

You are either with us or with us:

Constructing Samoan national identity through inclusion at the *Samoa Observer*

The human race has a compelling need to belong – to find a sense of cultural and national ‘home’ (Kinefuchi, 2010). This sense of cultural belonging is fostered within one’s imagined national identity (Anderson, 1991), which is continually under mediated construction. As global diasporas push people across geographic borders, there is an increased dependency upon technology as a central conduit to connect individuals with their own sense of home and national identity. Within the context of a global media, national identity is not only constructed by one’s ‘home’ country, but also by a myriad of international media, all exerting ideological pressures on what it means to be from a particular part of the world. However, most research has examined mediated representations of national identity from only the host, or ‘home,’ country, which ignores the globalized mediated marketplace of information. Previous studies have also examined only one particular aspect of national identity, such as patriotism, and have widely assumed that identity creation must be based upon the exclusion of others.

This study attempts to address these gaps in the academic literature by first reviewing the nexus of research examining journalism and national identity. This study will concentrate on the weight of research, which suggests that the exclusion/inclusion of others is central to the formation of a national identity in news content. Drawing from this review, this research will then truncate the exclusion/inclusion metanarrative research into four posited micronarratives. News content from Samoa, New Zealand and Australia will then be examined according to these micronarratives and discussed in relation to previous research that has examined national identity and journalism. This study does not aim to create an indigenous epistemological framework for deconstructing identity. However, this research will conclude by advocating a closer inspection of widely held Western conceptions of identity construction through media representation.

### ***Journalism and National Identity***

While an individual’s direct and lived community might be constituted by a relatively small number of people, an individual’s sense of that community is often conceptualized at the national

level. The concept of the nation as an imagined community (Anderson, 1991) is a process of continual construction by way of complex fragments of information that are disseminated through many sources including family, schools, and the government (Calabrese, 1992; de Cillia et al., 1999). The media also play a fundamental role in creating a national identity (Polonska-Kimunguyi, 2011) through recognizable signs, ample time, limited space, and the metanarrative of including/excluding others (Melucci, 1989). The process of excluding others from one's own culture solidifies the identity of those that are allowed inclusion. This centrality of exclusion as an 'us versus them' metanarrative in the formation of identity is found in the overwhelming majority of research examining national identity (i.e. Melucci, 1989; Billig, 1995; Brookes, 1999; Law, 2001; Nossek, 2004; Smail, 2002; Schlesinger, 1991; Maguire et al., 1999) and has been identified as the ideological umbrella that holds all other constructs of identity together. Repeated and purposeful differences between one group and another, whether it is an ethnic, national, cultural, or other 'naturalized' form of grouping (Brookes, 1999), have been cited as the principal path toward national identity formation. The 'us' group, sometimes referred to as the 'in' group, is often forcefully asserted (Maguire et al., 1999) as being better than the other through explicit strategies of exclusion and inclusion (Schlesinger, 1991). Strong differences between the two groups are framed in a way that forms a mentality of separation, difference, distance and sometimes superiority (Billig, 1995).

Journalism is an obvious conduit for the creation of a collective national identity through the exclusion or inclusion of others. The news media report on daily events, over long periods of time, through language and signs that ascribe meaning to events. In so doing, journalism is much more than simply the retelling of news as an objective reality. It is "a site where a community's sense of self is represented and negotiated" (Bogaerts, 2011: 400). News media are one site where we learn about our communities via nationalised symbols that coalesce to create a shared national identity (Golan and Wanta, 2003).

Newsrooms around the world are struggling against forces of globalization to report on local communities that are increasingly diverse and multicultural (Robie, 2009a; Robie, 2009b). The cultural-specificity of journalism has led some scholars to conclude that "western models are irrelevant to conditions of non western societies" (Papoutsaki, 2007: 13) and that a "de-

colonization” of journalism is needed (Papoutsaki, 2007), which recognizes local communities. Robie (2013) has argued that four distinct conceptualizations of journalistic news values may be needed: ‘First World’ journalism (such as in the United States and New Zealand) value objectivity, ‘Second World’ journalism (i.e. China and Cuba) value collective agitation in news content, ‘Third World’ journalism (such as in Fiji and the Philippines) value nation building, and journalism in the ‘Fourth World,’ such as Maori iwi and First Nations, value self-determination. These argument for culturally specific news values is supported by research finding that journalism in the Pacific deviates from generalized Western models of journalistic practice (i.e. Singh, 2012; Utanga, 2007). However, this contextualized examination of journalism has not been extended to a culturally nuanced understanding of how identity is framed in news content.

### ***Building a Construct for National Identity***

Much of the seminal research concerning national identity in the media has its theoretical roots in anthropology and cultural studies (i.e. Alessandri, 2008; Hau'ofa, 1993), which has been intrinsically qualitative (i.e. Kailahi, 2009; Utanga, 2007; Law, 2001). In addition, many studies have examined limited frameworks of national identity (i.e. Inthorn, 2002; Nossek, 2004; Lechler, 2008) from within the host country itself (i.e. Calabrese, 1992; Kaneva, 2011; Law, 2001), which ignores the globalized mediated marketplace of information. Further, while some notable research exploring the media in the Pacific Islands has been done (i.e. Lawson, 1996; Papoutsaki and Strickland, 2008; Robie, 2008), no research could be found that examines the mediated representation of national identity in a Pacific Island context.

This study attempts to draw from previous research to devise a reliable coding construct that can provide a quantifiable understanding of identity in the news. Part of what makes this process of identity construction so complex is the linguistic devices, such as specific pronouns and symbols (Billig, 1995), that are used to exclude or include others. The use of personal pronouns such as ‘I,’ ‘us,’ and ‘we,’ creates a feeling of unity and sameness. Similarly, pronouns such as ‘theirs’ and ‘they’ create distance between one’s own identity and the identified other. This use of pronouns is closely linked to an ‘us versus them’ mentality (Law, 2001: 301) as well as the use of symbols (Polonska-Kimunguyi, 2011), which when used over time, develop into a

recognition of identity that often evokes an emotive response. The symbols can be culturally specific or widely used across nations but applied to a specific geographic political state. In relation to Samoa, one might see the insertion of Samoan words denoting culturally specific honour, such as “matai” (village leader by title) or “aiga” (extended family) as well as the use of more generally applicable, but equally emotive symbolic terms, such as honor, pride, and justice.

Given the continued post-colonial flow of information across national boundaries, this research questions whether accompanying Western journalism norms may have an impact on the resultant identity created within a news text. Western norms of newsworthiness may be associated with the predominant tone of articles surrounding one particular nation, especially when there are authoritarian pressures on the press, as is the case in Samoa. These Western news values have generally dictated that negative news – news about crime, murder etc, particularly of ‘the other’ - may be considered more newsworthy topics than positive stories (Law, 2001). The formation of a national identity, both home and abroad, is assisted when there are repeated associations between newsworthiness/news values and a particular group of people.

The sources used in a story and the ethnicity of the reporter can also influence how national identity is constructed in the media. A reliance on elite governmental sources can lead to overtly affirmative news focused on governmental achievements (Lechler, 2008), creating a positivistic shared national identity. Also, as the presence of a shared culture, religion or ethnicity helps to bind an abstract audience together, the reporter’s byline can serve to build a relationship with the audience through the cultural identification embedded within a name.

The linguistic devices and Western journalism norms noted above are used in conjunction with other narratives to create a metanarrative of exclusion/inclusion that forms national identity. The properties by which the exclusion/inclusion metanarrative are constructed have been termed in this study as micronarratives to acknowledge their positioning in relation to the overarching ‘us versus them’ metanarrative. This analysis follows the example of previous work, which has examined how micronarratives can combine to form a broader meaning (Inthorn, 2002: 50). These narrative fragments remain separate, but culminate ideologically at a specific cultural site, such as a media outlet (Kenix, 2010). Micronarratives work against and with each other to reformulate a new ideological rhetorical force that can culminate in a shared

expression of national identity. In an effort to thematically organize the research, this study labels these micronarratives as Political Resistance, Reductive Signification, Cultural Tradition, and Allegiance Through Service. These micronarratives are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive.

The Political Resistance micronarrative involves the portrayal of opposition and/or tension as a principled point of departure from the host country. This is evidenced through two related frames that can be measured through content analysis: resistance against other groups and representations of violence. Expressions of violence can frame a distance between two groups, creating an inferior identity of the violent group. Expressions of violence relating to the dominant group can also be important, as these representations may give indication of how other identities are perceived, and how the dominant identity is perceived in relation to that group (d'Haenens, 2005; Mastro, 2005; Chan, 2005).

The Reductive Signification micronarrative represents an essentiality of the contemporary host culture. This occurs through the two frames of stereotyping and restrictive commercialism. Stereotypes are inherently reductive as they work to define an undoubtedly diverse people through limited language. They are generally used to reinforce the identity of superiority within one group while the other is framed along points of difference. When used repeatedly, stereotypes contribute to the reification of identities (Inthorn, 2002; Chan, 2005). Commercialism also relies on the truncating of meaning in order to make quick transactions within a very competitive marketplace. Nations are often commercialized to make them more appealing as a tourist destination. Traditions of the nation and activities/attractions are often emphasized as a commercial product to create a positive brand image (Calabrese, 1992).

The Cultural Tradition micronarrative represents the culture and tradition of a host country through specific frames of tradition and sympathy toward the culture. In doing so, these frames enable the group to identify with the historical past of the collective, which in turn helps to form the values and position of the current collective. Identifying with the past and reinforcing traditional ways of living, can help to form a collective, especially if this collective is contrasted against the culture of another group (Kaneva, 2011). The presence of a shared mediated culture and tradition helps to bind an abstract audience together. Restated cultural values, traditions and

sympathies toward a particular culture in the news are seen by readers as being newsworthy, and thus ensure that they too identify with and uphold those values to participate in the formation of a shared national identity (d'Haenens, 2005; Mastro, 2005).

The *Allegiance Through Service* micronarrative portrays a loyalty to the geopolitical imagined space of 'home.' These complementary frames of national pride and patriotism foster a national sense of belonging. Patriotism in the media asks the audience to identify with one's nation against a particular cause in a way that expresses membership and most importantly, loyalty, to the nation. Patriotism calls upon the duty and loyalty of a people to act or feel for a nationalistic cause. National pride suggests a strong collective identity forming in response to celebration that either an individual or group can participate. The national pride and patriotism frames help to foster an identity rooted in collectiveness and loyalty (Inthorn, 2002; Nossek, 2004; Lechler, 2008). Taken together, these four micronarratives are constitutive to the essential exclusion/inclusion metanarrative that defines a nation's identity.

### **Samoa**

Samoa was purposefully selected as a case study for several reasons. Samoa is a recently independent, post-colonial country that relies upon a shared national identity for its relatively nascent identificatory cohesion. In 1962, Samoa became the first Polynesian country to be recognized as a sovereign nation. Thus, it has only had 50 years to create and give meaning to its social institutions. In those fifty years, Samoa has had profound tensions in press freedoms. Journalists work under the threat of the 1992 Printers and Publishers Act, a law that Editor-in-Chief of the *Samoa Observer*, Savea Sano Malifa, has said "directs publishers and editors to reveal their sources of information to government leaders – PM, cabinet ministers, MPs, and heads of government departments – who claim they have been defamed by the media" (Malifa cited in Singh, 2010). In Samoa, public funds can also be used for legal fees of government leaders in defamation lawsuits. Taken together, many independent journalists in Samoa live in fear of governmental reprisals for critical news coverage that can extend indefinitely through lengthy court cases fully supported by public money.

While the Editor-in-Chief for the *Samoa Observer* has argued that Samoan journalists have been “vocal and fearless critics of government abuse” (Malifa, 2010: 41), it does appear that reporters are under extreme pressure by law to report favorably on the government. That same editor admits, “we have unfortunately been engaged in more stressful confrontations with the mighty and powerful than we care to admit” (2012). Those in the Samoan press have faced regular threats, summons, lawsuits, and injunctions from a government aimed at preventing the release of information they deem defamatory (Singh, 2005). Samoan Prime Minister Malielegaoi has never directly addressed these threats but has said that the media should be “making a more conscious effort to focus on positive stories rather than the often heavy diet of negative ones that the media tends to revert to in daily offerings” (2009). Due to pressures from the government to represent Samoa positively, and to the relatively recent emergence of Samoa as an independent country, one might expect to see a strong emphasis on national identity in the content of the *Samoa Observer* – and perhaps a much different portrayal from newspapers abroad.

The importance of these representations, both nationally and internationally, cannot be overstated given such phenomenal rates of Samoan diaspora. The majority of ethnic Samoans live in countries other than Samoa, with the majority of emigrants living in New Zealand or Australia (Statistics New Zealand, 2011) – the two other countries included in this study for comparison. These ethnic Samoans rely on media to cognitively and emotionally connect back to their homeland. Media work to redefine transnational boundaries and actively construct multiple, temporal public spheres based on a shared cultural identity. Media serve as a “modular backdrop that (represent) our home” (Bonini, 2011: 870), suggesting that mediated depictions of national identity, to a diasporic people, are of particular importance. As members of a culture that is geographically located on a distant shore, Samoan expatriots rely upon publications from Samoa, such as the *Samoa Observer*, to construct what it means to be Samoan. They also draw heavily from the media of their new homelands, such as *The New Zealand Herald* and *The Age* in Australia. These factors provide a rich context for examining how national identity of a particular country is framed across multiple new outlets in relation to the widely accepted metanarrative of exclusion/inclusion.

## **Research Questions & Hypotheses**

This research project asks how the national identity of Samoa is expressed within the *Samoa Observer*, *The Age*, and *The New Zealand Herald*. In so doing, this research explores the complex micronarratives, journalistic principles and specific linguistic devices that contribute to creating national identity in a globalized media environment. The following research question and hypotheses will be explored:

RI: Will micronarratives, journalistic principles and specific linguistic devices combine to form an 'us versus them' metanarrative of Samoans in the *Samoa Observer*?

H1: *The Samoa Observer* will rely on the Political Resistance micronarrative to create an 'us versus them' national identity of Samoa more than either *The Age* or *The Herald*.

H2: *The Samoa Observer* will rely on the Reductive Signification micronarrative to create an 'us versus them' national identity of Samoa more than either *The Age* or *The Herald*.

H3: *The Samoa Observer* will rely on the Cultural Tradition micronarrative to create an 'us versus them' national identity of Samoa more than either *The Age* or *The Herald*.

H4: *The Samoa Observer* will rely on the Allegiance Through Service micronarrative to create an 'us versus them' national identity of Samoa more than either *The Age* or *The Herald*.

## **Methodology**

A total of 988 news stories were collected between 1 January to 31 May of 2012: 486 from the *Samoa Observer*, 328 from *The New Zealand Herald* and 172 from *The Age*. The availability of coders necessitated this particular five-month timespan. These websites were checked every day within the sample period and content was continuously collected. Searches were done online, through the search function on the home websites of *The Age* and *The Herald*, for stories that had the term "Samoa" or "Samoans" within any text of an article. All resulting articles were examined. All of the 3 to 4 'Top Story' daily articles from the *Samoa Observer* available were collected each day during the period of study. Two independent coders coded each article according to the variables outlined in the national identity literature. Several examples for each variable were provided for coders. Coders were also provided with an



operationalization of key terms used throughout the coding sheet to help ensure greater reliability. The news article was the unit of analysis.

The study utilized descriptive statistics to examine a total of 35 variables, of which 31 were interval and 4 were nominal. These variables were organized into five thematic categories: four micronarratives and one category of variables involving linguistic devices and journalistic principles. These five categories collectively created the exclusion/inclusion metanarrative. All interval variables were coded along a gradated scale of not present, hardly present, somewhat present, strongly present. One exception was the 'overall tone' variable which was coded along a gradated scale of very negative, somewhat negative, neutral, somewhat positive, and positive.

The four nominal variables were topic, journalist's apparent ethnicity, displayed Western news values, and sources. In accordance with research examining Western news values, coders selected from the following: impact or significance, timeliness, prominence, proximity, the bizarre or unusual, conflict, human interest or unclear. Story topic could be either politics, sport, crime, entertainment, business/economics or other. A journalist's apparent ethnicity was categorized as Samoan, New Zealander, Australian, European, Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, other or unclear. Finally, the sources variable was divided between elite and non-elite as either the majority or minority of sources used.

Chi-square correlations ( $\chi^2$ ), Cramer's V associations ( $V_C$ ), expected values, adjusted residual scores, percentages, and frequencies were used to answer the stated hypotheses. Independent-samples t-tests (t), degrees of freedom (df), mean differences (MD), and eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) measures were used for all interval variables. Inter-observer reliability coefficients were utilized to provide an indication of coding scheme's reliability.

## **Results**

Two coders generated an overall 80.04% inter-coder Cohen's kappa (K) measure of agreement. Measures of Cohen's inter-coder agreement in relation to specific hypotheses are listed within individual charts. Values of kappa greater than .75 indicate excellent agreement beyond chance alone and suggest a strong standard measure of reliability (Riffe et al., 1998)

*Scott's Pi* was computed at .788, representing the inter-coder agreement after removing chance. This result suggests a reliable coding scheme was utilized.

The relationship between media outlet and resistance against other groups was significant. (Table 1) At the .05 alpha probability level, with 5 degrees of freedom, the chi square value needs to reach only 15.507. The very high 134.5 chi square value found here suggests that the difference, from what would be expected if there was no association, was quite large (Norman and Streiner, 1997). The Cramer's V measure, which gauges the relationship strength, suggested a very strong relationship. All Cramer's V associations ( $V_C$ ) above .25 were classified as very strong; .15 to .25 indicated a strong relationship; .10 to .15 a moderate relationship; .05 to .10 a weak relationship; and .01 to .05 indicated no or negligible relationship. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the resistance against other groups between the *Observer* and an aggregated 'other media' category comprised of *The Age* and *The Herald*. There was a significant difference in scores between the *Observer* and *The Herald/The Age*. The magnitude of the differences in the means, or eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) was found to be moderate when collapsed, meaning that 10.6% of the variance in resistance against others could be explained by the collapsed media groupings. An eta squared ( $\eta^2$ ) measure of .01 indicates a small effect; .06 a moderate effect, and .14 indicates a large effect (Cohen, 1988).

The overseas news was found to have more resistance against other groups than would be expected by chance (*The Herald* adj. res. = 2.7 & *The Age* adj. res. = 5.1). Adjusted residuals, or the difference between expected and observed counts, are used to demonstrate actual effects of any given relationship. Strong effects of a particular case of one variable on a particular case of another variable were found if adjusted residuals were +/- 2.0 points. An overwhelming 75.9% of content (10.6) in the *Observer* was found to have no presence of any resistance against other groups. An example of this lack of resistance was found in an *Observer* article on April the 12<sup>th</sup> that discussed the possibility of same-sex marriage in Samoa without making any mention of opposition, or support, for same sex marriage in Samoa or abroad. After detailing same-sex rights and exclusions in other countries internationally, the article ends with a thoroughly considered statement from the President of the Samoa Fa'afafine (Homosexual) Association, To'oto'oalii Stanley: "There are many factors to consider about decriminalizing homosexuality

that includes culture, but if there are more positive outcomes than negative, then we will go for it. It would be another thing if there are more negative outcomes, from legalizing it. So, if this is the case, then we will have to go against it.”

The *Observer* had very little representations of any violence at all in their newspaper – whether in relation to others within Samoa (-2.5), to locals in Samoa (-6.7), to Samoans abroad (-2.5), or to others abroad (-3.8). *The Herald* was much more likely (4.0) to display violence involving Samoans in local content about Samoans. An example from 31 October in *The Herald* states that an Auckland man of Samoan origin “punched and stomped on an unconscious man’s head so hard he left footprints on his face and splattered blood on a nearby car.” Therefore, Hypothesis 1, concerning the political resistance micronarrative, was only partially supported.

The relationship between the media outlet and representations of local Samoan stereotypes was significant and moderately strong. (Table 2) *The Herald* was much more likely (5.7) to rely on perceived stereotypes when discussing local Samoans whereas the *Observer* relied on these stereotypes (-4.0) the least. The *Observer* also avoided stereotypes of locals (-5.6) while *The Herald* (4.3) and *The Age* (3.8) used stereotypes of locals in their reporting much more than would be expected by chance. When Samoans were represented in other countries outside of the host country, the reliance on (or against) stereotypes was even stronger. The *Observer* was far more likely to avoid stereotypes of Samoans (-9.8), whereas *The Herald* (6.0) and *The Age* (7.1) were much more likely to stereotype Samoans. An example of such coverage was found in an article titled “Samoa PM upsets feminists with MP comment” on 22 March in *The Age*. The article quotes the Prime Minister of Samoa stating that one woman in cabinet is “more than enough.” The article then states, “Tonga, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and the Federated States of Micronesia had no elected women, while Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Marshall Islands had just one.” This positions the entire Pacific Islands as a cohesive ideological patriarchy. Outside of sourcing the Prime Minister, no other person was quoted from Samoa. Instead, a representative from Femlink, a feminist organization outside of Samoa, was repeatedly quoted throughout the bulk of the article, providing denouncements of the Prime Minister’s statements as “quite disappointing” and “unfortunate.” Taken as an ideological site of meaning, this article positions Samoa (and the Pacific Islands) as a stereotypically narrow-

mindful and parochial Pacific outpost somewhat lost amongst a far more knowledgeable and progressive global community.

Almost all content did not appear to be 'selling' the cultural nation/place of Samoa. Only 0.8% of content in the *Observer* was seen to be either 'somewhat' or 'strongly' commercial. In comparison, commercialism was 'strongly present' in 4.7% of *The Age* content and 2.4% of content in *The Herald*, but the difference was not enough to be significant. One rare commercial article from *The Age* details off-peak booking periods, specific airfares and lodging recommendations. The article ends by stating "if you're after a tropical paradise with adventure and culture, the buck starts and stops in Samoa." Therefore, Hypothesis 2, which examined the reductive signification micronarrative, was only partially supported.

The *Observer* depended heavily on traditional representations (12.7), whereas the *Herald* (-8.5) and *The Age* (-6.2) were far less likely to have traditional representations. (Table 3) These traditional representations from the *Observer* extended to those who were not of Samoan ethnic origin as well (5.2). Some examples of Samoan traditional representations in the *Observer* were "school kids playing on palm trees instead of PlayStations," and "a colourful Sunday church service where villagers were mingling before the to'onai" (all-day Sunday brunch cooked by men). The representations of Samoan tradition in other countries, however, were very rarely found in the *Observer*. The *Observer* was far more likely to have no representations of Samoan tradition in content about other countries (15.3). Conversely, *The Herald* (9.6) and *The Age* (4.5) represented Samoan tradition in other countries more than would be expected.

There was a significant relationship between the cultural values of local Samoans and media outlet. Again, it was the *Observer* that depended so heavily on these representations (12.9), whereas the *Herald* (-8.4) and *The Age* (-6.6) were far less likely to have these representations 'strongly' present. An article from the 29 March in the *Observer* titled "New tatau revealed" discussed the "beautiful work" of a particular tattooist who had just completed tattoos on five prominent matais. The work was described as having a "huge significance in Samoan culture" which can be displayed "with pride and respect for (our) culture." The cultural value of these tatau (tattoos) is made explicit when the reporter stated that those men who received

these tautaus “can now confidently serve their villages and their churches because they have been marked with traditional Samoan art.”

These representations of cultural values from the *Observer* extended to those who were not of Samoan ethnic origin as well (5.6). *The Herald* and *The Age* were again statistically much more likely to avoid these associations. Similar to representations of tradition, the representations of Samoan cultural values in other countries were also very rarely found in the *Observer*. *The Herald* represented Samoans in other countries as possessing cultural values (6.9) as did *The Age* to a lesser degree (3.2). Finally, sympathy toward Samoan culture and media outlet was significant. This sympathy was most often noted in its absence. The *Observer* was more likely to exhibit sympathy than would be expected (15.5) whereas *The Herald* (-10.5) and *The Age* (-7.4) did not represent sympathy toward Samoan culture. Therefore, Hypothesis 3, which examined the cultural tradition micronarrative, was generally supported.

Local Samoan national pride and local Samoan patriotism were both statistically related to origin of publication. (Table 4) *The Age* did not represent local national pride (5.6) in their content to the degree one would expect based on chance. In contrast, local patriotism toward Samoa was ‘strongly’ present (5.0) in the *Observer* and far more likely to be ‘not present’ (6.9) in *The Herald*. The patriotism of the *Observer* was plainly emotive – on 4 January, an article titled “Mahonri Schwalger Captain Courageous” begins with the sentence: “There’s never been more of a show of Samoan patriotism...the support from Samoans around the world reduced many grown men to tears.” This nationalistic devotion continues as the journalist, Tauafiafi, describes Schwalger as an “articulate and intelligent...man of principle...of the highest calibre.” These commendable traits are then directly connected back to Samoa itself as the source for his strengths and the reason for his success. Schwalger is quoted saying “any other Samoan kid anywhere in the world who wins the honour to don the Manu jersey, those are the ones I’m fighting for.” The article never frames his stature in accordance to sporting or athleticism, but repeatedly refers to the “honour” he procures as a representative of Samoa.

*The Observer* represented local national pride (4.8) and patriotism (5.1) from another local ethnic group more than expected. For example, on 4 January, Alan Grey, an afakasi (part Samoan) hotelier and businessman, is titled patriotically in the article, “La’auli Alan Grey – The

unsung hero.” The articles details that Grey is “generous” with a “heart of gold.” However, these qualities do not benefit Grey’s direct relationships, but Samoa as a nation. He is a “hero of this country...and to the people of Samoa.” National pride and patriotism of those from other ethnicities in other countries were also both significant. *The Herald* and *The Age* were much likely to emphasize both the national pride (9.4 & 11.6 respectively) and patriotism (6.7 & 6.9) of ethnicities other than Samoan in news content overseas. Given the conflicting results, Hypothesis 4 was partially supported.

The relationship between sources cited and newspaper was strongly significant with the *Observer* using no sources (3.2) and elite sources (4.2) more than would be expected, whereas *The Herald* relied on non-elite sources much more (5.0) than chance. Story topic was also found to be significant. When Samoans were discussed in *The Herald* (10.5, 48.2%) and *The Age* (10.4, 59.3%), it was largely in relation to sports, whereas *The Samoa Observer* dealt with topics such as business/economics (6.7), politics (5.0), and crime (3.4), more than would be expected. There was also an under-reliance on timeliness (-4.1) as a news value from the *Observer* and an over reliance on human interest (5.4).

Symbols, personal and distanced pronouns, were all significantly related to media outlet. Symbols were found to be ‘strongly’ present more than expected (3.9) in the *Observer*, while symbols were not as likely to be found in *The Herald* (-3.3). The *Observer* employed narratives that described historical events and figures that could only be immediately referenced by those within the culture – ava ceremonies, traditional healers, and floral leis (generally given at graduations) were some of the many symbols found in content. Other symbols were directly connected with their local, historical significance through a reliance on their traditional Samoan titles within articles that were written in English, such as the use of terms “tanoa” (ceremonial wooden bowl), “fa’aaloaloga” (the presentation of gifts), and “puletasi” (matching skirt and top).

Distanced pronouns, such as “them” or “they” were less likely (-4.0) in content from The *Observer*. Conversely, distanced pronouns were ‘strongly’ present in content from the *Herald* (3.0) and ‘somewhat’ present in content from *The Age* (4.1). Personal pronouns, such as “us” and “we” were much more likely to be ‘somewhat’ present in *The Observer* (4.9) and not present in *The Herald* (3.5) or *The Age* (2.7). Finally, Pacific Islanders rarely wrote about Samoans in

*The Herald* (11.0%) and never in *The Age* (0%). The relationship between the overall tone of the story in relation to Samoa and media outlet, was strongly significant. The *Observer* was very positive more (9.4) than would be expected whereas *The Herald* framed Samoa very negative (9.0) much more than one would expect.

### ***Conclusion and Discussion***

This study suggests that the mediated creation of national identity does not depend upon the exclusion of others as has been put forth by previous research. This widely accepted model of identity creation may indeed be inappropriate when applied to journalism systems that reward and cultivate quite different cultural values. These findings concur with recent scholarship arguing for a more culturally specific framework of understanding journalism that integrates local knowledge and philosophy. Future research should expand upon this study and investigate the possibility of an indigenous epistemological framework for journalism, which integrates culturally specific conceptions of identity. Expansive comparative analyses across nations coupled with in-depth research within indigenous countries should result in a more comprehensive understanding of identity construction.

In this research, the *Samoa Observer* represented Samoan's indigenous traditions throughout news content, but not at the expense of others. This reverence for indigenous tradition appears to have taken precedence over a differentiated approach to identity creation in the news. If one views the creation of identity as dependent upon the exclusion/inclusion of others, as previous research has suggested, then Samoan news content did not represent a fully formed national identity as distinct from the other. However, if one considers identity within the context of dominant narratives throughout all content, then Samoa did represent a cohesive national identity in news content – one that demonstrated a universal embrace of all represented traditions, cultures, stereotypes and values.

By almost all measures, the *Observer* was inclusive in local content toward those who were of an ethnicity other than Samoan. Locals of other ethnicities were represented without reference to violence or stereotypes. They were also represented in cultural and traditional terms and largely portrayed as people that demonstrated national pride and patriotism. The *Observer*

had very little evidence in content of anything that was deemed as 'resistance against other groups' and maintained an overall 'positive' tone. This is despite the reliance on personal pronouns and symbols – two linguistic devices often used to divide ethnicities in the creation of a unified national identity. In this case, these devices were used to demonstrate a reverence toward culture, tradition, national pride and patriotism for all locals and not only for those of Samoan heritage. The *Observer* also asked the reader to identify with the subject of the story through an identity of inclusive collectiveness.

It should be noted that one might expect *The Age* and *The Herald* to show more resistance to other groups given that the content selected from their site was specifically about Samoans while the content selected from the *Observer* was general 'Top Story' news content, which obviously still included a large portion of content specifically about Samoans. However, this assumption would be rooted from an antagonistic and oppositional position of the 'other,' which should arguably not be the default position for any analysis of national identity.

An interesting additional finding of this research was that stereotypes were more likely to be used in the Western press when the 'other' could not be immediately seen. While the *Observer* rarely used stereotypes of Samoans, particularly when discussing Samoans abroad, *The Age* and *The Herald* relied on these stereotypes for Samoans, particularly when they were not local. Representations of nationalities outside of one's own imagined nation state have long been seen to regress to negative stereotyping. However, these findings also suggest a self-awareness on the part of the *Observer* to guard their own representations abroad. Given that the near totality of content discussing Samoans overseas originated from wire services, the editors of the *Observer* had to actively select content that reflected their own journalistic, and Samoan, values. Rather than a naturalized nationalism, this research suggests a self-awareness of representing the other. This also suggests an awareness on the part of Western newspapers, which relied on in-house and affiliated writers to write content about overseas issues. These papers also distanced themselves through stereotyped language when the possibility for response and reflection was not as likely. This supports previous research, which found that when topics moved away from 'home,' reporters also moved away from journalistic values



(Nossek, 2004). However, in a globalized media marketplace, such findings are concerning for the creation and dissemination of international news.

Minority culture and tradition was valued by the Western press when dislocated and perhaps not seen a threat to local national identity. *The Age* and *The Herald* celebrated Samoan culture when those Samoans were represented overseas - largely in the form of travel advice and the allure of an exotic other. Western journalism norms have a long history of emphasising objectivity, structure, and elite sourcing. Therefore the inclusion of culture and tradition, outside of the exoticised travel pages, would likely pose institutional challenges. However, the inclusion of culture and tradition in the Samoan press cannot be quickly attributed to an integration of these mores into journalistic practice. Governmental pressure must also be considered within a country facing such extreme authoritative demands.

*The Age* and *The Herald* appeared to largely ignore all forms of patriotism in content except for other patriotism in other countries. In examining that caveat, it is important to remember that this study examined the 'dominant' as Samoan, so 'the other' in the coding context is any ethnicity that is not Samoan. Therefore, the other could be an Australian and a New Zealander in their respective newspapers. Thus, by emphasizing national pride and patriotism of 'the other' in countries other than their own homeland, these western news outlets could simultaneously reaffirm their national identity through international news representations while also not appearing overtly xenophobic or jingoistic. Again, the *Observer* represented the national pride and patriotism of Samoa and other ethnicities in their local content, celebrating the patriotism of minorities within their country.

The positive tone found in the *Observer*, alongside a reliance on elite sources, human interest stories, symbols and personal pronouns, does suggest that Samoan journalists could have been influenced by the fear of governmental reprimands. While this might be the case, it does not help to describe the positivity used to define other locals or others abroad. These findings could equally suggest that western journalistic frames of neutrality and objectivity have not been fully embraced and journalism in Samoa is a further example of Samoan culture integrated into westernized conceptions of democratic structure. "If it bleeds, it leads" may be driving the negative tone in the 'western' press, but the values of Samoa appear to be driving a

different set of news norms and practices informed either by Samoan culture or governmental pressure. A contributory factor may also be that a Pacific Island or Samoan journalist – almost non-existent in *The Age* or *The Herald* - might show more sympathy and understanding towards Samoan culture and may be less likely to write stories about Samoa in a negative light. This is impossible to fully know without interviewing the journalists themselves. Future research should address this very important limitation and interview journalists in Samoa as well as journalists overseas that cover Samoan news.

This research uncovered fundamental differences in the journalistic construction of identity across three countries. These differences suggest that a much more holistic and indigenous epistemological framework for understanding the creation and propagation of identity in the news is needed. These initial results suggest a preliminary confirmation of the four worlds news value matrix put forth by Robie (2013), whereby the first world values objectivity, the second world values collective agitation, the third world values nation building and the fourth world values self-determination. In this instance, New Zealand and Australia viewed Samoa with largely an objective, first world, perspective whereby Samoa created their own identity through constructive, third world, nation building. However, the four worlds matrix does not address how and why Samoa also constructed other identities through a practice of inclusion. Further study that is comparative between indigenous countries is an essential next step to unpacking exactly how the national identity of 'home' and 'abroad' is constructed in news content around the world. The widely held model of exclusion and inclusion for the construction of identity in news did not help to explain Samoan identity in the media sampled for this research. This may suggest that a 'de-colonization' of research examining the construction of identity in journalism is necessary.

**Table 1**

**The Political Resistance Micronarrative in the *Samoa Observer*, *The Age* and *The New Zealand Herald* (1 January – 31 May 2012)**

| Newspaper Outlet X...              | Cross tabulation     |          |                | Independent Samples T Test |       |         |        |                    |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------------------|-------|---------|--------|--------------------|
|                                    | P Value              | $\chi^2$ | V <sub>c</sub> | t                          | df    | MD      | p      | $\eta^2$           |
| Resistance Against Other Groups    | .000                 | 134.5    | .274*          | -10.775                    | 803.8 | -0.6408 | 0.000  | 0.106              |
| Local Samoan Violence              | .000                 | 47.9     | .156           | 2.009                      | 132.0 | 0.4240  | 0.0460 | 0.030              |
| Local Violence                     | (.000)^ <sup>^</sup> | -        | -              | 6.372                      | 56.3  | 1.1416  | 0.000  | 0.244 <sup>+</sup> |
| Samoan Violence in Other Countries | (.000)^ <sup>^</sup> | -        | -              | -0.486                     | 136.0 | -0.0667 | 0.6280 | 0.002              |
| Other Violence in Other Countries  | (.000)^ <sup>^</sup> | -        | -              | 2.308                      | 48.9  | 0.2684  | 0.000  | 0.039              |

\* = Strong relationship; <sup>+</sup> = Large effect; <sup>^</sup> = More than 20% of cells have expected counts less than 5. Significance can't be measured; NOM = Nominal data with no indication of value. Independent Sample Means T-test, measuring differences in means, can't be conducted; K = .793

**Table 2**

**The Reductive Signification Micronarrative in the *Samoa Observer*, *The Age* and *The New Zealand Herald* (1 January – 31 May 2012)**

| Newspaper Outlet X...                 | Crosstabulation     |          |                | Independent Samples T Test |       |         |        |                    |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|----------|----------------|----------------------------|-------|---------|--------|--------------------|
|                                       | P Value             | $\chi^2$ | V <sub>c</sub> | t                          | df    | MD      | p      | $\eta^2$           |
| Local Samoan Stereotypes              | .000                | 148.3    | .274*          | 0.312                      | 232.9 | 0.0281  | 0.7770 | 0.000              |
| Local Stereotypes                     | .000                | 96.3     | .194           | 6.236                      | 128.1 | 0.5364  | 0.0000 | 0.094              |
| Samoan Stereotypes in Other Countries | .000                | .327     | .407*          | -12.598                    | 185.7 | -1.0550 | 0.0000 | 0.288 <sup>+</sup> |
| Other Stereotypes in Other Countries  | (.000) <sup>^</sup> | -        | -              | 4.072                      | 96.4  | 0.3079  | 0.0000 | 0.040              |
| Restrictive Commercialism             | (.000) <sup>^</sup> | -        | -              | 0.489                      | 114.0 | 0.1333  | 0.6260 | 0.002              |

K = .784

**Table 3**

**The Cultural Tradition Micronarrative in the *Samoa Observer*, *The Age* and *The New Zealand Herald* (1 January – 31 May 2012)**

| Newspaper Outlet X...               | Crosstabulation     |          |                | Independent Samples T Test |       |         |        |                    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----------|----------------|----------------------------|-------|---------|--------|--------------------|
|                                     | P Value             | $\chi^2$ | V <sub>c</sub> | t                          | df    | MD      | p      | $\eta^2$           |
| Local Samoan Tradition              | .000                | 302.0    | .391*          | 16.744                     | 659.1 | 1.3023  | 0.0000 | 0.298 <sup>+</sup> |
| Local Tradition                     | .000                | 163.6    | .288*          | 8.925                      | 563.8 | 0.5268  | 0.0000 | 0.107              |
| Samoan Tradition in Other Countries | .000                | 430.0    | .467*          | -25.850                    | 556.5 | -1.5710 | 0.0000 | 0.504 <sup>+</sup> |
| Other Tradition in Other Countries  | (.000) <sup>^</sup> | -        | -              | 4.897                      | 321.7 | 0.1549  | 0.0000 | 0.037              |
| Local Samoan Values                 | .000                | 371.0    | .434*          | 23.170                     | 582.4 | 1.7205  | 0.0000 | 0.435 <sup>+</sup> |
| Local Values                        | .000                | 111.6    | .238*          | 8.868                      | 444.0 | 0.5485  | 0.0000 | 0.102              |
| Samoan Values in Other Countries    | .000                | 246.6    | .420*          | -18.244                    | 595.8 | -1.1846 | 0.0000 | 0.324 <sup>+</sup> |
| Other Values in Other Countries     | (.000) <sup>^</sup> | -        | -              | 3.271                      | 472.3 | 0.1299  | 0.0010 | 0.015              |
| Sympathy Toward Samoan Culture      | .000                | 297.8    | .389*          | 10.05                      | 780.0 | 0.7182  | 0.0000 | 0.115              |

K = .721

**Table 4**

**The Allegiance Through Service Micronarrative in the *Samoa Observer*, *The Age* and *The New Zealand Herald* (1 January – 31 May 2012)**

| Newspaper Outlet X...                    | Crosstabulation     |          |                | Independent Samples T Test |       |         |        |                    |
|--|---------------------|----------|----------------|----------------------------|-------|---------|--------|--------------------|
|  | P Value             | $\chi^2$ | V <sub>c</sub> | t                          | df    | MD      | p      | $\eta^2$           |
| Local Samoan National Pride              | .000                | 302.0    | .391*          | 5.463                      | 738.6 | 0.3959  | 0.0000 | 0.037              |
| Local National Pride                     | .000                | 184.7    | .312*          | 17.759                     | 884.2 | -1.487  | 0.0000 | .3267 <sup>+</sup> |
| Samoan National Pride in Other Countries | (.000) <sup>^</sup> | -        | -              | -10.775                    | 803.8 | -.64083 | 0.0000 | 0.064              |
| Other National Pride in Other Countries  | .000                | 146.8    | .280*          | 5.575                      | 949.4 | .33990  | 0.0000 | 0.093              |
| Local Samoan Patriotism                  | .000                | 97.3     | .222*          | 5.136                      | 508.6 | 0.4040  | 0.0000 | 0.048              |
| Local Patriotism                         | .000                | 136.4    | .264*          | 15.641                     | 861.8 | -2.7338 | 0.0000 | .3972 <sup>+</sup> |
| Samoan Patriotism in Other Countries     | (.000) <sup>^</sup> | -        | -              | .226                       | 458   | .01769  | 0.0000 | 0.027              |
| Other Patriotism in Other Countries      | .000                | 197.8    | .321*          | 9.489                      | 314   | .7333   | .0000  | 0.145              |

K = .757

**Table 5**

**Linguistic Devices & Journalistic Principles in the *Samoa Observer*, *The Age* and *The New Zealand Herald* (1 January – 31 May 2012)**

| Newspaper Outlet X...           | Crosstabulation |          |                | Independent Samples T Test |       |         |        |          |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|----------------------------|-------|---------|--------|----------|
|                                 | P Value         | $\chi^2$ | V <sub>c</sub> | t                          | df    | MD      | p      | $\eta^2$ |
| Personal Pronouns               | .000            | 57.5     | .171           | 5.575                      | 949.4 | 0.3399  | 0.0000 | 0.031    |
| Distanced Pronouns              | .000            | 74.6     | .195           | -5.641                     | 861.8 | -0.2734 | 0.0000 | 0.032    |
| Symbols                         | .000            | 73.0     | .192           | 0.226                      | 458.0 | 0.0177  | 0.8210 | 0.000    |
| Overall Tone                    | .000            | 173.2    | .296*          | 1.504                      | 540.8 | 0.1058  | 0.1330 | 0.004    |
| Topic                           | .000            | 345.9    | .419*          | NOM                        | -     | -       | -      | -        |
| Journalist's Apparent Ethnicity | (.000)^a        | -        | -              | NOM                        | -     | -       | -      | -        |
| Displayed News Values           | (.000)^a        | -        | -              | NOM                        | -     | -       | -      | -        |
| Sources                         | .000            | 109.1    | .235*          | NOM                        | -     | -       | -      | -        |

K = .947

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