in Hawai‘i, the members from Hawai‘i started participating in the Hawai‘i State Art Museum Festivities in 2013 where a shared culture is encouraged and a bond between native peoples can be explored. In this same year, a collaboration with Ho’oulu ‘Aina was welcomed where ulu (breadfruit) plants from Tokelau are

sent to Hawai‘i from Tokelau and planted in the valleys of Kalihi, thereby connecting the community to their homeland and Tokelauan identity as the ulu plant is connected to their cosmology.

Today, Te Lumanaki has nine teachers that has enhanced teaching skills and new teaching materials to teach 260 culturally-based language classes, increasing the language ability of 30 youth and 27 adults in the community (Ickes 1999, 167). Currently, Te Lumanaki gatherings are regularly attended by sixty to eighty participants, ranging from age one to eighty-two. The future looks positive for this small diasporic community based on the shared history with their own brothers and sisters that live in New Zealand. The educational platform has served both communities very well and one must be mindful that because the population in Hawai‘i is of smaller proportion, as well as the colonizer has a different agenda, the process and the quickness of funds to better enrich the program will be slower. The space for the community center and the funding for an educational platform, along with the collaboration from many different groups, will only benefit this diasporic community and encourage a better future where an importance on the language and culture in the curriculum will become a norm.

The obvious difference between the two diasporic communities is that in New Zealand, the language has been added to the public schools system. The curriculum translates into Tokelauan language even though the basis of the content is with a British design. In this design, the recognition of education through a different lens is recognized and thus adds an outline that is designed to understand migration and native identity.

In Hawai‘i, the public schools comes under the State of Hawai‘i, Department of Education system where the native language of the Hawaiian population, even though recognized as an official state language, is not recognized in the curriculum through the

education system. Hawaiian language courses are offered in the Department of Education (DOE), yet the rest of the curriculum is not offered in the Hawaiian language. Even though colonialism forced a process of severe disconnection from our history, our language, and our culture. (Ola i na Moolelo video. 2012), we still have schools such as Punana Leo O Hawai‘i that teaches a child the curriculum in the Hawaiian language for the entire curriculum. This is why Te Lumanaki O Tokelau i Amelika language and Cultural School is important for the diasporic Tokelauan community because it offers a space to practice and honor one’s language and traditions.

All public school students suffer as a result of the inadequate funding of the DOE. The students in the public schools mostly comprise of ethnic minorities where the underfunding of the DOE system continues to teach the colonial history. Thereby, connecting Native Hawaiians with the diasporic Tokelauan community in Hawai‘i is an example of native people that need to find their own pathways to ensure perpetuation of culture while living in a colonial structure. As a result, K-12 public education is a major factor in the institutionalization of ethnic inequality in Hawai‘i, not only in the inequality of education provided to ethnic minority students but especially in limiting their access to college (Okamura 2011, 106).

Discriminatory policies and practices include the underfunding by the state government of both the public schools and University of Hawai‘i system. In the DOE schools, where ethnic minorities, including Filipino Americans, Native Hawaiians, Samoans, and other Pacific islanders, are a majority of students, inadequate funding continues to result in the deteriorating quality of the educational system that is ranked among the lowest in the nation by various criteria (Okamura 2011, 88-89).

## **Educational Platforms in Hawaii**

In 1978, Hawai‘i becomes the first state in the United States to designate the native language of Hawaiian as an official language. The purpose was a “vehicle for revitalizing the Hawaiian language and assisting people to regain and maintain their language” (History of the Hawaiian language immersion program website). In 1984, Hawai‘i saw the first private Hawaiian language immersion pre-school on Kaua‘i start. In 1987, through the Hawai‘i State Constitution mandate Article X, Section 4, the Department of Education established the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program called Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai‘i (Hawai‘i State Department of Education website). The intended purpose was to “provide a quality education based on knowledge of Hawaiian language and culture as the foundation for instruction and learning experiences that lead to achievement of Kaiapuni goals and state standards” (Hawai‘i State Department of Education website). In 1990, the State of Hawai‘i approved a program aimed at K-12. Today, there are 21 emergent schools in the State of Hawai‘i, four on Hawai‘i Island, four on Maui, two on Moloka‘i, six on O‘ahu, four on Kaua‘i, and one on Ni‘ihau (www.ahapunaleo.org website). The difference between the immersion schools in Hawai‘i and the public education schools in New Zealand is that the curriculum in Hawai‘i is based off of Hawaiian traditions, culture and language. The curriculum is not a translated version of the curriculum in the Department of Education in Hawai‘i and therefore the context is place-base curriculum that meets the needs of the children so that they become the “perpetuators of the native language of this land and of the cultural heritage” (History of the Hawaiian language immersion program website).

In 1999, Hawai‘i saw the start of State Public Charter schools that is funded under Act 130. In 2013, the State of Hawai‘i has a total of thirty two charter school. Each school is

individually funded and serves over ten thousand students a year (www.chartercommission.hawaii.gov website). The school is focused on the Hawaiian language and culture yet the curriculum base is in the English language. The charter schools are different from the immersion schools is that the funding is separate where the immersion schools are funded by the state and the charter schools are funded by individual sources that come from federal grants.

### **Conclusion**

Indigenous peoples not only have other stories to tell but give an alternative story of a history of Western research through the eyes of the colonized. There is significance of Indigenous perspectives on research from a person that grew up within these Indigenous communities where there is an insight of different forms of colonization and injustice.

The wider picture is to bring the communities together in Hawai‘i with a common goal of teaching the children the foundations of their native culture. “The image of the binocular – a singular and undivided picture – is a complex synthesis between images in both the left and right side of the brain. In this context a synergy is created where the sum of the images is greater than the separate parts. As a result of bringing the two different views together, resolution and contrast are enhanced. Even more important, new insight into depth is created. Thus, the relationship between the different parts constructs new dimensions of seeing” (Kincheloe 2006 183-184).

The Tokelauan diasporic community in Hawai‘i can teach pivotal lessons on culture and a shared sense of collaboration in an earnest attempt for perpetuation of culture. This population is small in comparison to other ethnic groups however the way that the leaders in this community have reached out to other community members, the University, and those in the homeland and

the community in New Zealand, shows a sense of pride in their culture with a sense of commitment to rediscovery of a language that regenerates a reconnection to a culture that is across the ocean. “It is the universal language underlying all speech and words of our history. Struggle. Struggle makes history. Struggle makes us. In struggle is our history, our language and our being” (Thiong’o 1981, 108).

Through the shared sense of revitalizing a language in a grassroots effort, the wider picture becomes this sense of collaboration amongst different cultures as a way to learn from others in a non-threatening sharing manner with an ultimate goal of wanting what is best for one ethnic group, and in that process becomes what is best for all of us. When the native people thrive, everyone thrives.

The relationship that the community in Hawai‘i has with the community in New Zealand is intricate in forming an alliance with each other as they can both learn from the other through the different pathways that was needed to negotiate a change in Tokelauan agency while in the diaspora. A look at the native peoples of Hawai‘i also shares light in to a platform that has already been negotiated by the native people of Hawai‘i and lessons can be learned from the path that was taken for the immersion and charter schools to take place.

## Chapter Five

*Mai Na Matua, Mo Ki Tatou, Ki Na Fanau*  
*Learning from yesterday, living today and hope for tomorrow*  
*-Tokelauan saying*

I chose to research Tokelau because of their low population, transnational communities, language loss and the need for revival of culture. As I focused on the educational platform for each geographic location, I was able to see the bigger picture of the use of Indigenous educational methods in response to the loss of Indigenous knowledge through the process of colonization, marginalization and dispossession. Each demographic location was different in the structural set up for the different community programs and through case studies for each region, I ended up finding much more than I had anticipated.

It was important for me to give a cosmological explanation of this ethnic population so that other ethnic populations could associate with them through a similar cosmology. There are thousands of island atolls in Oceania that have been clumped in to groups under three regions, Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. By doing so, the identity of each island atoll is diminished and over time the knowledge of who they are is diminished as well. With a consciousness today of strengthening native identity, these terms are controversial and are seen as marginalizing thousands of native people and leaves them without any agency and/or identity. The significance is to acknowledge who they are and where they come from through knowing their beginnings and history.

Showing the dynamics from three different geographical locations allowed my research to speak for itself in terms of the force-driven issues that each location had to face and ultimately overcome and/or is still learning how to navigate through colonial waters. The population in Tokelau dealt with a colonial force that came in to their country to change the paradigm through the European structure of the VSA. Through the examples of resistance that the community

showed in terms of non-compliance in attendance for meetings and activities, the VSA learnt that it was not as easy as they had first thought of coming in to another country and teaching a foreign curriculum.

In New Zealand and Hawai'i, the grassroots effort became apparent and necessary for those that longed for their homeland of Tokelau. Through community centers and churches a shared connection to a culture was fostered and overtime these spaces became a pivotal example of Tokelauan agency while in the diaspora. "Tokelauans in Aotearoa/New Zealand and Hawai'i gives us insight when we consider the vast array of facets in the overarching migration and resettlement process" (Ickes 2009, 117). On another level of collaboration, the two diasporic communities were able to have a relationship with one another that eventually strengthened all ties leading back to their homeland.

One of the most important lessons learnt from this research is recognizing Indigenous education as a legitimate form of education. This different context highlights and enhances traditions and languages that fall outside of the western concept of curriculum seen as reading, writing and arithmetic. By looking at the educational platforms, the many other facets became apparent to discuss such as living in the diaspora, migration concerns that often come with force driven issues, relations between the native people and the colonial government, pathways for native agency, and a shared and collaborative effort in perpetuating culture for generations to come.

Another important lesson learnt is that even though each geographic location has their own struggles and force-driven issues for the native peoples, we can all learn from the good examples of what has worked for the people in terms of agency, as well as learn from the bad examples of what has not worked for the people. We have to be open to learning from all

examples and not be selective in learning only from the success stories but rather learn from the trials and tribulations so that the pathway that is forged for the future is built on a solid foundation. A key contribution to this outlook is having a healthy and open dialogue with community members that can reach over transnational lines in a shared and collaborative effort in perpetuating native cultures.

It is because of the history of colonialism and the need to connect once again connect to a native identity is the reason that these platforms are appearing all over the world. Native people choose to learn from this colonial structure and in return are aware that a different setting in the educational arena needs to take place. For native student, the western curriculum “does not include enough native history and culture to make it relevant to their interests or community needs,” (Champagne 2002, 149) and so today the importance on these Indigenous platforms are important for perpetuation of culture. Even though the colonial powers are different in each location, the same force-driven issues appear to exist for all that live away from their homeland and the same need to once again connect to their homeland becomes apparent in the activities that show agency while living away.

The importance of a native person writing about another native group is significant in this day and age because of learning from another native group is to learn more about the self as we all have similar force driven issues to confront. The time has come for us to wake up to our modern history as a region and a new sense of the region that is our own creation, based on our perceptions of our realities, is necessary for our survival in this new and future generations.

An optimistic approach known to come from Epeli Hau'ofa, a Tongan scholar, discusses another way of looking at the world from a native perspective and grassroots lens. Hau'ofa see's discourse that ultimately leads to native peoples self-characteristics. Like Thiong'o, Hau'ofa

sees that there are significant consequences when it comes to people's self-identity and in what is projected out to the world. When we look at the world through our myths, legends, oral traditions and cosmologies, it becomes "evident that we did not see the world as a small island but rather a sea of islands" (Hau'ofa 1994, 7). To have the mindset that we are all connected via the many characteristics above, then there must be another way of looking at the world that can better enhance native peoples in Polynesia.

Hau'ofa focuses on a vast ocean region and draws the people of the Pacific together to form a collective group called Oceania. The point is to band together because separate, we have no power or control, but if together, we could refer to the ocean as part of our domain and collectively be a force to reckon with. In this very mindset, scholars have critically analyzed and discussed the need to become one in order to be heard. Naturally the discussion leads to Pacific Islanders discussing such matters that will affect the future generations that will ultimately lead into a discussion of how a Pacific Islander studying other Pacific Islanders can be a useful tool in this day and age with a pan-pacific reach.

Albert Wendt, a novelist, short-story writer and poet is a Samoan scholar that contributes to the resistance and identity of being an Indigenous person with his text in the form of poetry and his many writings. Wendt encourages self-expression and a freedom of writing in his novels that contribute to the creative side of showing resistance and finding identity in today's world by using different contexts to express the ideology that pen and paper cannot duplicate.

I belong to Oceania—or, at least, I am rooted in a fertile part of it and it nourishes my spirit, helps to define me, and feeds my imagination. A detached objective analysis I will leave to sociologists and all the other 'ologists'...Objectivity is for such uncommitted gods. My commitment won't allow me to confine myself to such a narrow vision. So vast, so fabulously varied a scatter of islands, nations, cultures, mythologies and myths, so dazzling a creature, Oceania deserves more than an attempt at mundane fact; only the imagination in free flight can hope—if not to contain her—to grasp some of her shape, plumage, and

pain. I will not pretend that I know her in all her manifestations. No one...ever did; no one does...; no one ever will because whenever we think we have captured her she has already assumed new guises—the love affair is endless, even her vital statistics...will change endlessly. In the final instance, our countries, cultures, nations, planets are what we imagine them to be. One human being's reality is another's fiction. Perhaps we ourselves exist only in each other's dreams (Wendt, Albert 1976, 49).

There has been a wave of brilliant scholars with who have shared their thoughts on paper and have motivated the masses of Indigenous peoples to reflect critically on the nature, scope, and processes of colonialism in the pacific islands, and to start to reclaim an identity that has always been there. Amongst these writers, is a writer who wrote *Decolonizing Pacific Studies: Indigenous Perspectives, Knowledge and Wisdom in Higher Education* by the name of Konai Helu Thaman. This author believes that decolonizing the Pacific is about “reclaiming indigenous oceanic perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom that have been devalued or suppressed.” It is important to decolonize Pacific studies and counter the Western discourse and power via different ways of thought such as acknowledging and recognizing the dominance of western philosophy, content, and pedagogy in the lives and the education of pacific people; valuing alternative ways of thinking about our world, particularly those rooted in the indigenous cultures of oceanic peoples; and developing a new philosophy of education that is culturally inclusive and gender sensitive. If decolonizing Pacific studies is about decolonizing the mind, then it is about culture.

Thaman advocates the incorporation of indigenous and local knowledge and wisdom into the content of all courses offered at the university so as to encourage the valuing of ways of knowing and knowledge associated with oceanic peoples and the acceptance of their multiple wisdom. It is his belief that this approach ought to form the core of pacific studies teaching and research in the future. A paradigm shift and a search for multiple perspectives and alternative ways of looking at the world will enrich and enhance our understanding of pacific studies, not

diminish or degrade it. Students reclaiming their education, an important part of the ongoing process of decolonizing higher education in the Pacific, thus an Indigenous perspective in higher education is imperative now for several reasons; 1. Vibrant Indigenous cultures in the world today have their own views of the world that must be recognized and acknowledged; 2. Institutions of high education must recognize ownership and control of indigenous knowledge by indigenous peoples rather than by the academy. 3. Pacific studies centers and programs need indigenous cultural knowledge in order to validate and legitimize their work, particularly in the eyes of indigenous peoples. 4. Indigenous knowledge can contribute to the general knowledge base of higher education and enrich the curriculum by considerations of different perspectives of knowledge and wisdom. 5. Incorporating aspects of indigenous education into course curricula helps make university study more meaningful for many students. 6. Valuing indigenous ways of knowing usually results in mutually beneficial collaboration between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples, and improves their treatment of each other as equals (Gupta 1973, 10).

I believe each and every one of us that live on an island or atoll, or live in a diasporic community has what it takes to teach the children the skills for the future and I believe we are already putting those skills in motion whether it be by talking-story around the kava bowl or presenting in front of a room of people. Whether it is sailing on a canoe, chanting, dancing hula, farming, writing literature or performing creative arts such as poetry or song, we are all contributing to our future in Oceania and together we can move all of our people to the future where traditions and syncretic styles of learning are acceptable and done without hesitation. The wider picture to be seen by this thesis is that the future should include Indigenous perspectives in education and is imperative for different reasons.

I end this work on a high note of hope and inspiration for future generations to live in an era where education is taught through a lens that recognizes native traditions. In following the quote of Epele Hau'ofa for my studies, I share a poem of his that has affected the outcome of my portfolio and theology today.

We should not be defined by the  
Smallness of our islands, but by  
The greatness of our oceans.

We are the sea, we are the ocean,

Oceania is us

We must wake up to this ancient truth  
And together use it to overturn all  
Hegemonic views that aim ultimately  
To confine us again,  
Physically and psychologically.

It is time to create things for ourselves,  
To create established standards  
Of excellence that match  
Those of our ancestor  
(Epele Hau'ofa 1994).

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