

This file is part of the following work:

Lovo, Etivina (2025) *Integrating Indigenous principles of human research ethics: the cases of two Pacific Island countries: Fiji and Tonga*. PhD Thesis, James Cook University.

Access to this file is available from:

<https://doi.org/10.25903/3mwg%2Dct65>

Copyright © 2025 Etivina Lovo

The author has certified to JCU that they have made a reasonable effort to gain permission and acknowledge the owners of any third party copyright material included in this document. If you believe that this is not the case, please email

researchonline@jcu.edu.au

***Integrating Indigenous Principles of Human Research Ethics:
The cases of two Pacific Island Countries: Fiji and Tonga***

Thesis submitted by

Etivina LOVO

Master of International Research Bioethics, Master of Public Health, PGD in Public Health,
Bachelor of Arts (Psychology and Management)

In September 2025

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

College of Medicine and Dentistry

James Cook University

To my parents and family

Mālo e ma'u koloa

"Ko e mata pe ho'o peni teke fakafalala ki ai 'amui."

"You can only rely on your education for your future survival."

To my husband, our children and grandchildren,
our identities, our paradigms as *iTaukei* and Tongan are valuable.

Be bold about it and pass it on to the next generations.

Acknowledgements

I thank God for the blessings of knowledge and of good health that enabled me to do this research. I would like to express my sincere gratitude, *vinaka vakalevu* and *malo 'aupito* (thank you) to all participants in this research who shared their valuable knowledge with me through our *talanoa* sessions. I would like to take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to participants in this current research who have passed on to eternal life, in the years 2019-2020, the years of the global COVID-19 pandemic. I recall, you spoke with passion about engaging Indigenous principles in human research ethics and you asked for us to join hands and advocate for Indigenous recognition in HRE.

1. *“This is a very interesting time for us, my children do not understand what is going on now. Most likely when they do research, they will follow the international HRE frameworks, we need to cry out...we need to be persuasive...we need to cry out together...we need more people...to come forward and call – because there are interested people. Prophet Alijah called out to the Lord, I am alone there are no other prophet in Israel, but there are 7000 other people in Israel who are just like you.” (P26/MHMS/Male/50-60 years)*
2. *“We would like the establishment of the National Research Council. Membership - to have membership in ethics committees from iTaukei ...to ensure that the Indigenous protocols are followed by those researchers... We need to finalize the criteria...writing the values and protocols of research in each village so that become guidelines, provinces based...There are protocols for the sea, the river and the land, in order to achieve the bula sau tu (wellbeing), the land, respect the land if not then the land will not respect you. (P8/MEHA/male/40-50 years)*

After the *Talanoa*, God called you to eternity, but I have acknowledged your valuable contributions in my public seminars and I said, that although you are gone, your voices live on in this thesis. May your souls rest in the eternal peace of the Almighty God.

To my supervisory team, Dr Robyn Preston, Professor Sarah Larkins, Dr Lynn Woodward, and Dr Sefanaia Qaloewai, I am forever grateful for your support, patience and guidance in the processes of conducting this research. My gratitude goes to the JCU Cohort Team led by Dr Melissa Crowe, GRS staff and Stephen Anderson from JCU library, for their unwavering support while I did this PhD based in Fiji. To the former Dean of the College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences Dr William May and the Associate Dean of Research Dr Donald Wilson, thank you sincerely for your continuous support of my PhD journey.

To my late parents, Mr Nau Saulala Pikula Havea (1902-1987) commonly known as Nau Lala and Mrs 'Ilaisaane Palu 'Uiha (1925-2016), originally of the Ha'apai Group of Islands

who later migrated to Kolomotu'a, Nuku'alofa, Tonga Islands. *Malo 'aupito* for instilling in me the importance of an education. During my early education years, they used to tell me, “*Ko e mata pe ho'o peni teke fakafalala ki ai 'amui*”, which means “you can only rely on your education for your future survival”. It has been some forty odd years since then and their guidance are indisputable.

To husband, Mr Tomasi Lovo, who is *iTaukei* from the village *koro Nagadoa, Tikina o Dama, Yasana o Bua, Vanualevu* in the Fiji Islands, thank you for sharing your in-depth *iTaukei* cultural knowledge to boost my understanding of *iTaukei* concepts. Vinaka vakalevu, thank you for the title *Yavu Koula ni iTaukei* which I gratefully named the *iTaukei* framework for a HRE guideline that I developed in this research.

To my children, Russell, Billy, Melanie, Semiti, Palu and my grandchildren, my work here is about valuing our identity, *iTaukei* and Tongan. Be bold about it and pass on to the next generations.

Statement of the contribution of others

Research Collaboration on Published article included in the Thesis		
Chapter 2	Details of publication on which a chapter is based	Nature and extent of the intellectual input of each author, including the candidate
	<p>Citation: Lovo, E., Woodward, L., Larkins, S., Preston, R., & Baba, U. N. (2021). Indigenous knowledge around the ethics of human research from the Oceania region: A scoping literature review. <i>Philosophy, Ethics and Humanities in Medicine: PEHM</i>, 16, 12–12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13010-021-00108-8</p>	<p>Etivina Lovo implemented the scoping literature review according to the selected framework that include five stages of identifying the research question, search, identified and selected relevant studies from multiple sources. Further charting the data, collating and summarizing and reporting. She drafted the manuscript and together with her supervisor, edited and finalized it for publication.</p> <p>My supervisory team, Dr Robyn Preston, Dr Lynn Woodward, Professor Sarah Larkins provided professional advice and guidance, cross checked the analysis, throughout the drafting of the manuscript until it was finalized for publication.</p>
Appendix 2	Book Chapter Citation:	
	<p>Lovo, E. (Fiji MOHMS Strategic Plan 2020-2025). COVID-19 research crisis management for a human research ethics research project in Fiji and Tonga. In <i>Researching in the Age of COVID-19</i> (pp. 61-69). Policy Press. (Please refer to Appendix 2).</p>	<p>Etivina Lovo wrote the drafts of the book chapter and my supervisory team Dr Robyn Preston, Dr Lynn Woodward, Professor Sarah Larkins provided professional advice and guidance throughout the drafting process. They are acknowledged in the book chapter.</p> <p>The editors of the book Helen Kara and Su-ming Khoo edited and provided some guidance.</p>
Nature of Assistance	Contribution	Names, Affiliation of Co-Contributors
Intellectual support	Research Collaboration	My supervisors Dr Robyn Preston, Dr Lynn Woodward and Professor Sarah Larkins cross checked the qualitative data analysis for consistency of themes and

		<p>provided professional guidance throughout the PhD journey.</p> <p>Dr Sefanaia Qaloewai checked the <i>iTaukei</i> case chapter for accuracy of the presentation of <i>iTaukei</i> materials.</p> <p>During COVID-19 boarder closures, I could not travel and collect data from Tonga. Ms Elizabeth Kite organized zoom <i>talanoa</i> sessions with Tongan participants in Tonga. She audio recorded and saved the <i>talanoa</i> into google drive.</p> <p>Mr Tomasi Lovo, my husband is <i>iTaukei</i>. He interpreted <i>iTaukei</i> concepts in English.</p>
	Design of diagrams	My son Bilitaki Lovo designed Figures 3.1, 4.8, 4.14, 5.5, 5.7, and 6.1.
	Editorial Assistance	Julie Martyn of Grammarfun.com.au
Financial support	Grants	<p>James Cook University. A\$7,000 from 2 grants towards data collection, conference, thesis formatting editing, and publications.</p> <p>Fiji National University. F\$10,000 grant towards field work and oral presentations in Tonga, and travel from Fiji to JCU for CoC and Pre-completion seminar.</p>
In-Kind Support from JCU staff.	When I visit JCU for my PhD work.	Dr Karen Johnston and her family provided accommodation and transportation. Dr Judy Taylor accommodated me.

Abstract

Background: Human research ethics (HRE) pertains to the oversight and rules governing scientific research involving human participants. The aim of HRE is to ensure that researchers comply with research ethics principles for the protection of the human rights and wellbeing of participants. This chapter begins with a comprehensive history of research ethics prior to World War II, where unethical and harmful studies were conducted over past centuries, despite public outcry. International requirements propose that human research should be reviewed by an ethics committee to confirm that it upholds appropriate ethical standards. Western principles of research bioethics inform several guidelines including the Declaration of Helsinki, the International Ethical Guidelines for Health-related Research Involving Humans from the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) and World Health Organization (WHO). These principles originated in high-income countries (HICs) such as the United States of America and are interpreted through a Western lens. International Western HRE communities identified four crucial principles: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.

Globally, Indigenous communities have ethical principles that have governed their people and societies for centuries. Despite the existence of Indigenous principles, HRE that are guided by Western principles have dominated research ethics committees. While research involving humans has accelerated immensely in many Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) over the last decades, there has not been any corresponding increase in HRE review guidelines nor strong requirements for local governance. Indigenous cultures, relationships of people and things in their physic environment, spirituality and Christianity are important in the discussion of HRE. Decolonizing efforts are needed in HRE by re-valuing Indigenous approaches to HRE in PICTs. A literature review exercise informed that Indigenous principles of research be incorporated in HRE regulations and processes of all countries, specifically in developing countries including Fiji and Tonga. Relationship building among researchers and Indigenous populations are key to successful research with Indigenous populations. Traditional and cultural principles and practices of *vanua* (people and land) in Indigenous Fiji and *nofo a kainga* (relationality living) in Tonga, became intertwined with Christian values and are preserved in contemporary Fiji and Tongan society. Christian education systems established Western thoughts in *iTaukei* and Tonga people.

These colonial sources of knowledge, shaped people's worldviews. Indigenous populations are decolonizing their thoughts and are revaluing their Indigenous knowledge and empowering themselves to engage more Indigenous knowledge in all aspects of their lives now in the future. This research project aimed to develop a framework that harmonizes Indigenous and international principles in the application of HRE in two countries in the Pacific. The literature informs

Methods: A constructivist collective comparative case study design of Fiji and Tonga HRE, utilized a critical ethnographic theoretical perspective. Qualitative data collection methods employed included interviews, observation, and document analysis. The analysis focused on identifying underlying theoretical principles and their origins that inform ethical approaches to HRE. *Talanoa* sessions (key informant interviews and focus group discussions) were held with 65 participants including academics, government ministries of education, health and Indigenous affairs, members of NGOs and religious organizations. Inductive thematic analysis was conducted within the Fiji HRE case and the Tonga HRE case. A cross case comparative analysis was then undertaken to identify common themes.

Results: Western research paradigms were respected over Indigenous paradigms in HRE in both countries. Indigenous approaches were practiced but invisible and unrecognized. The western biomedical model of research ethics promotes individual autonomy and rights, while relational ethics, which is the collective ontology of Pacific people, forms the basis for emancipation from colonial mentalities. Ethical research is informed by Indigenous cultural rules of engagement. *ITaukei* is a culture of protocols, research activities must follow the straight paths of *iTaukei* research to be ethical. Tongan identity, positionality, relationality and traditional principles underpin ethical research.

The results of this PhD study are presented in three chapters, the Fiji HRE case study, the Tonga HRE case study, and a cross-case analysis chapter. The case study chapters are organized into major themes and subthemes.

The Fijian HRE: A comprehensive introductory section covers the history of the Fiji Colony, demographics, socioeconomic environment, and the infrastructure of HRE, followed by discussions of the four main themes that emerged from the Fiji HRE case study.

Exemplifying biomedical and *iTaukei* Indigenous involvement in HRE (Theme 1) outlines how there are dual approaches to HRE in Fiji, the Western Biomedical Model of HRE, such as those in Government ministries and in universities, and the *iTaukei* structure in the

Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs which has a combination of two origins, from Fiji colonial government and from the *Vanua* (*iTaukei* people and land). Fiji HRE mechanisms need strengthening (Theme 2) describes how this current research identified needs for a national HRE governing body, an Indigenous HRE committee and capacity building in *iTaukei* research and ethics. The review of research proposals by ethics committees are to be systematic and transparent. The axiology of research in *iTaukei* context is a culture of protocols. *iTaukei* rules of engagement are the ethics of research (Theme 3), so it follows that this straight path is the right protocol to follow in work involving *iTaukei* people. In terms of the theoretical underpinnings of *iTaukei* research ethics, *iTaukei* ontology is the concept of *Vakavanua* – the way of the land which includes ancestral spirituality and community approach to *iTaukei* life (Theme 4). This theme discusses respect underpins *iTaukei* morality and research is a ceremony that requires *iTaukei* participation and ownership. The last section is a synthesis of themes of the case results for HRE in Fiji. It also includes a decolonizing Indigenous HRE guideline framework.

The Tonga HRE begins with a comprehensive introduction to the Kingdom of Tonga, demographics, Tongan society, the *Pouono* strategy and a complete discussion of the infrastructure of HRE in Tonga. Three major themes were identified from the Tonga HRE case data. The Western research paradigm is respected over Tongan (Theme 1) highlights the challenges of navigating through western and Tongan traditional HRE. The Western approach to HRE is based on the protection of research participants while the Tongan approach to HRE is based on building lifelong relationships between Tongan people and researchers that will make a difference in Tonga. *Kini ha hala totonu ki he fekumi*: cutting an ethical research pathway (Theme 2) identifies that an ethical research pathway in Tonga involves the inclusion of Tongan research protocols and ethical principles embedded in the protocols. Theoretical and ontological underpinnings of research ethics in Tonga are manifested in the *Fa Kavei Koula* (Theme 3), the Four Golden Principles of Tonga, which must be embedded in research. These four principles are: *faka'apa'apa*, respect, *tauhi vā*, maintaining relationships, *mamahi'ime'a*, loyalty and passion in carrying out duties, and *lototō*, humility. A synthesis of themes of the Tonga Human Research Ethics Case findings is described including a Tongan HRE guideline framework, the *Fa Kavei Koula*, Four Golden Principles of Tonga, a decolonizing principles approach framework for a Tongan Human Research Ethics Guideline is presented in this section. Researchers need to take time to understand *iTaukei* and Tongan concepts and protocols for effective research.

Cross Case Analysis: The cross-case analysis generated eight themes that describe the various attributes of HRE cases in Fiji and Tonga. The legacy of colonialism (Theme 1) describes that both case studies, the Western biomedical model was visible, while Indigenous approaches were practiced but invisible and unrecognized. Indigenous members of ethics committees' review research protocols using western biomedical approaches without questioning this, while the application of an Indigenous approach is minimal. The need for training of HREC committee members and researchers (Theme 2) identified. In this, two types of capacity building in Indigenous research are required: the first is for researchers to engage Indigenous principles and for research ethics committee members to engage Indigenous principles in review processes. Changes in HRE need strong consolidated effort from all stakeholders (Theme 3) emphasizes that strong leadership and consolidated support of all stakeholders are needed to strengthen HRE. *Vanua (iTaukei people and land relationships), fonua (land) and kava (Piper methysticum) in research*" (Theme 4) highlights that the love of *Vanua/Fonua* is relational and provides foundational and motivational factors appropriate in research. *Talanoa* research methods may involve a *kava* ceremony, where *kava* symbolizes a covenant with the land. "Relationality informs an Indigenous ethical approach to research" (Theme 5) establishes the points that relationality is the foundation of Indigenous morality. Thus, relational ethics, the ontology of Pacific people, is the foundational framework for the decolonization effort of HRE. Insider or outsider researchers, positive and negative impact on Indigenous communities (Theme 6), raised the points that whether researcher is an insider or outsider is determined by their identity and positionality in relation to the research community and the knowledge sought. Urban and rural differences relevant to HRE (Theme 7) points to the distinction between urban and rural classifications which is important for HRE. The theme also highlights important indicators for the application of cultural protocols in research. Finally, the Pacific Indigenous HRE guideline framework (Theme 8) outlines the Fijian *vakavanua iTaukei*, and the Tongan decolonizing Indigenous HRE guideline frameworks that informed the development of a Pacific decolonizing Indigenous HRE guideline framework. Its features include a contextualization process, the formation of national research ethics councils and ethics committees, founded on Indigenous principles and aligned to national regulations.

Discussion: Indigenous HRE in Fiji and Tonga need the combined strength of the biomedical model and Indigenous approaches of *vakavanua iTaukei* in Fiji and *Nofo 'a kainga* in Tonga to construct a stronger HRE governance and oversight process relevant to each country's

contexts and potentially other PICTs. The findings have informed the development of an Indigenous decolonizing HRE guideline framework for *iTaukei* people in Fiji and Tonga. Its full title is *Yavu Koula ni iTaukei*, The Golden Foundation: A Decolonizing Indigenous Framework for HRE Guidelines. Its features are uniquely *iTaukei* and it respects and recognizes *iTaukei* people and ethics. All the participants in the Tonga case study agreed that Tonga needs a set of HRE guidelines that engages Tongan cultural principles. A Tongan decolonizing HRE guideline framework titled *The Fa Kavei Koula*, A Decolonizing Tongan Principled Approach Model HRE Guidelines, was also developed. The axiology and ethics of research involves cultural rules of engagements in *iTaukei* Fiji and Tonga. In addition, Christianity is discussed in this research as an influential overall power in both Fiji and Tongan societies and holds strong influence on Indigenous research ethics. Equally powerful are indigenous belief that is parallel to Christian belief systems. These belief systems provide the foundation for the development of the HRE guidelines. A key strength of this PhD study is that it is the first research of HRE in Tonga and Fiji that focused on engaging Indigenous approaches. This study was made possible through the researcher being a Tongan woman who lived in Fiji for many years gaining the right to and rare combination of knowledge of both Indigenous cultures. My identity made me an insider *iTaukei* and Tongan researcher. I was able to attract a diversity of research participants, despite COVID-19. My insider status enabled critical ethnographic data analysis and the development of the decolonizing HRE guideline frameworks. Challenges include that, the views of Indigenous people residing in *iTaukei* villages and in rural villages in Tonga were not heard. Thus, the decolonizing HRE guideline frameworks were developed based on data shared by Indigenous people affiliated with HRE in government ministries, academia and NGOs in Fiji and Tonga.

Conclusion: Indigenous communities, including *iTaukei* and Tongan communities, appreciate research that is emancipatory, empowers, provides social justice, and is supportive of decolonization. These communities want to see traditional forms of ethics reflected in HRE policies and procedures. Participants were able to articulate the key principles from their perspectives to recreate an epistemology that informs a HRE that engage Indigenous knowledge in the context of PICTs. Research institutions, including universities and government ministries, should align their roles and comply with research approaches appreciated by Indigenous communities. This PhD research is a first step in decolonizing HRE in Pacific countries, but research with Indigenous communities about ethical protocols of research needs to be explored further. Such research embraces Pacific Indigenous people's

rights and their sovereignty in research. It will enhance recognition and value Indigenous Pacific people's knowledge in scientific research. A major implication of the findings of this study is the re-creation of the epistemology that informs a true HRE that engages Indigenous knowledge in the Pacific context. This re-created epistemology emerged through the creation of relationality that connects minds and viewpoints through Indigenous research practices.

Glossary

Indigenous Fijian words followed by Tongan words and their English meanings.

Please note there are no plural forms in Fijian, unlike in English.

<i>iTaukei</i> Word(s)	English Meaning
<i>Bati</i>	Warriors who guard and protect the chief.
<i>Bete levu ni Kalou vu</i>	Traditional priests who represent the ancestral spiritual world on earth.
<i>Bete Matanivanua</i>	Spokesperson that represents the people to the chief and takes the chief's decision back to the people.
<i>Bete Matanivanua ni Tui</i>	Traditional priest whose role is to receive gifts and other items on behalf of the chief and then to present these to the chief himself or herself.
<i>Bose vanua</i>	Village meeting.
<i>Buli</i>	A district chief, appointed by government to be the head of 3-4 villages.
<i>Digitaki vakavanua</i>	Traditional <i>iTaukei</i> method of selection of subjects – for instance if for research, then selection of subjects for focus group discussions or key informants' discussions.
<i>Gonedau</i>	The chief's fishermen.
<i>iTatau</i>	Involves the presentation of a last departing act from visitors to the host village before researchers (or visitors) depart the village.

<i>iTaukei</i>	Indigenous Fijian.
<i>Kaivata</i>	A concept used to indicate a relationship among people who originates from the same geographical province in Fiji, for example, Ba Province, Kadavu Province, Lau Province or Tailevu Province.
<i>Lewenivanua</i>	Literally means the flesh of the land – which means “the people” who breathe life into the land resources.
<i>Lotu</i>	Church or to say a prayer.
<i>Marama ni mataqali</i>	Female head of the clan, who is a descendant of traditional leaders of the village and has been appointed traditionally to hold the leadership role in the village because the village does not have a chief who lives in the village.
<i>Marama ni Vanua</i>	Female traditional head of the clans within the village.
<i>Mata taki</i>	Representation.
<i>Mataisau</i>	Carpenters who build the chief’s house or the chief’s boats.
<i>Mata-ni -tikina</i>	Head of the clan.
<i>Matanitu</i>	Government.
<i>Mataqali</i>	Clan.
<i>Nai tovo vaka na iTaukei</i>	<i>iTaukei</i> moral behaviour.
<i>Palangi</i>	Europeans or white people.
<i>Ratu</i>	High chief
<i>Roko Tui</i>	Fijian leaders
<i>Sala dodonu</i>	Literally means ‘the straight path of <i>iTaukei</i> protocols. The straight path concept is a metaphoric representation of the right protocol to follow in work involving <i>iTaukei</i> people. Thus, in research, it is the ethical protocol of research involving <i>iTaukei</i> people.
<i>Sevusevu</i>	Presentation of yaqona (yaqona ‘piper methystica’) root in a ceremony of introduction or greeting by a visitor. Sevusevu is an <i>iTaukei</i> customary norm for requesting entry into a <i>vanua</i> (home, village, community).
<i>Tabua</i>	Whale’s tooth.

<i>Tako and Lavo</i>	The generations of the eldest siblings are referred to as Tako and the generations of the younger siblings are the Lavo. Tako and Lavo are concepts to describe the genealogy of ancient <i>iTaukei</i> siblings and are mostly used on Ra, Namosi, the interior of Ba, Nadroga-Navosa, the interior of Naitasiri and Serua on Vitilevu.
<i>Talanoa</i>	To talk among people. Talanoa is applied in research.
<i>Talatala</i>	Church pastor
<i>Tauvu</i>	Tau means friend, <i>vu</i> means ancestral god or spirit. <i>Tauvu</i> is an ancient type of relationships among people of various districts in Fiji whose ancestors used to worship the same ancestral god(s).
<i>Tikina</i>	A geographical description of an area that consists of several villages in a province.
<i>Tokatoka</i>	An extended family within a clan.
<i>Turaga ni Mataqali</i>	Male head of the clan, who is a descendant of traditional leaders of the village and has been appointed traditionally to hold the leadership role in the village because the village does not have a chief who lives in the village.
<i>Turaga ni Vanua</i>	Male traditional head of the clans within the village.
<i>Turaga-ni-Koro</i>	Village headman.
<i>Vaka veiwekani</i>	Family relationship manner.
<i>Vakaitavi</i>	To participate, serve, be occupied with or assigned to some tasks involved. For example, ' <i>era sa vakaitavi e na soli itukutuku</i> ' means 'they are involved in the release of the report'.
<i>Vakarokoroko</i>	Respect.
<i>Vanua,</i>	Briefly, Vanua means the <i>iTaukei</i> people and land and their relationships. Ravuvu provided a more in-depth translation as "the living soul or human manifestation of the physical environment which the members have since claimed to belong to them and to which they also belong. The land is the physical or geographical entity of the people, upon which their survival...as a group depends. Land is thus an extension of the self. Likewise, the people

are an extension of the land. Land becomes lifeless and useless without the people, and likewise the people are helpless and insecure without land to thrive upon.” Dr Asesela Ravuvu (1983, p. 76).

<i>Vasu</i>	Maternal links.
<i>Veibuli</i>	<i>Ve</i> means ‘to’ and <i>buli</i> means ‘to form’, so <i>vei</i> and <i>buli</i> is combined to mean ‘to form’ (Gatty, 2009) also in the Fijian context ‘Buli’ is a traditional title of certain chiefs, a title borrowed by the colonial administration for the government Fijian official administering each district as delineated in former times (Old District).
<i>Veimaroroi</i>	Protection.
<i>Veimataki</i>	A unique <i>iTaukei</i> ancient traditional relationship among people of different districts.
<i>Veitabuki</i>	A taboo relationship. Certain people in <i>iTaukei</i> family relations are prohibited by culture to talk to each other.
<i>Veivakamenemenei</i>	Show of love and affection towards family members.
<i>Yaga</i>	Benefits.
<i>Yaqona</i>	A cultivated shrub, <i>Piper methysticum</i> , used as a ceremonial and social beverage. The Polynesian name of ‘yaqona’ is ‘kava’, more informally, grog. Speaking in high ceremony, Fijians may refer to it as ‘na wai ni vanua’ or ‘drink of the people’.

Tongan word(s)	English meaning
<i>'Eiki</i>	Lord or God.
<i>'Ilo</i>	Knowledge.
<i>'Ofa</i>	Love.
<i>'Ofisa kolo</i>	A town officer or village officer.
<i>'Uluaki</i>	First.
<i>Fa Kavei Koula</i>	Four Golden Principles.
<i>Faitotonu</i>	Honesty.
<i>Faka'apa'apa</i>	Respect.
<i>Fakaafe'i</i>	To invite.
<i>Fakataputapu</i>	Speech to acknowledge important people such as the royal family, chiefs, dignitaries, church leaders and others.
<i>Fatongia</i>	Duties.
<i>Fe'ofa'aki</i>	Mutual love caring and generosity.
<i>Fekumi</i>	To search or to research.
<i>Fetokoni'aki</i>	Cooperation in the fulfilment of mutual obligation in extended family and community.
<i>Feveitokai'aki</i>	Reciprocity, consensus and cooperation.
<i>Heliaki</i>	To speak words with indirect meanings, talking in Tongan metaphorical terms and communicating indirectly or telling tales.
<i>Hou'eiki</i>	Nobles.
<i>Kainga</i>	Multi-generational extended family.
<i>Kakala</i>	Garland of sweet smelling traditional Tongan native flowers.
<i>Ko e 'Otua mo Tonga ko Hoku Tofi'a</i>	God and Tonga are my inheritance. Tonga's motto.
<i>Lototō</i>	Humility.
<i>Lotu</i>	Prayer.

<i>Luva</i>	To <i>luva</i> in the <i>Kakala</i> Research Framework is for the researcher to return to the research community in which they borrowed information from and give them back the result of the research.
Mafana	The warmth felt by the people in the audience as they watch a Tongan musical dance performance.
Malie	The appreciation from the audience.
Malo e lelei	Greetings or hello.
Malo	Thank you
Mamahi'i me'a	Loyalty, passion, humility and generosity in carrying out duties.
Manatu'i	To recall.
Manava'ofa	Compassion.
Matapule	A chief's spokesperson.
Me'a	A thing or 'for a cause'.
Ngeia	Dignity.
Nofo	To live or stay.
Nofo 'a Kainga	Tongan people live and relate to each other in extended families and communities or relationality.
Palangi	White person or people.
Poto	Wisdom or intelligence.
Pouono	Name of the place in the Vava'u island groups in Tonga where King Tupou I offered Tonga to the Lord Jesus Christ.
Ta'ovala	Mat worn around the waist as part of Tongan attire.
Talanoa	Verbal discussion or talk.
Tauhi vā	Maintaining relationships.
Teu	To prepare. In the <i>Kakala</i> Research Framework, <i>Teu</i> is the preparation/planning stage.
To'a	Courage
Toka'i	To honour and respect another person(s).
Toli	To pick flowers or fruits. In the <i>Kakala</i> Research Framework, <i>Toli</i> is the data collection stage.

Totonu	Rights
Tu'a	People of the commoner level in Tonga.
Tu'i	King.
Tui	To string the flowers.
Vā	A relational space that holds a relationship or relationships.
Veitapui	Taboo relationships.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
STATEMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS	III
ABSTRACT	V
GLOSSARY	XI
INDIGENOUS FIJIAN WORDS FOLLOWED BY TONGAN WORDS AND THEIR ENGLISH MEANINGS.	XI
LIST OF TABLE	XXV
LIST OF FIGURES	XXVI
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND	1
1.1.1 <i>History of human research ethics</i>	1
1.1.2 <i>Ethics Committees and Bioethics Guidelines in Fiji and Tonga: Balancing Western influence with Pacific context</i>	4
1.1.3 <i>Conflicting paradigms between Western and Pacific Island HRE causing tensions</i>	5
1.1.4 <i>Indigenous Pacific epistemologies and ontology</i>	5
1.1.5 <i>Decolonizing efforts are needed to re-value Pacific principles and practices in HRE</i>	6
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	8
1.3 RATIONALE	9
1.4 AIM.....	10
1.5 RESEARCHER REFLEXIVITY	10
1.6 THESIS STRUCTURE	17
1: <i>Introduction</i>	17
2: <i>Literature Review</i>	17
3: <i>Methodology</i>	17
4: <i>HRE in Fiji</i>	17
5: <i>HRE in Tonga</i>	17
6: <i>Cross Case Analysis</i>	18
7: <i>Discussion, Strengths, and Limitations</i>	18
8: <i>Conclusion and Recommendations</i>	18
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.1 PUBLISHED LITERATURE REVIEW ARTICLE	19
2.1.1 <i>Introduction to the paper</i>	19

2.1.2 <i>The relationship between colonialism, Christianity, Indigenous world views, ethics and integrity in Fiji and Tonga. An addendum to the literature review</i>	49
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	53
3.1 INTRODUCTION	53
3.2 AIM	53
3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	53
3.4 CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY	54
3.4.1 <i>Critical ethnographic theoretical perspective</i>	54
3.4.2 <i>Constructivist collective case study design</i>	54
3.4.2.1 <i>Levels of Analysis</i>	57
3.4.2.1.1 <i>Case Study 1: Human Research Ethics in Fiji</i>	58
3.4.2.1.2 <i>Case Study 2: Human research ethics in Tonga in the Ministries of Health and Education</i>	58
3.5 RESEARCH ETHICS PROCESSES	59
3.5.1 <i>Application for ethics review of research proposal and approvals received</i>	59
3.5.2 <i>Applications for Research Permits in Fiji and Tonga</i>	59
3.5.3 <i>Ethical principles addressed in the ethics application</i>	60
3.5.3.1 <i>Confidentiality</i>	60
3.5.3.2 <i>Voluntary Informed Consent</i>	60
3.5.3.3 <i>Level of Risks of Research</i>	61
3.6 STUDY POPULATION/PARTICIPANTS	61
3.6.1 <i>Sampling</i>	62
3.6.2 <i>Coding of participants</i>	62
3.7 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION	62
3.7.1 <i>Talanoa</i>	63
3.7.1.2 <i>Amendments to data collection</i>	63
3.7.2 <i>Talanoa in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)</i>	64
3.7.3 <i>Documentary analysis</i>	65
3.7.4 <i>Direct and indirect Observation</i>	66
3.8 DATA MANAGEMENT	67
3.9 DATA ANALYSIS	68
3.10 ACTIVITIES, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL	69
3.11 RIGOUR AND TRUSTWORTHINESS	70
3.12 ADMINISTRATION, MONITORING AND UTILIZATION OF RESULTS AND PUBLICATION	73
3.13 FUNDING RECEIVED	73
3.14 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER	74
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS: FIJI HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS CASE STUDY	75
4.1 KINGDOM, COLONY AND INDEPENDENCE AS THE BACKGROUND TO FIJI'S HEALTH AND RESEARCH ETHICS	75

4.1.1 Demographics and the constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands	75
4.1.2 Fiji's Socio-Economic Situation	78
4.1.3 The Colony of Fiji	78
4.1.4 Colonial Fiji, Native Medical Practitioners, Health and Research	80
4.1.4.1 Research Ethics in Development	84
4.1.5 The Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research and the College Human Health Research Ethics Committee of College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences.....	86
4.1.6 The Ministry of Health and Medical Services providing Fiji's health care services.....	90
4.1.6.1 Regionalized structure of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.....	90
4.1.6.2 Research Priorities Areas of the MHMS	93
4.2 FIJI SECTORS THAT ENGAGE HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS	94
4.2.1 Fiji National Research Council Act, 2017.....	94
4.2.2 Ministry of iTaukei Affairs	95
4.2.3 Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts (MEHA)	96
4.2.4. University of the South Pacific (USP), Research Ethics Review Process.....	97
4.2.5 International influences on the development of Health Research and HRE in Fiji	97
4.3 PART 1 CONCLUSION	99
4.4 RESULTS. HRE IN FIJI.....	99
4.4.1 Research participants in talanoa sessions.....	99
4.4.2 Introduction to the themes, sub-themes and a synthesis of themes.....	102
4.4.3 Theme 1: Dual approach to HRE in Fiji: Exemplifying Biomedical and iTaukei Indigenous Involvement in HRE in Fiji.....	102
4.4.3.1 Two Origins of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs' HRE Structure.....	104
4.4.3.2 Strong Adherence to the iTaukei Research Protocols Before Biomedical HRE, "The sevusevu gave us the okay"	109
4.4.3.3 "We Just Follow the Review Guide Given to us without Questioning"	110
4.4.3.4 The Vanua iTaukei HRE structures are communicated orally and practiced formally.	111
4.4.3.5 Triple bottom Line of Colonialism in iTaukei HRE Paradigms: Education, Political Environment and Christianity	112
4.4.4 THEME 2: FIJI HRE MECHANISMS NEED STRENGTHENING.....	113
4.4.4.1 Need for a National Governing Body for HRE in Fiji	113
4.4.4.2 Need for an Indigenous HRE Committee.	114
4.4.4.3 Need to Strengthen Transparency and Systematic Approach to Review of Research Proposals ..	115
4.4.4.4 The Role of Capacity Building in iTaukei Research and Ethics.....	116
4.4.4.5 Research Approval from Ministry of iTaukei Affairs does not Confer Protection of iTaukei Communities	117
4.4.5. THEME 3: AXIOLOGY OF RESEARCH IS A CULTURE OF PROTOCOLS: iTAUKEI RULES OF ENGAGEMENT ARE THE ETHICS OF RESEARCH.....	118

4.4.5.1 <i>iTaukei Truth is Measured by the Correctness of the Process</i>	118
4.4.5.2 <i>Sala Dodonu, the Straight Path of iTaukei Research</i>	120
4.4.5.3 <i>Traditional and Religious Pathways for Relationship Building for iTaukei Ethical Research</i>	122
4.4.5.3.1 <i>Veimataki, Homebased Ambassador System (Unique ancient iTaukei relationships)</i>	122
4.4.5.3.2 <i>Tauvu</i>	123
4.4.5.3.3 <i>Tako and Lavo</i>	124
4.4.5.3.4 <i>Kaivata</i>	124
4.4.5.3.5 <i>Tovata</i>	125
4.4.5.3.6 <i>Family relationship links – vasu, maternal and paternal links</i>	125
4.4.5.4 <i>iTaukei traditional roles</i>	126
4.4.5.5 <i>Christian groups to the Bose Vanua</i>	128
4.4.5.6 <i>Reciprocity is Honourable and Spiritual in the Context of iTaukei Relationality</i>	129
4.4.5.7 <i>Lack of Reciprocity of Benefits and Power Dynamics</i>	130
4.4.5.8 <i>The three iTaukei research ethics protocols</i>	131
4.4.5.9 <i>Voluntary Informed Consent, Top-Down or Individual Rights-based</i>	134
4.4.5.10 <i>The Right to Speak is Influenced by the Digitaki Vakavanua (iTaukei Selection Process)</i>	135
4.4.5.11 <i>Veitabuki: Caution about Unique Relationships among iTaukei People in Focus Group Discussion Talanoa Sessions</i>	137
4.4.6 THEME 4: THE THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF iTAUKEI RESEARCH ETHICS	138
4.4.6.1 <i>The Three-Legged Stool of iTaukei people, Vanua (people and land), Lotu (religion), Matanitu (government)</i>	139
4.4.6.2 <i>iTaukei ontology Vakavanua - the way of the land - the ethics that are covert</i>	143
4.4.6.3 <i>Respect Vakarokoroko, this underpins iTaukei morality</i>	147
4.4.6.3.1 <i>Research is a Ceremony of Respect of the Vanua in the iTaukei Community</i>	151
4.4.6.4 <i>Intellectual property</i>	151
4.4.6.5 <i>iTaukei community participation in research</i>	152
4.4.6.6 <i>Vulnerability of iTaukei communities</i>	153
4.4.6.7 <i>Communications approach based on humility</i>	153
4.5 A SYNTHESIS OF THEMES OF THE HRE IN FIJI CASE RESULTS. DECOLONIZING INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK FOR AN HRE GUIDELINE FRAMEWORK	154
4.5.1 <i>Features of the Yavu Koula HRE guideline framework</i>	155
4.5.1.1 <i>Contextualization of International HRE guidelines</i>	155
4.5.1.2 <i>Coordination of Stakeholders and Functions</i>	157
4.5.1.3 <i>iTaukei Cultural Protocols are Central in the Yavu Koula Framework</i>	157
4.5.1.4 <i>The Engagement of iTaukei People in Research is an Ethical Expectation</i>	158
4.5.1.5 <i>iTaukei Foundational Principles</i>	158
4.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER	159
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS: HRE IN TONGA	162

5.1 BACKGROUND TO THE KINGDOM OF TONGA AND HRE	162
5.1.1 <i>Tongan Kings were demigods</i>	162
5.1.2 <i>Tongan society was well structured, with the King at the top, supported by chiefs</i>	163
5.1.3 <i>Climate</i>	165
5.1.4 <i>Social Structure</i>	166
5.1.5 <i>Pouono Strategy and the Tongan Constitution</i>	167
5.2 HRE SYSTEMS IN TONGA	168
5.2.1 <i>Chronology of the development of HRE in Tonga</i>	168
5.2.2 <i>The Prime Minister’s office: National Coordination of Human Research in Tonga</i>	170
5.2.3 <i>The Ministry of Health and Tonga’s national health ethics and research governance structure</i>	171
5.2.4 <i>Ministry of Education and Training</i>	174
5.2.5 <i>Interdependence of government ministries and capacity building needs in HRE</i>	176
5.2.6 <i>Research Ethics Review Process</i>	177
5.2.7 <i>International Influence in Tonga for the Development of HRE Systems</i>	179
5.2.8 <i>Documents Collected for Analysis of HRE in Tonga</i>	180
5.2.9 <i>Participants in Tonga’s HRE Case Study</i>	182
5.2.10 <i>Part 1 Conclusion</i>	184
5.3 TONGA HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS CASE FINDINGS.....	185
5.3.1 <i>Introduction and outline of themes</i>	185
5.4 THEME 1: WESTERN RESEARCH PARADIGMS ARE RESPECTED OVER TONGAN PARADIGMS	186
5.4.1 <i>Influential Thought Leaders of Tongan Research Ethics in Tonga and the Pacific Islands</i>	187
5.4.2 <i>Approaches to HRE: Navigating Western Biomedical and Tongan Traditional Cultural Approaches</i>	189
5.5 THEME 2: <i>KINI HA HALA TOTONU KI HE FEKUMI</i> : CUTTING AN ETHICAL RESEARCH PATHWAY	191
5.5.1 <i>An ethical research protocol is informed by cultural rules of engagement</i>	191
5.5.1.1 <i>Kakala Research Framework</i>	191
5.5.2 <i>Traditional research protocols involve identity, positionality and relationality to determine insider and outsider researchers</i>	194
5.5.3 <i>Respectful communication in the Tongan language is ethical in research</i>	197
5.5.4 <i>Power dynamics in village research settings and research implications</i>	197
5.6 THEME 3: THE ONTOLOGY OF TONGAN LIFE: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING OF RESEARCH ETHICS IN TONGA.....	198
5.6.1 <i>Fa Kavei Koula (FKK) ethics, the Four Golden Ethical Principles of Tonga</i>	202
5.6.1.1 <i>Vā (Relationship) Built through Research is a Reciprocal Learning Platform</i>	202
5.6.2 <i>Faka’apa’apa (respect)</i>	203
5.6.2.1 <i>Respectful Human Relations relevant in Ethical Research in Tongan Context, as Discussed by Participants</i>	205
5.6.2.1.2 <i>Respect: A discussion to illustrate that the interpretation of Tongan ethics is difficult</i>	208
5.6.3 <i>Lototō humility</i>	208

5.6.4 Mamahi'i me'a (performance of duty towards others with loyalty, passion and commitment)	209
5.6.5 Tauhi vā (duty to maintain good relationships with others)	211
5.6.6 Christianity and Tongan culture intertwined since Pouono	212
5.6.7 Informed consent: an oral form of consent is appropriate in Tonga because it is predominantly an oral culture	214
5.7 A SYNTHESIS OF THEMES OF THE 'TONGAN HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS CASE FINDINGS'	215
5.7.1 The Decolonizing Tongan HRE Framework, The Fa Kavei Koula, Four Golden Principles of Tonga..	215
5.7.1.2 Tongan HRE Guideline Framework.....	216
5.7.1.3 International and National Regulations.....	217
5.7.1.4 Overarching Legislations of HRE	217
5.7.1.5 Foundational Principles of the Fa Kavei Koula in the Tongan HRE Guidelines	218
5.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER.....	219
CHAPTER 6: CROSSCASE ANALYSIS OF THE FIJI AND TONGA HRE CASES	222
6.1 INTRODUCTION	222
WESTERN RESEARCH PARADIGMS ARE RESPECTED OVER.....	223
6.2 THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM	227
6.3 THE NEED FOR TRAINING OF HREC COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND RESEARCHERS	228
6.4 CHANGES IN HRE NEED STRONG CONSOLIDATED EFFORT FROM ALL STAKEHOLDERS.....	229
6.4.1 Principles with similar meanings in ethical Indigenous research.	231
6.5 VANUA (ITAUKEI IDENTITY AND MOTHER LAND), FONUA AND KAVA IN RESEARCH	232
6.6 RELATIONALITY INFORMS AN INDIGENOUS ETHICAL APPROACH TO RESEARCH	233
6.7 INSIDER OR OUTSIDER RESEARCHERS, POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT ON INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES	235
6.8 URBAN AND RURAL DIFFERENCES RELEVANT TO HRE.....	238
6.9 PACIFIC INDIGENOUS HRE GUIDELINE FRAMEWORK	239
6.10 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER	241
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION	242
7.1 INTRODUCTION	242
7.2 PACIFIC INDIGENOUS HRE NEEDS THE COMBINED STRENGTH OF BIOMEDICAL AND INDIGENOUS APPROACHES.....	243
7.3 DECOLONIZING THINKING IN HRE.....	246
7.3.1 The Need to Incorporate Relationality	247
7.3.2 The use of international or Indigenous HRE principles varies by sector in Fiji and Tonga.....	248
7.3.3 Discrepancies between the Free and Prior Informed Consent individual approach with relational ontologies.....	250
7.3.4 Human rights in Western HRE paradigms co-exist with human relationships in Indigenous paradigms	251
7.3.5 Indigenous data sovereignty.	254

7.3.6 <i>The iTaukei Research Method is Recommended for the Re-creation of an Indigenous Epistemology.</i>	255
7.4 AN INDIGENOUS APPROACH TO HRE IS THE AXIOLOGY AND ETHICS OF RESEARCH.....	256
7.4.1 <i>Christianity’s impact on Indigenous iTaukei and Tongan research ethics</i>	257
7.5. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS AND RESEARCH TRANSLATIONS.....	258
7.5.1 <i>Strengths</i>	258
7.5.2 <i>Limitations</i>	260
7.5.3 <i>Research translation</i>	261
7.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER.....	263
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	263
8.1 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS HRE POLICIES AND PRACTICES AND FOR FUTURE HEALTH RESEARCH	265
8.1.1.1 <i>Recommendations for Research Institutions</i>	265
8.1.1.2 <i>Recommendations for Researchers</i>	269
8.1.1.3 <i>Recommendations for Health Professional Education Institutions</i>	271
8.1.1.4 <i>Recommendations for Communities</i>	271
8.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	272
APPENDICES.....	273
APPENDIX 1. LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER’S OFFICE OF TONGA. CABINET DECISION ON NATIONAL HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE.	273
APPENDIX 2: BOOK CHAPTER. RESEARCH CRISIS MANAGEMENT FOR A HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS RESEARCH PROJECT IN FIJI AND TONGA	275
APPENDIX 3: FIJI INSTITUTE OF PACIFIC HEALTH RESEARCH (FIPHR) STRUCTURE	283
APPENDIX 4: TONGA CHRISTIAN BASED EDUCATION FRAMEWORK.....	284
APPENDIX 5: DISSEMINATION	285
APPENDIX 6. WORKSHOP AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES	289
APPENDIX 7: RESEARCH ETHICS FULL APPROVALS	293
APPENDIX 8. PUBLICATIONS	300
REFERENCES.....	301

List of Table

Table 1. 1: History of harmful human experimentation pre-Nuremberg	1
Table 2. 1: Chronology of International Organizations and Oceania Region HRE Advances for the Protection of Human Participants in Research.....	24
Table 2. 2: Key words in four categories	29
Table 2. 3: Key categories and themes of Oceania Indigenous knowledge reflected in the literature	33
Table 2. 4: Statements for the governance of human research in Oceania Indigenous populations.....	41
Table 3. 1: Groups invited to participate in FGD sessions.	65
Table 3. 2: Rigour and trustworthiness in this collective case study design.....	70
Table 3. 3: Research fund applications and grants	73
Table 4. 1: Key Institutions and documents involved in the development of Human Research Ethics.....	82
Table 4. 2: Chronology of the Development of Human Research Ethics Committees in Fiji.	84
Table 4. 3: Research centres in the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research	89
Table 4. 4: Research projects associated with the MHMS Fiji at end of 2020.....	93
Table 4. 5: Fiji health research priority areas	94
Table 4. 6: Human Research Ethics Committees at Higher Education Sector in Fiji	97
Table 4. 7: Participants	101
Table 4. 8: Summary of Fiji HRE Case Results in themes.....	160
Table 5. 1: Tongan Population Distribution, 2021	165
Table 5. 2: Chronology of the Development of Human Research Ethics Activities in Tonga	169
Table 5. 3: Tonga’s Health Care System	173
Table 5. 4: Matching Tongan core values to international principles in the MET R&EP.....	175
Table 5. 5: Documents for analysis of HRE in Tonga.....	180
Table 5. 6: Participants in the HRE case study in Tonga.....	183

Table 5. 7: Summary of Chapter 5; Results: HRE Tonga Case Results in themes and a synthesis of the themes.	220
Table 6. 1: A summary of the Fiji and Tonga HRE cases and themes in the cross-case analysis.....	223
Table 6. 2: Research ethics principles that uphold the Vanua/Fonua.....	231
Table 6. 3: Negative impacts of traditional authorities that permit research (without the HRE governance mechanism) in Fiji and Tonga.....	238
Table 7. 1: Knowledge translation achievements	262

List of Figures

Figure 2. 1: Prisma Flow Chart of Literature Search.....	31
Figure 2. 2: Distinctive HRE Principles common to Indigenous populations in Oceania, a mind map	45
Figure 3. 1: Constructivist Collective Case Study Design: HRE in Fiji and Tonga.....	56
Figure 4. 1: Map of the Pacific Islands: Fiji Islands (blue circle) and Tonga (red circle). ..	76
Figure 4. 2: Map of Fiji’s provincial and divisional boundaries.....	77
Figure 4. 3: Fiji’s three confederacies (<i>Matanitu Vanua</i>).....	79
Figure 4. 4: CHHREC Review process: Facility approval stage highlighted in yellow.....	88
Figure 4. 5: Map of Fiji with Main Geographical Divisions for Health Care	90
Figure 4. 6: Tiers of the Fijian Health System.....	91
Figure 4. 7: Research Protocols Employed by the Ministry of <i>iTaukei</i> Affairs Research Unit	96
Figure 4. 8: Dual Approach to HRE in Fiji.....	103
Figure 4. 9: Application Process for Research Oversight that Combines the Government and the <i>Vanua</i>	107
Figure 4. 10: Titles with the Authority to Grant Permission for Research	127
Figure 4. 11: The Three-Legged Stool.....	140

Figure 4. 12: Pre-colonial and Post-Colonial Views of the Three-Legged Stool. The Combined Strengths of Colonialism and Indigenous Systems for the <i>iTaukei</i> HRE Framework	142
Figure 4. 13: <i>iTaukei</i> Ontology - <i>Vakavanua</i>	144
Figure 4. 14: Yavu Koula ni <i>iTaukei</i> , The Golden Foundation of <i>iTaukei</i> , a Decolonizing Indigenous Framework for HRE Guidelines	156
Figure 5. 1: Map of the Kingdom of the Tongan Archipelago	166
Figure 5. 2: Tongan Social Structure	167
Figure 5. 3: Two-pronged Research Permit Application Process.....	171
Figure 5. 4: The Navigational Framework of Relationality, Positionality and Identity in Reciprocal Research Environments	195
Figure 5. 5: <i>Nofo 'a Kainga</i> Value Theory Encompassing the <i>Fa Kavei Koula</i> Pragmatics Framework that Underpins Tongan Research Ethics.....	199
Figure 5. 6: Manifestation of Respect in Tongan Context.....	205
Figure 5. 7: Christianity and Tongan Culture are Intertwined.....	213
Figure 5. 8: The <i>Fa Kavei Koula</i> (Four Golden Principles of Tonga) Research Ethics Framework. A Decolonizing Approach to Tongan HRE Guidelines	216
Figure 6.1: Pacific Islands HRE Guideline Framework.....	240

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In order to understand the history of human research ethics in the Pacific it is necessary to appreciate the historic and global context.

1.1.1 History of human research ethics

Research studies conducted on human beings are recorded in the literature as early as the 1500s to early 1900s before the World War II (WWII), see Table 1.1. Research participants in these studies were exposed to unethical research practices that posed danger, harm and suffering, even death. Their rights and safety as human beings were utterly disregarded. Research scientists' agendas were fulfilled in an environment where there was lack of oversight mechanisms to govern such harmful acts upon human beings. This research identified a few unethical and harmful studies conducted over past centuries, prior to WWII. This research believes that the freedom of scientists to development their knowledge was superior to their respect for human life. Additionally, there were no known written regulations to govern these research projects.

Table 1. 1: History of harmful human experimentation pre-Nuremberg

Approximate Dates	Description
1500s-1600s	1582 Akbar the Great Mogul. Mughal emperor Akbar the Great conducted a language experiment on babies whom he locked up in a mute environment to see if they will learn a language. Akbar visited the place of experiment called "the dumb house" and found that there was no speech from the children just the noise of the mute (Smith V. A., 1917; Tariq & Shamraez, 2024).
1700s	1796 Edward Jenner (1749-1823) father of immunology tested a vaccine for smallpox on 8- year-old James Phipps up to twenty times. James Phipps died at 20 years of age (Maniotis, 2002; Resnick & Hofweber, 2025).
1800s	1830 Charles Babbage (1791-1871) published his book titled <i>Reflections of the Decline of Science in England and Some of its Causes</i> , in which he wrote about colleagues who were conducting research misconduct. He also wrote about his invention of a mechanical computing machine (Babbage, 1830; Resnik, 2025) 1874

	<p>Roberts Bartholow (1831-1904) performed medical treatment on a mentally disabled woman who had a cancerous ulcer on her head. He conducted electrical stimulation to see its effect on her brain. This treatment caused the patient pain, agony, seizures and she finally fell into a coma and died soon after (Resnik, 2025).</p>
	<p>1892 Ludwig Sigismund Neisser, a German doctor, accredited with the discovery of the Neisseria gonorrhoeae. Neisser first inserted serum taken from a one patient who had early symptoms of syphilis under the skin of four female patients without their informed consent (Vollmann & Winau, 1996).</p> <p>Again, Neisser experiment on people to study the development of syphilis and four research participants were inoculated with a serum taken from a syphilis patient. They were not aware of the experiment, nor did they consent (Ligon, 2005). This caused a public outcry and people argued that Neisser viciously injecting innocent people with the syphilis serum (Oriol, 1989).</p>
1900s	<p>1918 The Western explorers and colonizers' encounter with people of the Pacific Islanders were associated with infectious disease epidemics that caused high morbidity and mortality of the Pacific Islanders population. The epidemics resulted in the destruction of the islanders' social structures. These problems were often interpreted in racial views and white supremacy through the 20th century. In Samoa in 1918, the influenza pandemic caused the high morbidity and mortality (a fifth of Samoan population) while New Zealand soldiers who were in Samoa at that time got the flu but survived. The difference in mortality and morbidity during this influenza pandemic was interpreted in racial terms even after the scientific germ theory was discovered as the cause of the disease (Kirch & Rallu, 2007; Shanks, Hussell, & Brundage, 2012; N. Wilson, Barnard, Summers, Shanks, & Baker, 2012).</p> <p>1920-1930 Medical experiments were conducted on Aboriginal Australians to test their experiences of feeling pain, where blood samples and body measurements were forcibly taken (Lelliott, 2003; University of Adelaide, 2002).</p> <p>1932-72 The famous Tuskegee Syphilis Study. The doctors and scientists involved did not get verbal consent from their patients. In addition, they did not offer treatment to patients with syphilis who participated in the study.</p>

First known published legal document governing human experimentation

It is widely assumed that explicitly written guidelines and codes of ethics for human research prior to the WWII and the Nuremberg Code is unknown (Timms, 2016; Tröhler, 2009).

Towards the 1900s, people condemned the criminal acts of research publicly thus, the process began that led to the founding of the landmark of the Nuremberg Code in 1947 (Bateman House, 2015; Schuman, 2012). However, the *Guideline for New Therapy and Human Experiments 1931-1945*, also known as the Weimer Guidelines, was a legal document that governed human experimentation issued by the Weimer Republic (German Government) Health Department 1919-1933 (Encyclopedia of Bioethics). It is believed to be the first kind of human research ethics regulations published and translated in English. (Encyclopedia of Bioethics; Grodin, 1994; Roelcke, 2017). Ethical principles that underpin the Weimer Guidelines included beneficence, non-maleficence, and informed consent. The engagement of the Weimer guidelines continued until 1945 but were excluded from the German legislation validated at the end of World War II (Encyclopedia of Bioethics; Sass, 1983). However, Adolf Hitler annulled the Weimer Guidelines and established eugenics policies, such as Nazism racial ideologies, selective breeding and sterilization laws (Longerich, 2010). In the 1950s, the United States did not yet have federal regulations for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals for research (Rice, 2008; Timms, 2016).

Internationally accepted principles of human research ethics were first articulated by international organizations such as the United Nations and World Medical Association after World War II (WWII) in response to the atrocities of human experimentation conducted by the Nazis (Grodin & Annas, 1996). During WWII, Nazi doctors conducted experimental research on thousands of prisoners in concentration camps, and their deaths were the planned results of these experiments (Grodin & Annas, 1996).

The Nuremberg Code, founded after the Nuremberg doctors' trials in Germany in 1947 includes principles such as informed consent, absence of coercion and beneficence (International Military Tribunal, 1949; Von Knieriem, 1959). These principles were interpreted as appropriate for the endorsement of medical research, while protecting participants (Grodin & Annas, 1996). After the Nuremberg Code, three more comprehensive global guidelines were developed: firstly, the World Medical Association (Huang, Newman, & Schwartzstein) adopted the Declaration of Helsinki in 1964 (World Medical Association, 2001). Secondly in 1977 the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) launched the International. Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving

Human Subjects (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, 2016). Finally, the US Department of Health and Human Services launched the Belmont Report in 1979 for the same purpose, to achieve global protection of human participants involved in research (US National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical Behavioural Research, 1978).

To align with international guidelines on research involving human participants and to ensure protection of their rights, countries developed national statements on the ethical conduct of research involving humans. These national statements serve as a guide to all persons involved in human research in their respective countries. Furthermore, it is an international requirement, based on the Declaration of Helsinki 1964, that an independent ethics committee conducts reviews of all research that involves human participants.

1.1.2 Ethics Committees and Bioethics Guidelines in Fiji and Tonga: Balancing Western influence with Pacific context

Ethics committees have been established in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) of Fiji and Tonga. Fiji has a National Health Research Ethics Review Committee; however, the establishment date is not documented. The Tonga government endorsed the establishment of the National Health Ethics and Research Committee (NHERC) and defined its terms of reference within the Ministry of Health through Cabinet Decision No.288 of 13th February 2002 (Refer to Appendix 1: Letter from the Government of Tonga Prime Minister's Office, dated 26/9/2023). Both were established within their respective health sectors to guide HRE activities.

Fiji and Tonga imported Western-oriented research ethics guidelines, largely unaltered for the Pacific context. The Fiji National Health Research Guide 2015 (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015) mentions the Declaration of Helsinki, Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) the National Institute of Health (NIH) of the United States of America and the World Health Organization Ethics Review Committee as reference documents. Likewise, the Tonga Operational Guidelines for the National Health Ethics and Research Committee (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014) mention the Declaration of Helsinki, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Universal Declaration of Human Genome and Human Rights as well as the Tongan Government health research related legislation, amongst others as reference documents. Principles of research bioethics in these guidelines

had their origin and are interpreted in the context of developed countries like the United States (Gan, 2020).

1.1.3 Conflicting paradigms between Western and Pacific Island HRE causing tensions

The contextual meanings of principles of HRE in the Pacific contrast with those that originated from higher income countries (HICs). These contradictions result in misinterpretations of the principles of research ethics and protocols and harm caused, such as a lack of the reciprocal benefits of research in Pacific Island countries (Fournier, 2023). More tensions and confusion may arise because of the variations of interpretations of principles of human research ethics.

It seems likely that these tensions may be due to conflicting paradigms in Pacific people's initial ideas for the development of the guidelines. Thaman (2003) refers to these conflicting paradigms as the struggles of Pacific peoples whose minds were influenced by colonialism via Westernized Pacific education systems, resulting in Pacific peoples with colonized minds (Thaman, 2003). Colonization has deeply impacted Pacific peoples, who have been required to live and work according to regulations and views of foreign powers imposed on them intending to create a new culture. The foreign worldviews do not have a place for Pacific philosophies, knowledge, ideas and epistemologies.

1.1.4 Indigenous Pacific epistemologies and ontology

Pacific people's epistemologies consider their theory of knowledge, their ways of knowing, realities and truths, the views of who and what they are, the nature, sources, frameworks and limits of knowledge and what is considered worthwhile to learn and pass on to others (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001; Sanga, Fa'avae, & Reynolds, 2023; Thaman, 2003). An example of epistemology from Tonga is outlined below. There are two sides of this epistemological structure: one is the common everyday knowledge, and the other is the higher level of knowledge held by certain people in Tonga's social structure. Strict protocols have to be followed if one needs the knowledge from the higher echelons of Tonga. Only people who are known to have good characters that uphold Tonga's culture and will make good use of the knowledge for the benefit of one and all will be granted the required knowledge (Thaman, 2003).

To complete the discussion on Pacific epistemologies, an examination of social ontology, the nature and essence of what exists and the objects of knowledge constructions, must be outlined (Gegeo & Gegeo, 2013). Ontology considers society and its different parts and

processes and aims to understand and describe the underlying structures that effect individuals and groups. The contemporary ontology of Indigenous¹ people involve beliefs in i) ancestral spirituality, ii) various cultural forms of relationships of people and things in their physical environment, and iii) Christianity, which was introduced to the Pacific islands considerably later in history than the latter. These beliefs are the sources of knowledge that inform the cultural protocols or place specific practices, that are important in the discussion of human research (Hunt, 2014, p.27).

1.1.5 Decolonizing efforts are needed to re-value Pacific principles and practices in HRE

Decolonizing efforts in Pacific human research need to begin with Pacific people recognizing how Western philosophies have dominated Pacific philosophies and paradigms, then to re-value Pacific principles and practices of human research (Thaman, 2003). Research involving humans has accelerated immensely in many islands of the Pacific, but there has not been any corresponding increase in human research ethics committees and reviewing guidelines or strong requirements for local governance (Denholm et al., 2017). Human research projects are mainly initiated and driven by researchers from outside PICTs with little local oversight or ethical review. This is a cause for concern because according to traditional customary ethics and principles, the protection of human participants in research may be inadequate.

Examples of the lack of protection of human participants in research from Pacific islands.

- i. A proposal by Autogen, a Melbourne based Biotechnology Company, to establish a database of genetic information on Tongan persons was objected to by many people in Tonga (Burton, 2002). One of the reasons for the objection was because research ethics principles employed by Autogen contrasted with those of Tongan people. Autogen's perception of the principle of informed consent is that of individual rights

¹ Indigenous is defined as “people who are descendants from populations that inhabited the region before the time of conquest and colonization, and who, independently of their legal status, have preserved all or part of their social, economic, cultural and political institutions, and that, at the same time, self-recognize themselves as such”(Minaya & Roque, 2015). Being Indigenous is also defined in terms of people's descent in the Melanie, Micronesia or Polynesian regions (Feetham, Vaccarino, Wibeck, & Linnér). Indigenous people of most Pacific Islands are the majority population, unlike other Indigenous populations who are minorities in their own countries. Indigenous PICT people have civil and political rights, including land rights with strong cultures that have survived for centuries. Melanesian Indigenous people have many ethnic languages with one common language that everyone use. Micronesian countries have main states languages and languages of smaller groups. Most Polynesian countries are monolingual. Indigenous Polynesian people are denoted as, for example, Samoans or Cook Islanders. Melanesians are called *iTaukei* in Fiji, *NiVanuatu* in Vanuatu and *iKiribati* in Kiribati.

to consent. This contrasts with the contextual meaning of informed consent in Tonga, which is that of interpersonal relationships within an extended family (Fua, Manu, Takapautolo, & Taufe'ulungaki, 2007). In practice, the extended family is informed and if they agree then they give collective consent. This collective consent of the extended family will influence individual members decision to give an informed consent to participate in human research or not. Other reasons for the Tongans' rejection of Autogen's research offer were the government's paternalistic act of accepting this proposal this proposal and the lack of public consultation about this project (Burton, 2002). A representative of the Tonga Human Rights and Democracy Movement condemned the agreement, "What is involved is the sanctified blood of human beings and not the genetic make-up of our pigs (with all due respect) so there should have been prior public discussions before the Minister signed" (World Council of Churches, 2002).

- ii. It was reported that a controversial US company drug company, Phoenix Life International, signed a 25-year deal with the Vanuatu government to trial a cannabis-derived diabetes drug in Vanuatu. The report said that one of the reasons for choosing Vanuatu was because their ethics committee was not functional, and no established review of any research ethics was in place. However, the Medical Association of Vanuatu called for the deal to be stopped (RNZ Pacific News, 2019).
- iii. An Indigenous Fijian PhD student in New Zealand employed Indigenous methods of research in her PhD project and she reported that the ethics committee of her university did not understand the ethics of research involving Indigenous populations of Fiji (Meo-Sewabu, 2014).

There is a lack of capacity in Fiji and Tonga to adapt the internationally accepted HRE guidelines to include important Indigenous principles and practices necessary for the understanding and conduct of HRE review in the two countries. The current HRE operating mechanisms in Fiji include a National Health Research Guide developed in 2015 (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015). Tonga developed a document called Operational Guidelines for the NHERC 2015, (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014) based on the World Health Organization guidelines (WHO, 2009). Apart from these documents there are very few publications about HRE from both countries and from the wider Pacific region. One of the few publications in the peer-reviewed literature from the region includes the authors' discussions that capacity for formal HRE is under-developed in some PICTs and in

other countries, unavailable, which leaves gaps in the research development efforts in the Pacific region (Denholm et al., 2017). Gopichandran (2017) described HRE in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) as lagging behind with LMICs encountering difficulties in the effort to develop capacity for HRE. The under-developed status and standard of quality of work of HRE in the Pacific is unknown.

These Indigenous research processes need to be viewed via a critical ethnographic lens (Madison, 2005) in order to inform an appropriate Human Research Ethics Governance framework that is sensitive to PICTs research principles in the context of the PICTs of Fiji and Tonga. This governance framework will inform National HRE Guidelines that will advise researchers to design research that is culturally appropriate and ethically sound in the context of PICTs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Fiji and Tonga have traditional Indigenous knowledge frameworks, structured within a paradigm of general truths and principles that provide the fundamentals of ethics in research in these countries. This environment, in which HRE exists, has not been examined to identify important elements that can be enhanced to strengthen human research, uphold traditional Pacific ethics, promote a high standard of ethics review and ensure the protection of the general population from harm through participating in research.

Primarily, the ethical values and guiding principles of HRE are founded on Western values and agendas. These values and principles are imperfect in their application to traditional or non-Western cultures. The Westernized guiding principles may have led to the scarcity of HRE frameworks available for non-Western cultures. In Fiji and Tonga, the HRE governance mechanisms were created within the health sector guided by WHO standard operating procedures. World Health Organization personnel from outside of the Oceania region have also been the main facilitators of capacity building exercises in HRE in Fiji and Tonga, thus the approach to Human Research Ethics is predominantly a biomedical approach. The contextualization and application of the HRE principles to Indigenous PICTs remains largely absent in HRE mechanisms in Fiji and Tonga and presumably in many other Pacific islands, leaving a notable gap in the entire research agenda.

Although there are Pacific research frameworks designed by Pacific scholars, they do not feature in any HRE guidelines of Pacific Island countries. The Kakala Research Framework was originally designed as a Pacific conceptualization of teaching and learning. This also

encourages Pacific scholars to value their own Pacific Indigenous thinking in higher education (Fua S. J., 2014). The Vanua Research Framework presents similar thinking to the Kakala one, with a decolonization focus on research involving the Indigenous people of Fiji (Nabobo-Baba, 2008).

There is a presumed disconnection of these two Pacific research frameworks with the existing biomedical approach to HRE in the health sector. Indigenous principles were not considered an important aspect of the ethics of human research in the Pacific health research context. However, this contends that Indigenous principles need to be included in research ethics guidelines, policies, rules and legislation. This inclusion will enhance the recognition and awareness of Indigenous principles by international research bioethics communities.

1.3 Rationale

Based on the Pacific Island principles, which include respect for Indigenous identity, respect for the hierarchical structure of communities, relationality and the duty to upkeep family and community relations, spirituality as in Christian beliefs and in ancestral beliefs and humility amongst other principles, this PhD research project is an investigation of HRE in Fiji and Tonga. Using a case study research approach, this study is designed to address a gap in the literature: an in-depth inquiry about HRE principles that guide HRE activities in these two countries. It is apparent that the dual origins of HRE principles guide HRE activities in the two countries.

Firstly, there are principles that are internationally accepted and documented in international guidelines and secondly, there are underlying Indigenous principles that guide the practices of peoples of Fiji and Tonga but are not recognized in the "official" guidelines. The sources of Indigenous principles are derived from local belief systems, culture, religious teaching, and social structures. It seems that these Indigenous principles are excluded in the biomedical model of HRE in the health industry but are valued in other sectors such as education and cultural affairs.

The case studies aim to demonstrate the importance of understanding how these principles could be utilized to inform HRE activities in Fiji and Tonga. They highlight, the tensions, intersections between these two systems of ethical practices. They inform the development of frameworks for the engagement of Indigenous principles in HRE governance mechanisms in Fiji and Tonga respectively.

1.4 Aim

The aim of this research is to explore the ethical principles that inform HRE from both traditional and international perspectives in Fiji and Tonga. This research is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the existing underlying theoretical principles that inform ethical approaches of HRE in Fiji and Tonga?
- ii. How are international and Indigenous HRE principles applied in HRE activities in Fiji and Tonga?
- iii. How relevant is the application of international HRE guidelines in the context of small and developing Pacific Island nations like Fiji and Tonga?
- iv. How can Indigenous and international principles of research ethics best be combined for an effective HRE framework for the Pacific?

The investigation is conducted to answer the research questions and the results of the investigation will inform the development of frameworks that harmonizes Indigenous and international principles in the HRE context in Fiji and Tonga. It is based on the theoretical underpinning of HRE principles, and takes into account origins, relevance, context and application.

1.5 Researcher Reflexivity

I was born in *Vaiola* hospital in Nuku'alofa, Tonga in 1965. I am the youngest of six siblings and the only one with a university education, qualifications and an academic career. Our parents were originally from the Ha'apai group of islands and when they were young, they migrated to Nuku'alofa, the capital, where they met and married. We grew up in our family home in Kolomotu'a, Nuku'alofa. I received primary education in Longolongo Primary School. This was an important time in my life because the Tongan values were ingrained in me through family socialization. I also appreciated my primary education because we learnt about our cultural values, native plants, dance and foods, as well as academic subjects. I moved on to secondary school at Tonga High School. I was educated further in academic knowledge and, most importantly, I further developed my ability to master the use of the English language which has been the language of work and higher education. Throughout these years of growing up in Tonga, I learnt to be Tongan. I value my family, community,

culture, language, values, religion, and the Tongan physical environment, rural and urban living. These values became invaluable in my personal and professional life. I later married a Fijian man and we migrated to Suva in the Fiji Islands where we have lived for about 30 years. I now have a dual identity as a Tongan and Fijian through marriage. While living in various parts of Fiji, I learnt the *iTaukei* Indigenous Fijian culture and speak the language. I also participate in my husband's family and community activities which also gave me a comprehensive knowledge of the meaning of the *Vanua* and *iTaukei* protocols and expectations of the *iTaukei* community.

As a young wife and mother, I decided that I wanted to further my education at the tertiary level. I began my studies at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji where I got my first degree, a Bachelor of Arts in Management and Applied Psychology in 1999. I was still searching for more knowledge, and I enrolled in a Master of Public Health (MPH) programme of study at the Fiji School of Medicine in Suva Fiji which was partly funded by AusAID. I completed my MPH in 2006.

These educational achievements added value to me as a person, but all along, I felt that I was learning a great deal about foreign knowledge created by other people from other places. These educational programmes I have completed so far were valuable but there was another part of myself that remained "a void in my mind" although it was hard for me to identify what it was. I was very good at studying foreign theoretical perspectives, writing about them in my assignments, receiving up to A grades, but this void remained there in my mind for a long time. Even though I was trying to put a name to it, I was afraid of searching for it, afraid of finding it and not knowing what to do with it if I did find it. So, it remained there for several more years.

I was working full time in Pacific Islands regional organizations and studying part time throughout. Through this employment, I worked with people from many parts of the Pacific Islands. Here, my thinking was enriched with the wider Pacific Islands knowledge. I developed respect for and believed strongly in knowledge I learnt from around the Pacific Islands region.

The work arrangement was important because I had to help my husband take care of our family which turn out well. My lifestyle of working full time and studying part time was useful to carry forward and apply in my future professional development. Soon I found that

my job was no longer challenging and had a lot of spare time. Because of this, I then looked for an opportunity to find something more challenging to do to enhance my knowledge. I found a scholarship advertised from the Monash University in Australia for scholars from Asia and the Pacific to do a Master of International Research Bioethics. This scholarship was funded through the National Institute of Health and the Fogarty International Centre. I applied and was offered a scholarship which I thought was certainly a big challenge. On accepting the offer, I completed the requirements for the Australian international students' visa which was a milestone. In February of 2010, I flew to Melbourne and began the study programme at Monash University, at the Alfred Hospital training centre. I later learnt that there were five other candidates from Asia and the Pacific who were offered the scholarship but could not pass all the Australian immigration requirements to study in Australia.

The prescribed courses offered were quite intense because the study programme was designed to be offered over a two-year time frame, but based on limited funds for the scholarships, it was condensed to one. I was determined to complete the study programme. Monash University training centre at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne was a new educational environment, with a faster pace of study and very cold compared to home, but there was no time to grieve over it, there was only time to concentrate on attending classes, studying and the endless writing of assignments. I borrowed a long black coat from a relative which was my companion during the cold Melbourne winter nights of study and working on my course work.

One of my assignments for a course titled "Comparative Moral Theory and Ethics" required us to write about philosophy and cultural relativism, using orientations of intimacy and integrity (Kasulis, 2002). In class, we would talk about various cultural orientations based on the religions of the world, like Hinduism and Buddhism. This was very interesting, but these religions were all foreign to me. My thoughts were that I would not even attempt to write on foreign philosophies which I do not understand. To attempt this assignment, I thought that the best approach was to tap into my own wealth of cultural knowledge. I explored and discussed my Tongan and Fijian cultures, identifying relationships, commitments, and practices of our people to uphold the *kainga* (multi-generational extended family) and *vanua* (Fijian mother land). I used our cultural concepts and explained these through Kasulis's cultural orientations of intimacy and integrity (Kasulis, 2002). We also had to do an oral presentation of our paper in class. I received some simple, but very effective life changing feedback from my lecturer.

He said that my assignment was the best and was very refreshing to read. Those words stuck like glue in my mind. There were only five students in the class, two Asians, two Australians and me, from the Pacific.

Through this experience, I told myself, I had just found what I referred to earlier as the “void in my mind” that I had suppressed into my unconscious mind for years, interpreting a worldview with my own eyes and being accepted in academia and considered valuable and worthy. I was given a Distinction grade for my effort in the study of comparative moral theory and ethics. At the end of the year, I completed the Master of International Research Bioethics. In this process I studied the origins of HRE and Western bioethical principles and guidelines.

In 2011 I returned to Fiji and began an academic career, teaching a course called Ethics Values and Governance to undergraduate students at the Fiji National University (FNU). I felt that I was not satisfied with my work because I wanted to work in an area related to health and ethics. In 2015 I had the opportunity to work for the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) of the FNU as a Research Fellow. There I became a member of the College Human Health Research Ethics Committee (CHHREC). I attended CHHREC meetings and conducted the ethics and scientific reviews of research proposals submitted to the CHHREC. Quickly and quietly, I studied the approach the CHHREC employed in their work and found it to follow the Western biomedical approach all through. This presented a dilemma because I was considering the background of people in Fiji (me included) that were involved in research. They were mostly Indigenous Fijians, Rotumans, Fijians of Indians descent and other Pacific Islanders. I already knew that our lives are guided by our socio-cultural background, which is rooted in our inheritance, Indigenous or otherwise. This is the core of our lives, our belief systems and our philosophy.

I thought about two issues, firstly, that there is a gap in the work of the CHHREC which is not including Indigenous paradigms in its approach, and secondly, that if researchers are not connected to the core of research participants' lives, then there are missing links that are important for research that need to be connected. This formed the basis for my PhD research journey. I considered this adoption of a Western paradigm for HRE to be an injustice as there may be some tensions among researchers, research participants and research ethics committees in the Pacific Islands. My view in this research is positioned within the critical

paradigm as an insider of the two countries of Fiji and Tonga and an outsider with knowledge of Western principles of Human Research Ethics (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

I began to talk about my criticisms to my colleagues, after which I began to publicize my ideas. At this time, they were articulated as a prospective research topic. I presented my ideas at a lunch time forum in the CMNHS. Soon after, other colleagues stated it was a very suitable to be promoted outside of the CMNHS. I was invited by Dr William May, Dean of the CMNHS, to present my ideas at a conference for the Internal Medicine Organization of the Pacific (IMOP) 2016.

This was the first time I disseminated my ideas in public. I also had discussions with a James Cook University (JCU) team led by Professor Sarah Larkins, Dr Ronny Gunnarsson, Dr Robyn Preston and Karen Johnston who partnered with a team from the CMNHS to deliver a research training fair with CMNHs in June 2016. The second time I disseminated my ideas was in a local conference. I drafted a research methodology to investigate the same topic and presented it at the Pacific Islands Health Research Symposium, 2017. There I received good comments. Some audience members who showed interest remarked on how to progress my research ideas. I further received support for my work through winning the Greg Urwin Awards in 2017, which allowed me to undertake an attachment at James Cook University. In doing so, I developed an educational curriculum for a Post Graduate Certificate in Research Bioethics.

Personally, I gained more and more confidence to seek ways of integrating Indigenous principles in human research governance mechanisms and do more work to develop human research ethics in Pacific Island countries. I was placed in a position where I could conduct research to look at the gaps that I had identified, which were to integrate Indigenous principles of human research ethics into human research ethics activities in the Pacific Islands. Case studies in Fiji and Tonga would be a good start. I was still not confident with scientific methodology but knew that my own professional goal is to develop a HRE environment in the Pacific embedded with both international and Indigenous knowledge of HRE.

The following year, I met a team from JCU led by Professor Sarah Larkins, Associate Professor David MacLaren and Dr Karen Carlisle who were conducting a research training programme in the CMNHS. I was invited to deliver a session on 'Ethics in operational

research'. At this training programme, I discussed my thoughts of the gaps in the CHHREC with the team. They asked if I wanted to conduct a research study on this topic through a PhD study program. I agreed that this is a good opportunity to highlight Indigenous knowledge in human research ethics.

The team from JCU negotiated and secured a Cotutelle PhD programme contract between JCU and FNU for my PhD programme. I enrolled in 2018 in both the JCU College of Medicine and Dentistry and the FNU CMNHS. The status of my PhD programme was part-time study and full-time work, which is why I continued as a research fellow at the CMNHS. Later in 2019, the FNU part of the cotutelle contract fell through because an FNU representative thought that FNU did not have sufficient resources to deliver a cotutelle PhD programme.

JCU honoured their part of the contract, and I continued the PhD journey with my enrolment status at JCU. I had a team of supervisors and external advisors from both JCU and FNU. The JCU research supervisors' team, Dr Robyn Preston, Professor Sarah Larkins, and Dr Lynn Woodward who is a Bioethics content expert in this PhD project. These supervisors and advisors provided technical advice on how to proceed with the research, suggesting and refining ideas and offering guidance on every stage of the research.

At the beginning of the PhD project, I had an FNU supervisor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo Baba but she took up a senior management position that kept her extremely busy. We discussed the situation and agreed that it was best that I find another FNU advisor. Dr Sefanaia Qaloewai had just recently been an external advisor for a JCU PhD research project completed by Dr Karen Johnston about dementia in Fiji which was a very successful project. I discussed the matter with the other members of my supervisory team and agreed that Dr Sefanaia be approached to be my FNU external advisor. Dr Sefanaia accepted the offer for which I was very grateful.

During the data collection phase, participants were very supportive of the research initiative and thought that it was a very important area that needed to be addressed. They freely gave their time and ideas for the research. I learnt an important lesson while doing the data collection. Firstly, the colonialism history of Fiji and the colonization of the minds of Tongans via their education system influenced their HRE approach. Secondly, the decolonization of such thoughts and approaches to HRE in Fiji and Tonga was the foundation

needed to create change. I am very grateful to JCU for this great opportunity to conduct this PhD programme with high hope that the result will benefit the research community and the people of both Fiji and Tongan. The result of this research work can also be applied in other Pacific Island countries.

As I reflect on my PhD journey, I have developed skills that are important in academia and utilized in the conduct of this research project. Being a critical thinker, having the confidence to identify injustices and advocating for change, such as change in paradigms from colonized mind to being bold to advocate for inclusion of Indigenous thinking in policies and practices. Knowledge of research, specifically of qualitative research, conducting interviews and sorting through the data and most importantly writing the results in a meaningful way. I am most rewarded knowing that I have given voice to Indigenous people through their participation in my research to express their views and make it known. Through the data analysis phase of my PhD research, I have developed the skills of interpreting Indigenous concepts in the English language. This proved to be a difficult exercise, because of the language barriers, whereby no English words can express an Indigenous concept as eloquently as the interpretation in which is written in my Indigenous mind in my Indigenous language. For example, *mamahi'i me'a* (passion and duty) is one of the four pillars of Tonga's golden principles. I tried to express the meaning in English but was dissatisfied with my English interpretation. I gave it my best and hope that people who can better interpret the same will forgive me for my short coming.

Sharing the research knowledge gained through this research project is important to me. I share my knowledge through lectures on research and ethics topics I manage to develop the confidence to deliver and share my experiences gained through the PhD course. Many colleagues from PICTs have supported my ideas and have also joined hands with me. Now research students of CMNHS are asking me to share with them knowledge of various topics of research like literature review, qualitative data analysis, research bioethics and other.

With reference to the original thoughts that motivated me to do this PhD research involving in Indigenous knowledge. I reflected on my individual level of Indigenous knowledge as a Tongan and also my *iTaukei* knowledge and build on it with added knowledge gained from the research, enabled me to produce the content of this PhD research that highlighted the values of Indigenous knowledge in HRE in PICTs. I have become a staunch advocate of engaging Indigenous knowledge in research. I have delivered oral presentations in

international conferences on engaging Indigenous knowledge in research and was received well by researchers in the audience and they have asked to share my knowledge in research work post-conference. Now the challenge I have is to be the best role model to students and fellow researchers.

1.6 Thesis Structure

The structure of the thesis is outlined below.

1: Introduction

This chapter has outlined the background to the study and my reflexivity.

2: Literature Review

This chapter comprises a literature review article titled; Indigenous knowledge around the ethics of human research from the Oceania region: A scoping literature review. It was published in 2021 in the journal *Philosophy, Ethics and Humanities in Medicine* (Lovo, Woodward, Larkins, Preston, & Baba, 2021).

3: Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology, research ethics processes, study population and participants, methods of data collection and the research tools are described. The justification for and description of the comparative case study design with a critical ethnographic theoretical perspective are given.

4: HRE in Fiji

In this chapter the findings of the *iTaukei* Fiji case study are provided. A total of 54 Indigenous participants was included in the key informant interviews and focus group discussions (*talanoa*) in Fiji (see Table 4.6. for details). The findings from the Fiji case study were reported against four themes (outlined in the abstract and introduced in Section 4.4.1) and illustrated with quotations, followed by a synthesis of the themes and an *iTaukei* HRE guideline framework.

5: HRE in Tonga

In this chapter the results of the Tonga case study are given. A total of 11 participants was included in the key informant interviews and focus group discussions (*talanoa*) in Tonga (see section 5.2.9 for details). The findings from the Tonga case study were reported against three

themes (outlined in the abstract and outlined in Section 5.3.1) and illustrated with quotations, followed by a synthesis of the themes and a Tongan HRE guideline framework.

6: Cross Case Analysis

In this chapter, I present the outcomes of the cross-case analysis of the *iTaukei* Fijian and the Tongan HRE cases, together with a Pacific Indigenous HRE guideline framework.

7: Discussion, Strengths, and Limitations

This chapter largely consists of a discussion highlighting important findings of the cases and how they enhance published literature. Lastly, the strengths and limitations of study are included.

8: Conclusion and Recommendations

In this chapter, I draw concluding statements and recommendations from the case studies for researchers, research ethics committees, policy makers, research institutions such as universities and government departments.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Published Literature Review Article

Citation: Lovo, E., Woodward, L., Larkins, S., Preston, R., & Baba, U. N., (2021) Indigenous knowledge around the ethics of human research from the Oceania region: A scoping literature review. *Philosophy, Ethics and Humanities in Medicine: PEHM*, 16, 12–12.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13010-021-00108-8>

2.1.1 Introduction to the paper

The literature review was undertaken in 2019. A manuscript was developed and sent to the BMC Journal, Philosophy, Ethics and Humanities in Medicine. It was received on 4 December 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic happened around this time causing a long delay in the peer review. Towards the end of the pandemic, the editorial team of the journal resumed work, and we received their first comments. We were happy that the effect of the pandemic on publications was ending. It was accepted on the 8 September 2021 and published on 9 October 2021. A copy is presented here.

An additional literature search was conducted in July-August of 2023. New relevant literature identified was added to Chapter 7: Discussion.

An addendum to the literature review in 2025: Section 2.1.1: The relationship between colonialism, Christianity, Indigenous world views, ethics and integrity in Fiji and Tonga.

Authors' Contribution

All the authors were involved in the conceptualization of the scoping literature review, led by EL. EL conducted the literature search and implemented the scoping literature review, drafted the manuscript with continuous advice and guidance from all the other authors who are the PhD supervisory team. All authors commented and revised subsequent drafts. All authors read and approved the final manuscript and approved for publication.

Title: Indigenous Knowledge around the Ethics of Human Research from the Oceania Region: A Scoping Literature Review

Authors: Etivina Lovo, Lynn Woodward, Sarah Larkins, Robyn Preston, Unaisi Nabobo
Baba

Author affiliations:

EL: Fiji National University, Suva, Fiji Islands
James Cook University, QLD, 4811 Australia
Emails. etivina.lovo@fnu.ac.fj; etivina.lovo1@my.jcu.edu.au

LW: James Cook University, QLD, 4811 Australia
Email: lynn.woodward@jcu.edu.au

SL: James Cook University, QLD, 4811 Australia
Email: sarah.larkins@jcu.edu.au

RP: Central Queensland University, QLD, 4810 Australia:
Email: r.preston@cqu.edu.au

UNB: Fiji National University, Suva, Fiji Islands
Email: unaisi.baba@fnu.ac.fj

Correspondence: EL on Email: etivina.lovo@fnu.ac.fj

Full list of author information is available at the end of the article.

Abstract

Background: Many Indigenous people have died or been harmed because of inadequately monitored research. Strong regulations in Human Research Ethics are required to address these injustices and to ensure that peoples' participation in health research is safe. Indigenous peoples advocate that research that respects Indigenous principles can contribute to addressing their health inequities. This scoping literature review aims to analyse existing peer reviewed and grey literature to explore how Indigenous values and principles from countries

of Oceania are incorporated into HRE and the governance of research involving human participants.

Methods: A scoping literature review framework was used for this study. A search for peer reviewed and grey literature from Google, bibliographies, and electronic databases such as SCOPUS, SPRINGER, Medline (Ovid) and JBI Database of Systematic Reviews was conducted, limited to the years 2002-2020. Sixty (60) documents that focused on Indigenous knowledge from Oceania region and HRE were included, from which key findings and themes were synthesized.

Results: Charting the data showed that more than half the eligible documents were peer-reviewed journal articles (54%). Other sources included: International Declarations on Human Research (8%); book chapters (8%); government documents (8%); HRE Guidelines or protocols (13%); news articles (7%) and PhD thesis (2%). The literature was from Australia, Cook Islands, Guam, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu, some of which focused specifically on HREs in the Pacific Region. Issues emerging from the literature were grouped into five themes i) Indigenous and cultural principles of HRE; ii) informed consent in Indigenous settings in Oceania; iii) vulnerability and minority status of Indigenous populations exploited for research; iv) research ethics governance for Oceania Indigenous peoples; and v) research ethics committees in Oceania. Respect, relationship building, and trust were priority Indigenous HRE principles that encompass the principles of partnership, capacity building, reciprocity, and equality. Relationship building and trust imply the equal distribution of benefits for Indigenous population and researchers.

Conclusion: Indigenous principles of HRE identified were interconnected and interdependent. Recommendations were to incorporate Indigenous principles of research in HRE regulations and processes of all countries with Indigenous populations. This is especially pertinent for emerging national research committees in LMIC countries, including Fiji and Tonga. Relationship building among researchers and Indigenous populations is key to successful research with Indigenous populations. HRE principles important for relationship building include respect that is reciprocal among researchers and Indigenous people. Elements of the principle of respect highlighted are empathy, collaboration, sharing of benefits, reciprocity, appreciation, empowerment, protection, safety and awareness of culture and languages. Indigenous ontology from the Oceania region involves spirituality, connectedness to land, religious beliefs and a participatory approach to HRE and should be respected in research. An ethical governance mechanism of HRE is one that incorporates

Indigenous principles and applications for the purpose of maximizing the protection of the dignity and rights of Indigenous peoples of Oceania.

Key Words: Ethics, Oceania, Pacific, Indigenous research ethics principles, values, human research ethics committees

Introduction

Human Research Ethics aims to ensure that research is conducted to the highest ethical standard and that human participants in research are protected (World Medical Association, 2001). Important statements of ethical principles involved in human research such as the Nuremberg Code (Shuster, 1997), the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2001) and the (CIOMS and WHO, 2016; Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, 2016), have provided guidance for the governance of HRE activities. This applies in countries of Oceania (Briney, 2020), including Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga, as stipulated in their National Guidelines for the ethical conduct of research involving human beings, (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015; Hudson et al, 2010; National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018)

Thousands of people have lost their lives (Nelkin, 1993; Neuberger, 2005) and many others have been harmed through research and medical experimentation (Benedek, 1978; Harald G. Kratochvila, 2007; Marks, 2006). These negative consequences fall disproportionately on the disadvantaged and Indigenous population groups (Benedek, 1978; Mosby, 2013). Two significant events have highlighted the deficiencies in human research governance mechanisms in research institutions (Benedek, 1978; Nelkin, 1993). One of these was the Nuremberg Trials in 1945-1946 when Nazi doctors were brought to trial for conducting experiments on thousands of prisoners resulting in their deaths during World War II. The second was the 40-year-long study of black American men with untreated syphilis in Tuskegee Alabama, 1932-1972 (Benedek, 1978). The Tuskegee study sparked outrage in 1972 after it became widely known that despite the discovery of penicillin as a cure for syphilis, the participants in the Tuskegee study were not treated. Many were unaware they were in a study and many were harmed and died as a result (Council of Europe, 2005; Thomas & Quinn, 1991).

These deficiencies prompted calls for strong regulations in health research ethics to ensure that people participating in health research are not harmed (CIOMS and WHO, 2016; Nelkin, 1993; United Nations, 2007; United States National Commission For The Protection Of Human Subjects Of Biomedical Behavioral Research, 1978; World Medical Association, 2001). HRE regulations were formed in countries like Australia (National Health Medical Research Council, 2003), New Zealand (United States National Commission For The Protection Of Human Subjects Of Biomedical Behavioral Research, 1978) as they responded to the need to strengthen governance mechanisms for the protection of human participants in research (Canadian Institute of Health Research, 2018; Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015; National Ethics Advisory Committee, 2019; National Health Medical Research Council, 2003; Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014). HRE systems exist in a few countries in the Oceania region (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015; Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014) but are non-existent in others like Tuvalu and Kiribati. Indigenous populations are frequently researched (Ekeroma, Biribo, Herman, Hill, & Kenealy, 2016) but their own values and practices that should guide research involving themselves are not always made known to researchers. Therefore, national HRE must consider the unique cultural values and practices and include these in national guidelines for HRE in order to guide researchers to conduct research appropriately in Indigenous populations (United Nations, 2007). Table 2.1 presents the chronology of these advances in HRE in Oceania and internationally.

Table 2. 1: Chronology of International Organizations and Oceania Region HRE Advances for the Protection of Human Participants in Research

INTERNATIONAL		OCEANIA REGION	
Year	Report Titles	Year	Report Titles
1947	The Nuremberg Code: International (International Military Tribunal, 1949)	2003	Values and Ethics : Guidelines for Ethical conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (National Health Medical Research Council, 2003)
1948	The International Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly (United Nations General Assembly, 1948)	2010	Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori research ethics: (Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell, & Smith, 2010)
1964	The Declaration of Helsinki by the World Medical Association (World Medical Association, 2001)	2011	The University of Otago, Pacific Research Protocols (2011) (Bennett et al., 2013)
1966	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Office of the UN High Commission of Human Rights in Human Experimentation, 2005)	2014	Health Research Council’s Pacific Health Research Guidelines (2014) (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2014)
1978	The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research (United States National Commission For The Protection Of Human Subjects Of Biomedical Behavioral Research, 1978).	2014	Tonga Ministry of Health. Operational Guidelines for the National Health Ethics and Research Committee (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014)

- 2000 WHO Operational Guidelines for Ethics Committees that Review Biomedical Research (World Health Organization, 2000)
- 2005 Council of Europe. Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, concerning Biomedical Research (Council of Europe, 2005)
- 2006 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (UNESCO, 2006)
- 2007 United Nations declaration on the and rights of Indigenous people
- 2008 UNESCO Bioethics Core Curriculum and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNESCO, 2007)
- 2011 WHO Western Pacific Region: The Ethics Review Committee Standard Operating Procedures for Ethics Review Committee of the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific, 2011)
- 2015 National Health Research Guide (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015)
- 2015 Centre for Samoan Studies, University Research Ethics Committee, National University of Samoa (Centre for Samoan Studies, 2015)
- 2017 Pacific Research Guidelines and Protocols, Pacific Research & Policy Centre and the Pasifika@Massey Directorate, Massey University, (Meo-Sewabu, Hughes, & Stewart-Withers, 2017)
- 2018 Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders 2018 (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018; Putt, 2013)
- 2020 Fiji Human Health Research Policy (Ministry of Health and Medical Services Fiji, 2020).

Indigenous HRE

Indigenous is defined as “people who are descendants from populations that inhabited the region before the time of conquest and colonization, and who, independently of their legal status, have preserved all or part of their social, economic, cultural and political institutions, and that, at the same time, self-recognize themselves as such” (Minaya & Roque, 2015, p.201).

The Oceania Region is divided into four major sub-regions; i) Australia and New Zealand sub-region include Australia, Christmas Island, Cocos Islands, Heard Island, New Zealand and Norfolk Island, ii) Melanesia sub-region include Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, iii) Micronesia include Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Northern Mariana Islands and Palau, iv) Polynesia sub-region include Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Wallis and Futuna (Migiro, 2018; United Nations Statistics Division, (nd)).

Indigenous people of the Pacific Islands are divided into three main groups, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia (Indigenous Peoples' Literature, 2017). Melanesian Indigenous populations are the *iTaukei* people of the Republic of Fiji (Nabobo-Baba, 2008), the Kanaks of New Caledonia, the people of Papua New Guinea, the NiVanuatu of the Republic of Vanuatu and the Solomon Islanders (Melanesian Spearhead Group, 2019). Some Polynesian Indigenous people include the Cook Islanders, Maori of New Zealand, Samoan and Tahitian people (Indigenous Peoples' Literature, 2017). Some Micronesian Indigenous populations include iKiribati, Palauans and Tuvaluans (Fischer, Kahn, & Kiste, 2019). For the purpose of this review, the term Indigenous includes cultural knowledge from island countries of Oceania who do and do not consider themselves Indigenous like Tonga². Whilst HRE systems exist in a few countries in Oceania region they are non-existent in others. The significance of focusing this review on Indigenous peoples' values and principles in HRE in the Oceania region is to highlight the need to incorporate Indigenous values and principles in the governance mechanisms of research that involve them (United Nations, 2007). Human Research Ethics in Indigenous populations are to be informed by their Indigenous principles and values for relevance and applicability (United Nations, 2007). The involvement of

² Tonga does not fit the definition of Indigenous as per Minaya and Roque, 2015, because Tonga is a Polynesian Kingdom that was never colonized and do not recognize themselves as Indigenous.

Indigenous paradigms and ontology in the governance of HRE has been overlooked. The international guidelines from the World Medical Association have been applied in HRE with Indigenous populations without consideration of Indigenous contextual relevance. Whilst HRE systems exist in a few Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) in Oceania they are non-existent in others. The aim of this review is to explore how Indigenous values and principles from countries of Oceania are incorporated into HRE and the governance of research involving human participants. This study is focusing on HRE in Oceania region, due to the need to advance HRE in countries of Oceania.

Methods

Review Methodology

A scoping literature review framework defined by Arksey and O'Malley was used for this study (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005); a common method for reviewing a broad range of literature and synthesizing research evidence particularly when few rigorous research studies address the question (Council of Europe, 2005; Daudt, van Mossel, & Scott, 2013; National Health Medical Research Council, 2003). This framework involves five stages presented in the next section 1) identifying the research question; 2) identifying relevant studies; 3) study selection; 4) charting the data; and 5) collating, summarizing and reporting the results. The scoping study process is non-linear and the researcher can repeat certain steps or check searches or tasks required to conduct a thorough search (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The Arksey and O'Malley framework enables the researcher to utilize a methodical system to find and collect relevant documents then summarize, consolidate, and map out concepts and themes, then linked back to the research topic of international Indigenous knowledge and the ethics of human research. Conclusions are drawn by synthesizing how activities of Indigenous HRE are reported in the literature, including the status of activities of Indigenous HRE in the literature. The implementation of the scoping literature review is summarized below.

Implementing the scoping literature review

The research questions for this scoping review were: i) what are the existing underlying theoretical principles that inform Indigenous ethical approaches of HRE? and ii) how are Indigenous principles applied in the governance of human research? The literature search process is shown in the 'Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis' (PRISMA) diagram (Figure 1) and was limited to the years 2002-2020 (PRISMA,

2019.). The last day of the literature search was 23rd November 2020. English word search and French translation of the same words plus the names of the three French Territories in Oceania, Tahiti, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna were used for the search in the databases. Table 2.2 presents a summary of the search words.

The first author (EL) collated the data, read and summarized all documents according to the following characteristics and recorded the following in a table; profile of document, study location, study population, aim, research ethics/bioethics principles or theories, methodology (only research articles), important results and outcomes. A framework was developed for a consistent approach to the analysis of the findings from the gathered literature. Based on the aim, the framework consisted of two categories: i) the Indigenous knowledge incorporated into HRE; and ii) the regulations of HRE in Indigenous populations.

Key words search. The search strategy is presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2. 2: Key words in four categories

Categories	Key Words
Ethical or Moral Principles	"Principles Research? Ethic* Theor* OR Moral* OR "Virtue" OR "Research" AND "Bioethics" OR "Research" AND "Morality" OR "Moral*" OR "Values" OR "beneficence" OR "Justice "OR "Non-maleficence" OR "Respect for autonomy" Or "Philosophy" AND "Research Ethics" OR "Privacy" OR "Confidentiality" OR "Informed Consent" OR "Vulnerable"
Research Bioethics and Governance	"Research? Ethic* Committee" AND Pacific" OR "Research? Ethic* Committee" AND "Indigenous "OR "Pacific" OR "Research? Ethics Codes" OR "Institutional Review Board" OR "Pacific Research Ethics Codes" OR "Research Ethics Guidelines"
Indigenous HRE	"De-colonizing research methods" OR "Pacific research? ethic*" OR "Fiji Research? ethic*" OR "Tonga Research? ethic*"OR "Pacific Indigenous research" OR "Indigenous research? ethic*" OR "Pacific Indigenous research"
French Language Search (targeting any publication from French Territories in Oceania Region)	"Ethique de la recherch" OR "ethics committe" OR "comite de deontologi" OR ""comission ethiqu"" AND "indigenou" OR "Tahit" "OR "New Caledonia" or "Wallis and Futuna"

The PRISMA identification stage involved a database search in SCOPUS, Springer, MEDLINE (Ovid), JBI Database for Systematic Review and it was decided that the search will be filtered by the years 2002-2020. English search words were utilized for the search and this search yielded a total of 1,154 documents. Google search was used to search for the French translation of the English search words. Then the names of the French nations in the Oceania region Tahiti, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna were added to the search words and a search was conducted in the databases. This search did not yield any results.

Further search for documents that may not have been found in the databases was also conducted in Google Scholar, eJournals, Bibliographic Search and in relevant Organizational webpages and 82 documents were found and the total was 1223 documents. The duplicates were removed, and 954 documents remained. The next stage was the screening stage which is the strategic selection of documents to be included or excluded. Inclusion criteria strategy was to include all documents that were about research, bioethics and Indigenous research

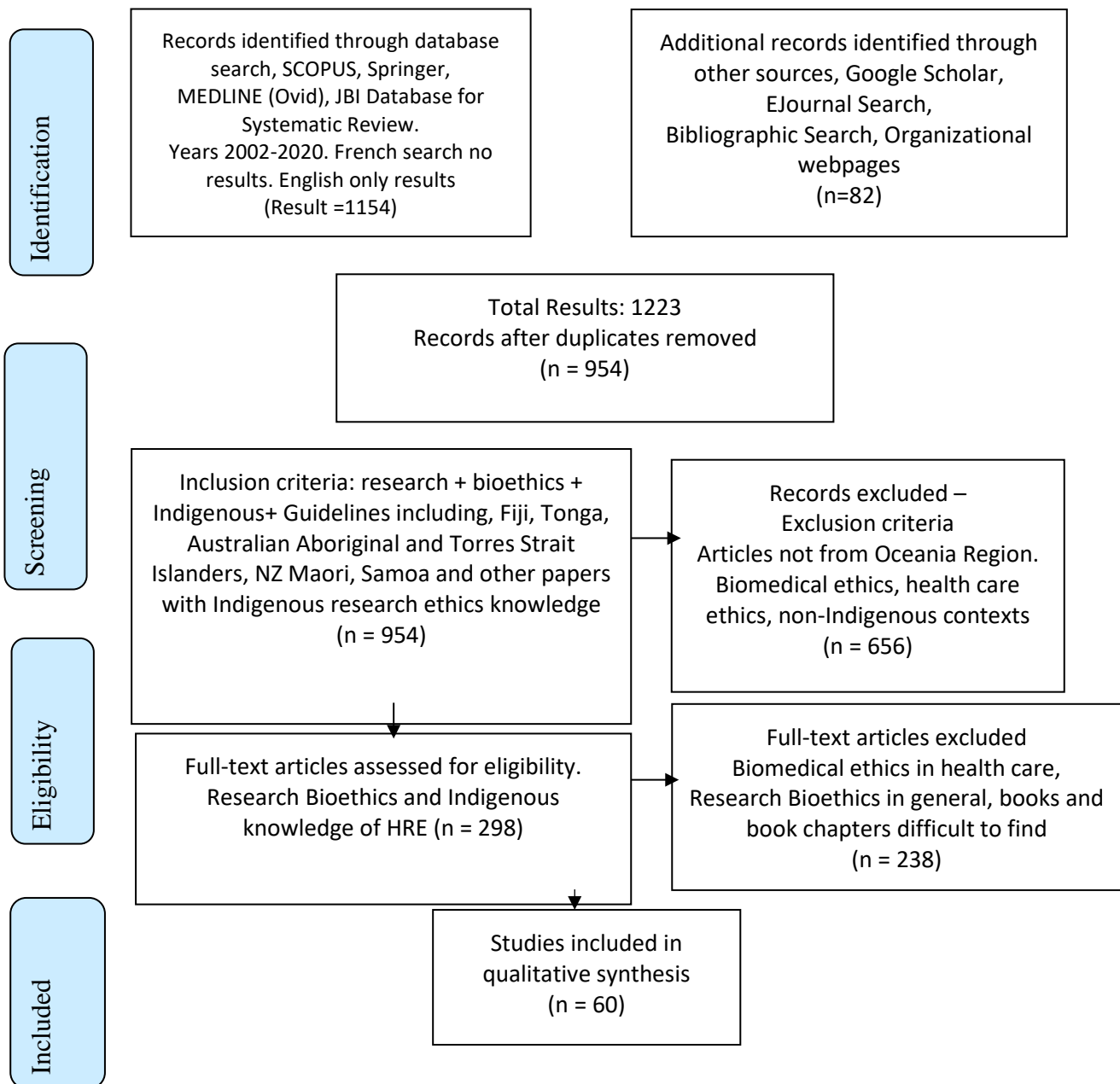
ethics knowledge in countries of Oceania and exclude documents about biomedical ethics, health care ethics, about non-Indigenous contexts and HRE in countries outside of Oceania region. 656 documents were excluded, and 298 documents remained that met the inclusion criteria. A further screening exercise was conducted where an exclusion criterion was set to exclude documents that was about Biomedical ethics in health care, Research Bioethics in general, books and book chapters difficult to find. This screening exercise resulted in the exclusion of 238 documents. The next stage required the screening of documents for eligibility. Only documents that included research bioethics and Indigenous knowledge of Human research ethics were included. Documents that were excluded were about biomedical ethics in health care, research bioethics in general, books and book chapters that were difficult to find. 60 documents remained and were included in the scoping literature review. The search process is presented as a PRISMA flow chart; Figure 2.1.

Results

The scoping literature review found that although high income countries such as Australia and New Zealand have HRE regulations that engage Indigenous HRE knowledge, many low- and middle-income countries like Fiji and Tonga have not yet developed HRE regulations that incorporate their cultural values or Indigenous values. The English search yielded results while the French search did not yield any results. Some books and book chapters could not be located or accessed, so they were not included.

Charting the data showed that more than half the eligible documents were peer-reviewed journal articles (54%). Other sources included: International Declarations on Human Research (8%); book chapters (8%); government documents (8%); HRE Guidelines or protocols (13%); news articles (7%) and PhD thesis (2%).

Figure 2. 1: Prisma Flow Chart of Literature Search



The geographical distribution of the literature from Oceania region were as follows; Australia 12%, Cook Islands 2%, Fiji 6%, Guam 2%, General 22%, New Zealand 18%, Pacific Islands 18%, Samoa 6% and Tonga 8%, Vanuatu 6%.

The themes that emerged were divided into five main categories: (i) Indigenous and cultural principles of HRE; ii) informed consent (IC) in Indigenous settings in Oceania; iii) vulnerability and minority status of Indigenous populations exploited for research; iv) research ethics governance for Indigenous peoples; and v) research ethics committees in

Oceania. Indigenous from here onwards means Indigenous knowledge from the Oceania region only. Each theme is summarized and presented in Table 2.3 and discussed in more detail below.

Table 2. 3: Key categories and themes of Oceania Indigenous knowledge reflected in the literature

(i) Informed Consent (IC) in Indigenous Settings

- **Elements of IC** are respect of dignity and autonomy of persons, transparent, un-intrusive, free of coercion, free and informative, protection of human rights and bioethics, collaborative and establishing a trusting relationship (Bennett et al., 2013; Fitzpatrick et al., 2016).
- **Culturally and linguistically** appropriate (Fa'avae, Jones, & Manu'atu, 2016; Hudson et al, 2010; Nabobo-Baba, 2008).
- **Communitarian approach to IC** (Burton, 2002; Fitzpatrick et al., 2016; Liamputtong, 2008; Meo-Sewabu, 2014)
- **Acceptable processes of IC for increased understanding;** audiovisuals and graphics, provide options of oral or written forms. Read out loud then consent can be audio recorded. Conduct IC in the local language. IC may include family members or community (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016; Liamputtong, 2008; Marshall, 2012).

(ii) Indigenous Principles of HRE

- **Relationship building** between researchers and Indigenous participants should employ the values of respect and empathy, (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; M. Hudson et al., 2010) collaboration, sharing of resources, reciprocity, appreciation (M. Hudson et al., 2010) (Nabobo-Baba, 2008) (Fua S. J., 2014; Hudson & Russell, 2009; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Naepi, 2015; Putt, 2013), knowledge of the culture (M. Hudson et al., 2010) and identity, consider time and lived experiences (Fua S. J., 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008), humility, care and generosity (Fua S. J., 2014) .
- **Ethical research** is research that empowers, provides social justice (M. Hudson et al., 2010), emancipatory, decolonizing, protects (Curtis, 2016; Sauni, 2011), gifting, knowing the language or dialect and build capacity (Nabobo-Baba, 2008).
- **Reciprocity** equitable benefits to Indigenous populations, joint ownership (Dunbar & Scrimgeour, 2006; Putt, 2013)
- **Ontology** of Indigenous people is defined as the point of view of spirituality and their interconnectedness to their land and the environment which require a participatory approach to ethical research. **Participatory approach** comprises the ethical principles of reciprocity, respect, equality, responsibility, survival and protection or safety, spirit and integrity, partnership, responsiveness and benefit (Curtis, 2016; Dunbar & Scrimgeour, 2006) (Efi, 2007; Hudson & Russell, 2009; M. Hudson et al., 2010; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Putt, 2013; Wilson, 2017)

(iii) Vulnerability and minority status of Indigenous populations exploited for research

- **Common issues;** marginalization, exploitation and lack of benefits (Hudson & Russell, 2009; Kowal, Pearson, Peacock, Jamieson, & Blackwell, 2012; Wilson, 2017).
- Western paradigms are associated with expert knowledge while Indigenous paradigms are associated with “lay knowledge”. **Western ideas adopted in research methodologies cannot** be applied to the understanding of Pacific Island culture.

(iv) Research Ethics Governance with Indigenous People

Principles commonly expressed in national HRE Guidelines are;

- **Responsibilities and cultural continuity** (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015; National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018)
- **Respect for persons** (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015; National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018; Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014)
- **Spirituality, integrity, equity and justice** (Hudson et al, 2010; National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018)
- **Relationships** (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015; Hudson et al, 2010; National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018; Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014)
- **Research designs** are to include the principles of confidentiality, protection of human subjects' dignity and safety, maximize efficiency, transparency, accountability, fair open and responsible conduct.

Improve health and benefits aligned towards national priority areas (Hudson et al, 2010; Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014)

(v) Research Ethics Committees

- **Stewardship roles** within health research systems (Gopichandran, 2017)
 - HREC is **underdeveloped or lacking**. (Denholm et al., 2017; Ekeroma et al., 2016).
 - **Capacity building** is needed to develop governance mechanisms. LMICs lack resources, have limited legal systems and little expertise in bioethics. **Capacity building** and institutional support for HRECs is needed yet lacking. (Denholm et al., 2017; Ekeroma et al., 2016).
 - HRECs cannot function on **altruistic grounds only** (Bain, 2017).
-

(i) Indigenous and cultural principles of HRE

This section discusses a critical analysis of Indigenous principles expressed in literature, including relationship building, and the ontology of Indigenous populations in Oceania. Indigenous research principles include respect for relationships, knowledge and reciprocity, and participation among other principles (Anae, 2016; Futter-Puati & Maua-Hodges, 2019; Melanesian Spearhead Group, 2019 ; Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Indigenous peoples, not unreasonably, expect research to respect Indigenous principles at all stages of the research process. Health research institutions have a responsibility to support ethical research involving Indigenous persons that will contribute to the elimination of inequity in health (Willows, 2017).

Relationship building with community leaders and prospective participants in cross cultural research is very important (Mila-Schaaf, 2009). Concepts used for relationship building are common among Australian Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders (Putt, 2013), Cook Islanders (Futter-Puati & Maua-Hodges, 2019), *iTaukei*, who are the Indigenous people of the Republic of the Fiji Islands (Nabobo-Baba, 2008), Maori of New Zealand (Naepi, 2015) and Tongans (Fua S. J., 2014). Relationship building involves the following concepts: respect, empathy (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014), collaboration, sharing of resources, reciprocity (Hudson & Russell, 2009; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Naepi, 2015; Putt, 2013), appreciation (Fua S. J., 2014), knowledge of culture and identity of Indigenous people, consideration of time and lived experiences (Fua S. J., 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008).

For a relationship or *Va* in Tongan to begin (Mila-Schaaf, 2009), researchers need to develop respect for Indigenous people's culture, philosophy, environment, spirituality and epistemology (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). If respect is achieved by the researcher, respect will also be given by the Indigenous people because a relationship has been formed. Time and lived experiences are important factors in the relationship building as expressed by Fua, 2014

as *nofo* in the Tongan context. *Nofo*, “to stay” and “to live”, means that the person has to stay for some time within the Indigenous community and *talanoa* (verbal discussion or talk) about things or just talk with people at leisure (Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014; Tecun, Hafoka, ‘Ulu ‘ave, & ‘Ulu ‘ave-Hafoka, 2018; Vaioleti, 2013, 2016) . While *talanoa* takes place, the relationship is being formed. Sharing of resources will also take place and the relationship grows stronger. Farelly and Nabobo-Baba (2014) emphasized that *talanoa* as a decolonizing research method ought to reflect the socio-cultural background of the Indigenous research setting (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014). The process of *talanoa* comprises a combination of lived experiences, ecology, imaginations, memory, and body language of persons in the *talanoa* group. Through knowing people in the Indigenous community through the relationships established over time, researchers will be assisted by the community groups. Research protocols such as ‘entry’ to Indigenous communities will be informed by selected members of the Indigenous community. For example, in Indigenous Fijian *iTaukei*, “*Na i curucuru/na i sevusevu*” (entry) is the process performed by the Indigenous researcher’s party to ask the community for permission to enter the community in order to conduct a *talanoa* (oral communication) for research purpose or other purposes (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Authors recommend that research institutions should aim to align their roles with research approaches appreciated by Indigenous communities of Maori and of Indigenous origins. Indigenous communities appreciate research that empowers, provide social justice, is emancipatory and supportive of decolonization (Curtis, 2016; Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014).

Authors expressed two opposing views of Indigenous persons and resources in cross-cultural research settings as well as conflicts within Indigenous groups. Firstly, the exploitation of Indigenous persons and resources in cross-cultural research can happen through the inaccurate reporting of research findings (Liamputtong, 2008). Secondly, individual members of the community can become greedy and guard access to Indigenous resources, including knowledge, gifts or gifting and spiritual blessings (Fua S. J., 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Naepi, 2015; Sauni, 2011; Tecun et al., 2018), in order to commercialize these and make profit for personal gain (Forsyth, 2012). These views may be considered as ethical dilemmas formed because of differences in attitudes, habits or dissolutions amongst people concerned (Komesaroff, 2012).

The **ontology of Indigenous peoples** including the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders of Australia, *iTaukei* (Indigenous people of Fiji), Maori of New Zealand and the Samoans, is relatively different from the ontology of Western thought. The difference is commonly defined by authors from the point of view of Indigenous peoples' spirituality and their interconnectedness to their land, with a participatory approach to HRE recommended (Curtis, 2016; Dunbar & Scrimgeour, 2006; Efi, 2007; Hudson & Russell, 2009; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Putt, 2013; Wilson, 2017). The participatory approach comprises the ethical principles of reciprocity, respect, equality, responsibility, survival and protection or safety, spirit and integrity, partnership, responsiveness and benefit (Curtis, 2016; Dunbar & Scrimgeour, 2006; Efi, 2007; Hudson & Russell, 2009; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Putt, 2013; Wilson, 2017).

Respect in research is ethical research that empowers and protects the Indigenous community (Dunbar & Scrimgeour, 2006). In addition, the principle of reciprocity ensures the distribution of equitable benefits to Indigenous populations participating in research. An Indigenous reference group and joint ownership of research between researchers and Indigenous research participants is recommended specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Dunbar & Scrimgeour, 2006; Putt, 2013). Broadly, a respectful research approach for Tongans includes the principles of *feveitokai'aki* (mutual care and generosity) and *loto fakatokilalo* (humility).

Contemporary Samoan experiences and ethical approaches are central within the principles of *tapu* (the sacred) and *tofa sa'ili* (the search for wisdom) (Efi, 2007). The Vanua Research Framework of Fiji recognizes the importance of gifting and knowing the language or dialect of the research community for accuracy of understanding, critiquing, verifying and documenting Indigenous concepts in research. Vanua also recommended that an *iTaukei* should be the principal researcher for capacity building purposes (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Researchers' accountability means that Vanua chiefs and community must grant permission for all research projects done in the Vanua (Hudson & Russell, 2009; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Naepi, 2015). On the other hand, the operationalization or application methods of the principles of research in an Indigenous setting is not well represented in the literature (Knight, Comino, Harris, & Jackson-Pulver, 2009).

(ii) Informed consent (IC) in Indigenous settings in Oceania

The need for IC is central to ethical research in Indigenous settings (Bobba, 2019). The moral values most commonly defined as elements of IC are; (i) a mechanism for respect of dignity and autonomy of persons that should be meaningful, trusting, transparent, un-intrusive, free of coercion, free and informative to protect human rights and bioethics, (Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea) collaborative and establishing a trusting relationship (Bennett et al., 2013; Fitzpatrick et al., 2016; Meadows, Lagendyk, Thurston, & Eisener, 2003). Respect for persons in human research involves the process of voluntary IC, where persons are asked for their permission to participate in a research study (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016; Marshall, 2012). It is a unique and complex process to seek IC among Indigenous peoples, so it is recommended that a member or members of the Indigenous community be involved in the negotiations or consultations about the appropriate method of IC with Indigenous communities (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016). Awareness of Indigenous culture and language are essential in seeking Indigenous persons' IC (Fua S. J., 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008). The principle of trust is an essential component of the IC process in any cultural setting. Trust is also significant in research involving Indigenous people because trust has the potential to strengthen collaborative relationships in research in any Indigenous or cultural setting (Marshall, 2012).

An individualistic approach to informed consent involves a competent individual who exercises autonomy in deciding to consent or not. A communitarian approach to informed consent involves the individual and his or her immediate family members, extended family members and the wider community (West-McGruer, 2020). Leaders of the extended family or communities can anticipate the risks and benefits as persons and as a group in the community before granting informed consent in research (Tauri, 2018). It is recommended that informed consent is to be sought from both individual participants and the local community (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016; Meo-Sewabu, 2014) because the individual is an intrinsic part of the extended family and the community and they are the owners of cultural knowledge that is set within a collective structure (West-McGruer, 2020). An individual within this community setting does not have the autonomous authority to grant permission through an individual consent process to share and communicate cultural knowledge (West-McGruer, 2020). The process of IC described as acceptable in Indigenous communities includes the use of audio-visual materials and graphics to illustrate concepts and increase understanding. A choice of oral or written IC should be provided for Indigenous persons (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016; Liamputtong, 2008; Marshall, 2012). It is recommended that

appropriate processes of IC for research in cross cultural setting include a read aloud session for illiterate people or if participants have diminished autonomy, for example, refugees have diminished autonomy and cannot sign an IC form because identifying them with their names and signatures may pose high risk even death (Liamputtong, 2008).

(iii) Vulnerability and minority status of Indigenous populations exploited for research

This section presents incidences of exploitation experienced by Indigenous persons or groups in human research. Notions of marginalization, exploitation and lack of benefit for Indigenous participants in unethical medical research were commonly expressed (Hudson & Russell, 2009; Kowal et al., 2012; Wilson, 2017). Human research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Australia are described as biased, disempowering and offering inadequate protection (Dunbar & Scrimgeour, 2006; Putt, 2013).

In the Pacific Region, Autogen³ received the consent of the Tongan Government, but the Tongans who were the prospective participants in the genetic study did not consent. This is a paternalistic act of the Tongan government. The Autogen proposal was rejected by Tongans because of a lack of public discussion, the wrong approach to informed consent and the religious sanctity associated with the blood of Tongans (Burton, 2002). The Autogen approach to informed consent in its proposed genetic study in Tonga was individualistic, which was one of the reasons for the rejection of the proposed study by Tongan people (Burton, 2002).

Indigenous epistemologies have been long subjugated, while the application of Western ideologies in Indigenous settings seem to have been the norm for many years, for example, the attempt by Autogen to apply an individualistic approach to informed consent in an Indigenous communitarian setting like Tonga was a mistake. The outcome of making such a mistake is that the proposed Autogen genetic research in Tonga was cancelled. The Australia Broadcasting Commission Pacific Beat reported an American company Phoenix Life

³ A proposal by a Melbourne based biotechnology company, Autogen, to establish a database of genetic information on the population of Tonga. The project proposed by Autogen in Tonga in the South Pacific was opposed by Tongan church groups and pro-democracy groups. Autogen emphasized individual informed consent but the Tongan people's representatives said that informed consent from the extended family should also be considered because of the common genetic material from extended family (Burton, 2002)

Sciences had chosen the Melanesian country of Vanuatu despite its dormant ethics committee, to trial cannabis-derived drugs (Srinivasan, 2019). ABC reported that Phoenix Life Sciences was forced to move to Vanuatu because of strict drugs legislations in the USA and Vanuatu was attractive because of “the ability to work through the Dangerous Drug Act”. Phoenix Life Sciences move was strongly opposed by the Vanuatu Medical Association (Daily Post Vanuatu, 2019; Government of Vanuatu, 2013; Srinivasan, 2019). In Guam a 1996 law created the Guam Ethics Commission and was re-established in 2004, but the Guam Ethics Commission has not been active for twenty-three years and by 2019 it was reported that there were still no appointments to the Ethics commission yet and people of Guam have been waiting for two decades (Gilbert, 2019).

Western paradigms are associated with expert knowledge while Indigenous paradigms are associated with “lay knowledge” (Meo-Sewabu, 2014). Western ideas adopted in research methodologies cannot be applied to the understanding of Pacific Island culture (Fa'avae et al., 2016; Ferris-Leary, 2013; Meo-Sewabu, 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008). A good example is a study proposed by Meo Sewabu in Fiji to involve people with whom she has an existing relationship (Meo-Sewabu, 2014). This project is considered unethical from the Western point of view because of a presumed lack of objectivity involved in the research methods (Meo-Sewabu, 2014). An Indigenous researcher’s paradigm considers the involvement of Indigenous thoughts and methods as fundamental to research and researchers are to comply with Indigenous peoples’ expectations (Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Putt, 2013; Sauni, 2011). If Indigenous methods are excluded, the researcher will face major challenges in the conduct of research (Meo-Sewabu, 2014), like a lack of interest and participation from people in all areas of the research (Nabobo-Baba, 2008), (Fua S. J., 2014). Culturally, it is believed that if the researcher is Indigenous Fijian, negative cultural impact, like unexplained illness, is believed to befall the person or his or her extended family (Meo-Sewabu, 2014). The Fijian researcher must be culturally sensitive in conducting research in a Fijian setting (Hudson & Russell, 2009; Kowal et al., 2012; Meo-Sewabu, 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Wilson, 2017). A culturally appropriate protocol to observe is the performance of the ‘*Isevusevu*’, which is a presentation of ‘*yaqona*’ (‘piper methystica’, also known as ‘*kava*’ in some Pacific Island countries) by the research team as a request for entry into a Vanua (home, village or community) in Fijian communities (Meo-Sewabu, 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008). If the *Isevusevu* is not conducted the people of the Vanua will feel disrespected and will not welcome the research team.

The practical advice offered about the ethical conduct of research in Indigenous populations involves the inclusion of internationally accepted ethical principles such as beneficence, non-maleficence, tolerance for ambiguity, patience, adaptiveness, an open mind and courtesy. Risk and benefit analyses and research projects that maximize benefits for Indigenous populations should be conducted (Komesaroff, 2012; Liamputtong, 2008). Advice to researchers for successful research in Indigenous populations is to be willing to learn and have thorough comprehension of the culture (Bosch & Titus, 2009; Fua S. J., 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Putt, 2013). Research participants may be in a position of vulnerability due to a perceived lack of understanding of the purpose of the research and the risks and benefits of participation in the research (Bobba, 2019). It is important to recognize and address power relations and level of knowledge between researchers and research participants in order to reduce their vulnerability due to lack of power relative to the researchers (Bobba, 2019). Researchers are to immerse themselves in the culture of Indigenous populations to develop an in-depth and accurate comprehension of the Indigenous populations' culture (Bennett et al., 2013; Fua S. J., 2014; Hudson & Russell, 2009; Putt, 2013; Wilson, 2017). Researchers are to also gain extensive historical, socio-cultural and religious background knowledge of the Indigenous populations in cross-cultural research (Komesaroff, 2012; Liamputtong, 2008; Melanesian Spearhead Group, 2019). An interesting description of research bioethics training of people from developing countries is "Indigenous evangelization" whereby Indigenous persons are being taught or "evangelized" by the Western bioethical principles (De Vries & Rott, 2015) and in the process losing sight of traditional ethical principles.

(iv) **Research Ethics Governance for Oceania Indigenous People**

Statements for the governance of human research in Indigenous populations have been developed in some countries of Oceania region. Some of the statements identified in this scoping literature review were from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand; Pacific statements issued by New Zealand Universities and Tonga. The title and the citation for these statements are presented in Table 4.

Table 2. 4: Statements for the governance of human research in Oceania Indigenous populations number 6.

1.	Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori research ethics: A framework for researchers and ethics committee members (Hudson et al, 2010).
2.	Pacific Research protocols from the University of Otago (Bennett et al., 2013)
3.	Pacific Health Research Guidelines (Health Research Council of New Zealand, 2014)
4.	Operational Guidelines for the National Health Ethics and Research Committee (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014)
5.	Fiji National Health Research Guide (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015)
6.	<i>Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders and Keeping research on track II</i> (National Health and Medical Research Council (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018)
7.	<i>Centre for Samoan Study at National University of Samoa</i> , University Research and Ethics Committee (UREC), 2020 (Centre for Samoan Studies, 2020)

The cases of the Fiji and Tonga HRE governance mechanisms need elaboration. Although there are existing documents about Fijian and Tongan cultural standards and frameworks of human research developed by Indigenous Fijians (Meo-Sewabu, 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008) and Tongan scholars (Fua S. J., 2014; Tecun et al., 2018; Vaioleti, 2016) respectively, there are no links from these guidelines to the research ethics frameworks to indicate the inclusion of the cultural values of human research in the governance mechanisms of HRE. There may be reasons for the non-inclusion of cultural frameworks in the National Health Research Guidelines in Fiji and Tonga, but those reasons are currently not documented.

An interesting variation was identified in the lists of references of the national guidelines of human research in Indigenous populations of high-income countries compared to low- and middle-income countries. The “*National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research: 2007 (Updated 2018)*” in Australia (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018), the “*Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori research ethics*” (Hudson et al, 2010) and the “Pacific Research protocols” from the University of Otago (Bennett et al., 2013) made reference to both prominent international guidelines such as the Declaration of Helsinki, Belmont Report, Nuremberg Code as well as policy documents that govern Indigenous research. These include the National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party (1989), and Hudson and Russell, 2009. This is evidence that government policies for governing Indigenous people were sourced and included in the processes of developing HRE governance mechanisms in high income countries of Oceania. On the other hand, the national guidelines for low- and middle-income countries such as Fiji and Tonga refer only to prominent international HRE

guidelines. The impact of the variation is reflected in the Guidelines, but there is no mention of cultural or Indigenous principles of HRE.

(v) Research Ethics Committees in Oceania Indigenous populations

Research Ethics Committees (RECs) or Ethics Committee (EC) (Gopichandran, 2017; Hudson et al, 2010) or Research Ethics Board (Campbell, 2016; Tauri, 2018) or Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECS) (Denholm et al., 2017) are different names of research ethics committees but they all have the same goals which is to govern research in order to protect human participants and to ensure that the research projects benefits, or at least does not harm participants but often benefits of research is not directly for participants (Gopichandran, 2017).

HRECs were established worldwide in the early 1980s with stewardship roles within health research systems. HRECs are well developed and strong in Australia, New Zealand for Indigenous people but not so in other countries of Oceania like Fiji. LMICs which includes some countries in Oceania lack resources, have limited legal systems and little expertise in bioethics (Ekeroma et al., 2016). Online news media reported that; (i) Vanuatu Ethics Committee has been described as dormant and the Guam Ethics commission has been inactive for twenty-three years (Gilbert, 2019; Srinivasan, 2019).

In a time of increasing health inequity around the world, (HRECs) must provide oversight of human research such as review and approval of human research proposals (Davis, Sule, Bughediwala, Pandya, & Sinha, 2017; Gopichandran, 2017). A critique of REC relative to Indigenous knowledge construction is that the result of ethics review further marginalizes Indigenous approaches to knowledge construction and dissemination because REBs employ universal and individualized approaches to the review of research involving Indigenous populations (Tauri, 2018). REBs are to recognize Indigenous communal processes in Indigenous research (Tauri, 2018).

Capacity building and institutional support for HRECs is needed yet lacking. HRECs cannot function on altruistic grounds only where members' contributions are for the benefits of others only, but HRECs need funding and support in the form of human resources in order to function effectively (Bain, 2017). The HRE systems in lower income countries of Oceania could be strengthened by incorporating Indigenous principles and practices. Countries in Oceania region that do not have an HRE system need to build capacity in order to develop

their human research governance mechanisms. Researchers and ethics committees are to support HRE and maximize the protection of Indigenous people in human research (Gopichandran, 2017). Some Pacific Islands have only informal processes that exist for ethics review and oversight. Cook Islands does not have a HREC and relies on overseas Ethical Review Committee; Tonga has a National Human Research Ethics Committee but do not have regular meetings; Samoa's HREC was under review and now has a University Research and Ethics Committee in the Centre for Samoan Studies at the National University of Samoa (Centre for Samoan Studies, 2020); Vanuatu has some form of ethical review process under the Corporate services of the Ministry of Health (Ekeroma et al., 2016). This is problematic for the optimal development of relevant and culturally appropriate research and building up local ethics committees should be part of continued research development in the Pacific (Denholm et al., 2017; Ekeroma et al., 2016).

6. DISCUSSION

The aim of this scoping literature review is to explore how Oceania regional countries' Indigenous knowledge of HRE is engaged in the governance of research involving human participants. The findings demonstrate significant development in the governance of HRE in developed countries like Australia and New Zealand, for the protection of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous peoples and Maori of Aotearoa (New Zealand). There are existing regulations, policies or guidelines developed solely for the protection of Indigenous people in human research in Australia and New Zealand. The guidelines inform researchers of Indigenous principles and methods appropriate for the conduct of research with Indigenous people. By contrast, this is not the case in countries like Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu and other PICs. For researchers to achieve integrity in research that involves Indigenous people, they need to gain extensive knowledge of Indigenous history, socio-cultural and religious backgrounds before starting a research project. Distinctive HRE principles and values identified in this review that are common threads in research settings with Oceania Indigenous populations are mapped in the flow diagram (Figure 2).

The engagement of Indigenous principles in HRE regulations and guidelines ensures the achievement of research integrity. Two HRE guidelines, i) Values and ethics: Guidelines for ethical conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research (National Health Medical Research Council, 2003) and ii) Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori research ethics: A framework for researchers and ethics committee members have set the precedent for

inclusion of Indigenous peoples' principles in HRE guidelines for countries of Oceania. Various other guidelines from New Zealand Universities identified as "Pacific" were also identified to include cultural principles of human research (Bennett et al., 2013; Meo-Sewabu et al., 2017). It is, however, different for small nations where the majority of people are Indigenous, for example, Fiji and Tonga. Fiji's *iTaukei* population and the Tongans in Tonga hold are majority population but have not developed national HRE guidelines to include Indigenous and cultural values and principles. The Indigenous principles and values and their core elements will foster development of a mutual relationship between researchers and Indigenous participants in research.

It is interesting to note the portrayal of the Indigenous principles of 'respect' in literature reviewed. Respect described by authors as encompassing the values of mutual care, humility, empathy, collaboration, generosity and sharing of benefits, reciprocity, appreciation, awareness of culture and languages, protection, safety, survival and spirituality. Respect and its core values are highlighted in the literature thus respect is established as one of the foundational pillars of relationship building and trust in research with integrity involving Indigenous populations. Indigenous peoples demand the application of respect through various methods in research to uphold their dignity and right.

The notion of 'participation' encompasses partnership, benefits, capacity building, empowerment, equality, integrity, mutual care, partnership, reciprocity, respect, responsibility, responsiveness, spirituality, survival and protection. Empowerment of all stakeholders in research emerges via 'participation'. Capacity building involves Indigenous people's involvement in the conduct of research projects with a goal of increased knowledge of conducting research. Capacity building can also be a two-way learning experience where everyone learns and teaches. Reciprocity in research involving Indigenous people applies to respect, sharing of knowledge among all stakeholders, being generous and equal distribution of benefits among all stakeholders and capacity building.

Figure 2. 2: Distinctive HRE Principles common to Indigenous populations in Oceania, a mind map



An interesting reciprocal angle of empowerment via ‘participation’ emerges. Where there is participation of Indigenous people in research, ‘doors’ into Indigenous knowledge and societal etiquettes will open to research stakeholders through Indigenous participation. This reciprocity in participation enables a successful research endeavour, which will bring benefits to all parties involved. The notion of “reciprocity” further emphasizes equality in the distribution of benefits of research. Benefits that are both tangible and intangible should be shared equally among research stakeholders and be enforced via HRE regulations.

Conclusion

This scoping literature review has significant findings. Relationship building between researchers and Indigenous populations is key to successful research in Indigenous populations. HRE principles and their elements important for relationship building include respect that is reciprocal between researchers and Indigenous people. Elements of the principle of respect are highlighted, including empathy, collaboration, sharing of benefits, reciprocity, appreciation, empowerment, protection for safety and survival, respect for spirituality, and awareness of culture and languages. The ontology of Indigenous people is different from the ontology of Western thoughts. Indigenous ontology as understood for research includes spirituality, connectedness to land, religious beliefs and a participatory approach to HRE. The participatory approach comprises the ethical principles of reciprocity, respect, equality, responsibility, survival and protection or safety, spirit and integrity, partnership, responsiveness, and benefit. Western paradigms adopted in research methodologies can create challenges in Indigenous settings because of the differences in paradigms. Indigenous paradigms and applications methods are fundamental to research involving Indigenous populations. A participatory approach in an informed consent process would be first step to build a trusting relationship between researcher and research participants.

The findings indicated the need to make recommendations for successful research involving Indigenous populations in Oceania. Indigenous HRE principles and applications methods should be part of HRE governance mechanisms. Informed consent processes in Indigenous settings should be informed by both individualistic approach and a communitarian approach. The existing research frameworks in countries of Oceania could be linked and highlighted in HRE governance mechanisms. Capacity building and institutional support for the establishment of Research Ethics Committees is needed. Governance mechanisms of RECs,

once established, must incorporate Indigenous principles and applications in order to maximize the protection of the dignity and rights of Indigenous peoples of Oceania.

Abbreviations

HIC: High Income Country; HRE; Human Research Ethics: HREC: Human Research Ethics Committee; IC: Informed Consent; LMIC: Low- and middle-income countries; PIC: Pacific Island Country; PRISMA: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis; REB: Research Ethics Board.

Declarations

Ethical Approval and Consent to participate

Not applicable.

Consent for publication

All authors have consented for this article to be published.

Availability of supporting data

Not applicable.

Funding

We would like to thank the Fiji National University and James Cook University for funding the PhD programme.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the Fiji National University and James Cook University for co-funding the PhD Programme. EL conducted this scoping literature review as part of the requirements for the PhD with the guidance of the supervisory group. We also thank Dr. Jacqui Webster of George Institute, University of New South Wales and Prof. Murray Thomson of Otago University for their kind assistance in reviewing and comments on the manuscript during the Fiji National University College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences Writing Retreat in September 2019. We thank Mr Bilitaki W. Lovo of Suva, Fiji for the design of FIGURE 2.

Competing interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Information

EL: Research Fellow, Bioethics and Professionalism, College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Fiji National University, Suva, Fiji Islands

PhD Candidate and Adjunct Research Fellow, James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland, Australia

Emails. etivina.love@fnu.ac.fj; etivina.love1@my.jcu.edu.au

LW: Senior Lecturer, College of Medicine and Dentistry & Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine (AITHM), James Cook University, Townsville QLD 4811, Australia

Email: lynn.woodward@jcu.edu.au

SL: Professor Sarah Larkins; Associate Dean, Research, College of Medicine and Dentistry & Co-Director, Anton Breinl Research Centre for Health Systems Strengthening Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine, James Cook University, Townsville QLD 4811, Australia. Email: sarah.larkins@jcu.edu.au

RP: Senior Lecturer (Public Health), School of Health, Medical and Applied Sciences CQ University Australia, 538 Flinders St, Townsville QLD 4810.

Email: r.preston@cqu.edu.au

UNB: Professor, Department of Secondary Education, College of Humanities and Education, Fiji National University, Natabua Campus, Lautoka. Email: unaisi.baba@fnu.ac.fj

2.1.2 The relationship between colonialism, Christianity, Indigenous world views, ethics and integrity in Fiji and Tonga. An addendum to the literature review

Fiji became a British colony in 1874 and remained so for 96 years until it gained independence in 1970. Tonga is a constitutional monarchy and was a British protectorate (Gifford, 1924) (see also Sections 4.1 and 5.1). Christian missionaries arrived in Tonga in 1790, and they were successful in converting King George Tupou I to Christianity in 1831. King George Tupou I offered his Kingdom to Jesus Christ the Lord of all Christian people, and he also requested all Tongans to become Christians (Gifford, 1929). Christian missionaries arrived in Fiji prior to colonization, around 1830s and since then they have been successful in converting Fijians (36.2% of total population) into Christianity. About 67% of Christians are *iTaukei* Indigenous Fijians (Katz, 1999; Methodist Church of Fiji, (nd) World Methodist Council, 2025). Like the conversion of the Tongan King Tupou I to Christianity, the Fijian high chief Ratu Seru Epenisa Cakobau converted into Christianity twenty-four years later (1854) and his conversion motivated many Indigenous Fijians to convert (Katz, 1999; Methodist Church of Fiji, (nd); World Methodist Council, 2025). The missionaries included members of the Australian-based Wesleyan missionary society along with some Tongan missionaries (Methodist Church of Fiji, (nd); Stilwell, 2002). The majority of Fijians are Christians and others are Hindu, Muslim and other religious beliefs (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Large-scale Indian migration to Fiji began in 1879, and the Indo-Fijian Methodist Mission church began in 1892 (Close-Barry, 2016). Tongans are predominantly Christians (Fiji High Commission to United Kingdom, 2021; Niumeitolu, 2007; Tu'ipulotu, 2013). Further information on the colony of Fiji, see Section 4.1.3. More information on the background for the Kingdom of Tonga, see Section 5.1.

The Fiji colonial administration partnered with the Fiji Christian Methodist mission in nurturing the racial segregation between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijian communities. Racism is strong and is still visible in contemporary Fiji. Methodist missionaries were intrinsic to colonialism, divisive, politicized indigeneity and demarcated Indigenous Fijian and Indo Fijian people (Close-Barry, 2016). Race and cultural concepts underpinned the structural framing of Christian Methodist mission in colonial era. The racial division approach was employed in positioning people into hierarchical structures within the Methodist church but excluded Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians from holding leadership roles. This positioning approach marginalized Fijians. Macdonald, (1990) mentioned that the

Christian missionaries' purpose of the racial and cultural segregation was to establish two segregated churches, Fijian and Indo-Fijian which seemed an act of compartmentalization of Fijian and Indo-Fijian people in the Christian church in Fiji.

Christianity in Fiji and Tonga has influenced every part of Indigenous Fijian and Tongan life. People have instilled deeply rooted Christian values in the family, community relationships, education and daily activities. Praying and attending church and church functions are daily practices of Fijians and Tongans. Values of respect for one another, honesty and humility are some of the norms of daily living. Traditional and cultural principles and practices of *vanua* (people and land) in Indigenous Fiji and *nofo a kainga* (relationality living) in Tonga, became intertwined with Christian values and are preserved in contemporary Fiji and Tongan society. Most schools conduct singing and praying before the beginning of a school day in the classroom. Research meetings in the traditional settings of both Fiji and Tonga always begins with a prayer and this practice is mentioned by Shaver, 2015 (Shaver, 2015). The embedment of principles of both Christian ideology and the Fijian and Tongan ideologies was originally established in the church through the conversion of King Tupou I of Tonga and high chief Cakobau to Christian methodism forming the Methodist church ideology. Deference of Indigenous Fijian traditional *vakaturaga* protocols (see Section 4.4.4.3) and the Christian doctrines became a norm that is still in practice now in modern Fijian way of life (Degei, 2007; Shaver, 2015; Williams, 2008) see Figure 4.12. Contemporary norms among people in Fiji include the subordinate roles of people to church leaders, gender inequalities and women submissiveness, (Amin, Momoyalewa, & Peniamina, 2024; Brison, 2024). Tongan church practices are criticized as being obligatory and promotes inequalities and poverty. Church activities such as the Methodist traditional levies known for centuries as *vakamisinare* (Fijian) and *misinale* are annual monetary contributions from families to the church (Tongan Working Group, 2012). Fund raising, feasting and giving gifts to the church are being criticized as encouraging competition, inequality, and divisiveness of people according to their socio-economic social status which worsens poverty (Tu'ipulotu, 2013; Vaipulu, 2013). In Tonga, the *Fa Kavei Koula* principles of *faka'apa'apa* (respect), *mamahi'i me'a* (loyalty and passion in carrying out duties to one and all), *'a e lototō* (humility), *tauhi vā* (maintaining good relationships with family and others in the community) are the underlying principles of Tongan life and it also applies in HRE mechanisms (see Section 5.6.1). The *vakaturaga* protocol involve respect of *iTaukei* people and the principle of respect applies to Indigenous ethical research involving *iTaukei* Indigenous Fijians (Close-Barry, 2016; Tomlinson, 2014).

The advancement and recognition of Pacific Islands ‘rich cultures, languages, worldviews, belief systems and traditions’, as a force against the original ‘imperial-patriarchal-supremacist’ theological perspectives of the missionaries are promoted in modern Tonga (Vaka’uta & Jackson, 2021 p.259). In terms of research, research ethics and integrity in the Tongan context is measured by the behaviour of the person or researcher in their conduct of the research. Tongan features of researcher ethical behaviour include, speaking the correct language, dress appropriately in the Tongan dress code, talking respectfully and humbly in a heart-to-heart *talanoa* that result in forming a *vā* long lasting relationship with people of the research community and contributing to community development. Keeping the *vā* alive between researcher and research community is done by communicating regularly, visiting if physically present in Tonga, participating in village functions or community development activities. These are behaviors that Tongan consider highly ethical and a person of integrity. One of the participants in this research (*PTI/Senior Academic 2/Female/40-60 years*), mentioned that if a researcher does not respect the Tongan behavioral expectations, then he or she will be considered a poor person. To elaborate, being poor is not measured in economics terms, rather, poor is measured in behavioral terms in the Tongan interpretation.

To conclude, prior to colonial eras, people of Fiji and Tonga as Indigenous communities had their own education systems, through the *Vanua* and *Vakavanua* (see Section 4.4.3.4) in *iTaukei* Fiji and the *Nofo a Kainga* in Tonga (see Section 5.6) structures, which included mechanisms of an oral education system that taught and shaped people to be persons of integrity according to principles and rules of engagements. Then the eras of Christianity developed churches and schools that established Western thoughts in *iTaukei* and Tonga people (Hereniko, 2000; L. T. Smith, 2005; Thaman, 2003; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). These colonial sources of knowledge, such as religion and education systems also shaped people’s worldviews because of the need for them to live and survive in legalized societies created by the colonizers. Some *iTaukei* and Tongan people think that they have lost their original values through their Christian belief and learning through modern schools, but upon self-reflection, the original Indigenous knowledge remained intact, for generations so these thoughts are creating a dilemma. Evidence of this dilemma in paradigms is eloquently stated by Dr Akanisi Kedrayate, Head of the Department of Education and Psychology, School of Humanities, University of the South Pacific, 2004: A Personal Reflection ...

“I cannot disassociate myself from my past and ignore the important values and norms that have shaped my life. I am what I am today because of my past.

And yet, at times in my modern mind I am in a dilemma as to which part of my education has changed me the most. Is it my community education or the Western education? On the one hand, I want to say that the past is no longer relevant to the modern world of science and technology. But then, on reflection, no matter how much the modern world has to offer, I find myself escaping to my community quite often to recapitulate the positive teachings and values I have lost through modern education.” Akanisi Kedrayate (Kedrayate, 2004) Retrieved from: <https://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-612003/learning-is-for-everyone/learning-in-traditional-societies-in-the-south-pacific>

Indigenous populations are decolonizing their thoughts and are revaluing their Indigenous knowledge and empowering themselves to engage more Indigenous knowledge in all aspects of their lives now in the future (Smith, 2021; Thaman, 2003; Palakiko et. al., 2024; Chu-Fuluifaga, 2023).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises a description of the methodology of this PhD research project, including the methodological approach, the critical ethnographic theoretical perspective and a comparative collective case study design. The case studies were: i) a human research ethics case study in Fiji, and ii) a human research ethics case study in Tonga. The qualitative methods, constituting interviews, focus group discussion and document analysis and the tools of data collection are outlined, as are the research ethics processes. The chapter includes a description of the study participants, sampling, data management and analysis and addresses concerns about the study's rigour and trustworthiness. Furthermore, the activities, equipment and personnel involved in the research, a summary of the administration of the PhD at JCU and the progress monitoring process are presented.

3.2 Aim

The research's aim was to explore the ethically principled approaches that inform HRE from both traditional and international perspectives in the Pacific Islands of Fiji and Tonga. The investigation's ultimate goal was to develop a framework that harmonizes Indigenous and international principles in the HRE context in Fiji and Tonga, based on theoretical underpinnings of HRE principles and considering origins, relevance, context and application.

3.3 Research Questions

To achieve the research aims, this research is guided by the following research questions.

- (i) What are the existing underlying theoretical principles that inform ethical approaches to HRE in Fiji and Tonga?
- (ii) How are international and Indigenous HRE principles applied in HRE activities in Fiji and Tonga?
- (iii) How relevant is the application of international HRE guidelines in the context of small and developing Pacific Island nations like Fiji and Tonga?
- (iv) How can Indigenous and international principles of research ethics best be combined for an effective HRE framework for the Pacific?

3.4 Choice of Methodology

3.4.1 Critical ethnographic theoretical perspective

This study employed a critical ethnographic theoretical perspective to guide its method, interpretation and analysis (Madison, 2011). Critical ethnography begins when a researcher observes an unjust system where people are suffering. The critical ethnographer feels a moral duty to change this unjust system to one that promotes “*greater freedom and equity*” (Madison, 2005, p.5). Critical ethnographers use their knowledge and available resources to create a viewpoint beneath the superficial scenarios of such unjust systems and identify the important underlying power and control that drives these systems. They use research as a tool of enquiry to inform a framework that can challenge the institutions with power and change the system from its current status to a more appropriate one (Madison, 2005).

I am the critical ethnographic researcher as I am placed in a privileged position, as a Pacific Island scholar of Research Bioethics, a member of a university ethics committee and a teacher of ethics. I have an intrinsic interest in HRE and insider knowledge about both Tongan and Fijian cultures, languages and values. By studying at Monash University, I investigated HRE’s origin and its Western principles and guidelines. My views are positioned as an insider of the two countries of Fiji and Tonga and an outsider with knowledge of Western principles of HRE (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To achieve research integrity and trustworthiness, I followed clear research protocols where the findings are derived from the research data and not from the researcher’s preconceived ideas. How rigour and trustworthiness was maintained in this current PhD research is described in Section 3.11.

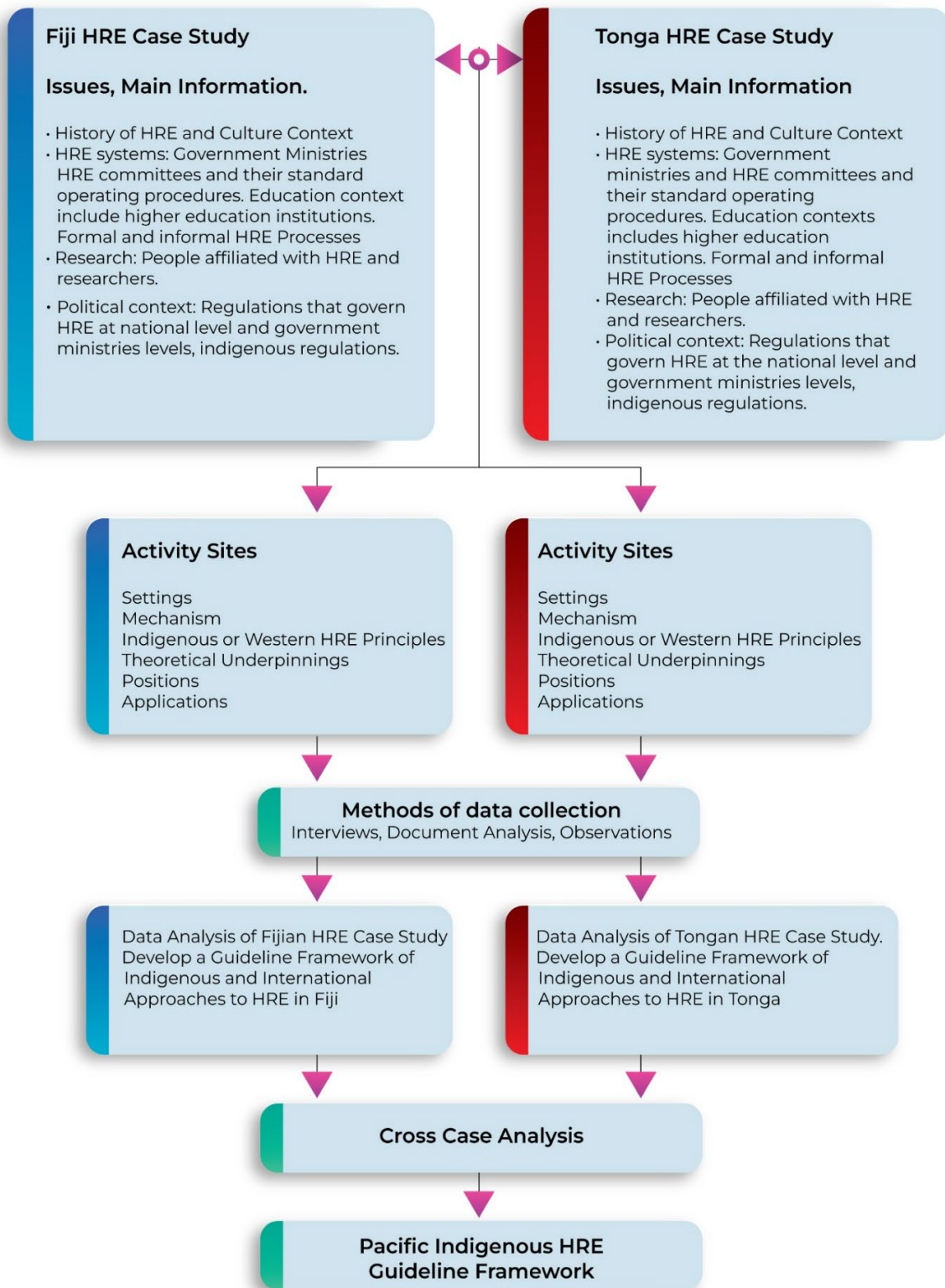
These reasons show that I have the capacity to work towards the creation of a HRE system that embraces Indigenous principles of HRE and promotes the engagement of Pacific people’s knowledge and practices in the governance mechanisms of research.

3.4.2 Constructivist collective case study design

Stake, 1995 and Creswell, 2013 define case studies as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context of bounded integrated systems, with a boundary, functional elements and an overarching purpose of the particularity and complexity of a single case, (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995). This research is a qualitative case studies that involves knowledge integration approach, enables the organization of the varieties of data while maintaining the entirety and meaningful characteristics of actual-life events (Scholz & Tietje, 2002;

Stake, 1995; Thow et al., 2010). Constructivist grounded theory data analysis methods inform this case study approach. The ontological perspective of qualitative case study approach is that reality is local and specifically constructed, thus this approach is inclusive in constructivist paradigm (Stake, 1995; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012; Lauckner, Paterson, & Krupa, 2012). A constructivist approach focuses on the investigated contemporary phenomena and considers the initiation of data and analysis as relative experiences of the investigator and participants (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Stake, 1995). This PhD research project constituted an investigation of human research ethics in Fiji and Tonga, with a constructivist collective case study design. Qualitative research methods that instituted grounded theory methods of inductive qualitative data analysis was applied (Stake, 1995). A graphical presentation of the constructivist collective case study design is presented in Figure 3.1 (Stake, 1995). Fiji and Tonga were chosen as the countries of research because they are easily accessible in terms of finding resources for this inquiry and they provide an opportunity to learn in depth of the particulars of HRE in context. This constructivist case study approach provided opportunities for this research to utilize and integrate information from different stakeholders or actors, such as individuals or single groups, or disciplinary perspectives, to explore HRE in the unique context of Fiji and Tonga.

Figure 3. 1: Constructivist Collective Case Study Design: HRE in Fiji and Tonga



The study involved an in-depth inquiry about HRE principles that guide HRE activities in the two countries, in which there seemed to be two origins: firstly, principles that are internationally accepted and documented in international guidelines and secondly, underlying Indigenous principles that guide the practices of peoples of Fiji and Tonga. The sources of Indigenous principles are derived from the local belief systems, cultures, religious teachings, and social structures.

These collective case studies demonstrate the importance of understanding how these principles are utilized to inform HRE activities in Fiji and Tonga, the tensions, and intersections between these two systems of ethical practices and a possible model for the engagement of Indigenous principles in HRE governance mechanisms in Fiji and Tonga respectively.

The rationale for the use of a collective case study methodology was that it allowed an investigation of the depth and richness of Human Research Ethics in a real context, while retaining HRE's holistic meaning and characteristics, within two study countries: Fiji, and Tonga. This collective case study methodology facilitated the use multiple sources of evidence for triangulation purposes.

3.4.2.1 Levels of Analysis

The construct of “**Human Research Ethics**” in the Pacific Islands of Fiji and Tonga was identified as the primary component of analysis. The activity sites are the secondary components of analysis. In this study, there are several levels of analysis:

- i. The settings in which HRE exist include all persons involved and interested in research ethics assessment and administration.
- ii. The underlying theoretical principles that inform the ethical approaches of HRE.

The position, applications, and relevance of Indigenous or Western principles of HRE. As indicated in Chapter 1, there are pragmatic and theoretical reasons for the selection of these two case studies of HRE in Fiji and Tonga. I (the researcher) currently work as a member of the ethics committee of the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) of the Fiji National University (FNU). I am also an affiliate of the Fiji National Health Research Ethics Review Committee (FNHRERC) and the Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee (TNHERC). I have a responsibility as a dual citizen of the two countries of Fiji and Tonga to make high level contributions towards the strengthening of national policies,

designed to guide the decision making of ethics committee members to form good decisions for the protection of the citizens of Fiji and Tonga from harm in research.

3.4.2.1.1 Case Study 1: Human Research Ethics in Fiji

This case study was an investigation of *iTaukei* Fijian principles (Indigenous Peoples' Literature, 2017) and the theoretical underpinnings that are important and relevant to HRE as the components of analysis. HRE systems and governance mechanisms involving Indigenous HRE principles are sub-units of the case study, for example, the human research ethics committee, human research ethics guidelines and other research policies. This case study identified Fijian *iTaukei* people's views and expectations of the positioning of imported Western research ethics principles in relation to Indigenous Fijian *iTaukei* principles in the context of Fiji's HRE. The Fijian *iTaukei* research knowledge should inform research policies that govern research involving *iTaukei* people in Fiji.

The operationalization of the *iTaukei* Fijian principles of human research in Fiji requires in-depth knowledge of traditional culture and practices. Research involving Fijian *iTaukei* needs to engage appropriate principles, knowledge, protocols, and practices required by the people for the research to achieve useful results.

The Fiji HRE case study begins from around 1990, at which time the Fiji National Human Research Ethics Review Committee was initiated. It ceased at the end of the data collection in 2020. Affiliates of the FNHRERC, leaders of civil society groups, members of religious groups, members, or leaders of Indigenous Fijian groups such as women's groups and representatives of Fijian *iTaukei* geographical district groups were invited to participate in sharing their knowledge, expectations, and views about the topic of research.

3.4.2.1.2 Case Study 2: Human research ethics in Tonga in the Ministries of Health and Education

The approach for the Tongan HRE case study was the same as the Fijian HRE case study and thus followed the same methodology. The only variations were based on differences in the social structures and systems, for example, Tonga is Polynesian and has a constitutional monarchy, while Fiji is Melanesian mixed with Polynesian and has a democratic government. HRE governance mechanisms, religious, cultural beliefs, practices, and language are unique to each country, and each provided an interesting comparative view in this research project.

3.5 Research Ethics Processes

3.5.1 Application for ethics review of research proposal and approvals received.

The research project proposal was first submitted to the FNU College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee for a research ethics review, for which I received full approval. After that, ethics applications were sent to the Fiji National Health Research Ethics Review Committee, Tonga National Health Research Ethics Committee and James Cook University Human Research Ethics committee (JCUHREC), attaching the full approval letter from the FNU College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee. An application for ethics review was sent to the JCUHREC and they granted an external approval based on the approval of the FNU College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Reference numbers of the Ethics Approvals received are listed here.

- College Human Health Research Ethics Committee (CHHREC) number; 012.19.
- Fiji National Human Research Ethics Review Committee, reference number; 2019.26 MC
- JCU HREC granted an external approval for my research based on the ethics approvals from FNU's CHHREC, reference numbers; 2019.26.MC and 012.19
- Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee (TNHERC) reference number: 2019012

3.5.2 Applications for Research Permits in Fiji and Tonga

If research involves the staff of government ministries in Fiji, the researcher must apply for a permit before data collection. I applied for permit from Fiji's relevant government ministries: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs. I was granted permission from both ministries by their respective permanent secretaries. I also applied for permission to interview FNU staff who are affiliated with the CHHREC.

After receiving the ethics approval from the Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee, I was to apply for a Tonga national research permit from the Tonga Prime Minister's Office. The office of the TNHERC assisted by giving me the contact names and email address of the person responsible in the Prime Minister's Office. I received this approval in March 2020. Then the COVID-19 global pandemic impacted Fiji, and a lock down was ordered by the government from March to April 2020. I had to send a second letter to the TNHERC and the Tonga Prime Minister's Office in May 2020 to notify them of the

changes to my study due to the COVID-19 environment. The TNHERC and Tongan Prime Minister's Office approved these changes.

3.5.3 Ethical principles addressed in the ethics application.

3.5.3.1 Confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality was addressed in the ethical applications in various ways. Identities of interviewees were kept confidential. The digital audio files of interviews were kept under password protected digital files. Hired transcribers transcribed a few of the audio files and I transcribed others myself. The transcribers were sworn to keep all the information and identity of the interviewee(s) confidential. After the transcribers sent me the transcripts, I asked for the copy of the audio file in their computers to be deleted. I kept the only copies of the audio files on my laptop computer which is password protected. No identifiers were revealed in this thesis because each participant name was given a code number.

3.5.3.2 Voluntary Informed Consent

Before the *talanoa*⁴ began, I conducted a voluntary informed consent session with all persons participating in the research project on an individual basis in a key informants' interview or in focus group discussions. The participants' information statement was sent to each of the participants via email first which they were asked to read before the *talanoa* session. In Fiji, most of the *talanoa* was done face to face, except one. The process was that just prior to the *talanoa*, I gave a brief oral introduction to the study, then distributed a hard copy information statement and a consent form which they were asked to complete and hand back to me. In the case of the Tongan data collection, all the interviews were conducted via Zoom and Facebook messenger video calls. The participants were invited via an email and the participants' information statements, and consent forms were also sent via email. The participants signed the consent form and emailed this back to me prior to the virtual *talanoa* sessions. All the completed consent forms were kept in a locked drawer in my office at Hoodless House for which I am the only one with a key.

⁴ Talanoa literally means to talk among people. Talanoa is applied in research as an Indigenous method of conducting interviews and focus group discussion.

3.5.3.3 Level of Risks of Research

The JCU ethics review stated that the risk posed by this research project is one of inconvenience only. The participants agreed that they faced a slight risk was due to the inconvenience of the time involved in taking part in the *talanoa* but stressed that it was time well spent, and the research was very important for Fiji's and Tonga's HRE.

3.6 Study Population/Participants

In both the Fiji and Tonga case studies the following groups were identified as priority groups that would have an in-depth understanding of the topic. They were included to explore their perceptions of human research ethical principles from international and Indigenous or cultural origins:

- Human research ethics committee members or affiliates. Any person who has been a member or affiliated with a HRE committee in Fiji and Tonga, for example, HRE committee members, ex-committee members, reviewers, advisors, research experts and lawyers.
- Community leaders or elders in Fiji and Tonga who are interested in research. Community leaders hold traditional chiefly titles or are community elders in both Fiji and Tonga. In Tonga only, they may be members of the royal family.
- Members of civil society, Human Rights advocates, or NGO staff working with vulnerable populations that participate in research. These include for example, NGOs that take care of *iTaukei* people in the community, women's community centres and charitable organizations that care for vulnerable populations such as orphaned children.
- Health workers including nurses, doctors, laboratory scientists, dentists, pharmacists, dieticians, and other allied health workers who may have been involved with health research.
- Members of church organizations who have an interest in human research or have worked in an HRE committee or have been affiliated with an HRE committee. Other religious leaders identified to have interest in HRE.
- Lawyers involved with HRE activities or who have knowledge of laws that govern human research in Fiji and Tonga.
- Staff of government ministries tasked with overseeing research activities in Fiji and Tonga, for example, staff of the Ministry of Education Research Division and the Ministry of Health.

- Indigenous scholars with in-depth knowledge of Indigenous principles of HRE.
- Tongan and Fijian Indigenous researchers or scholars.

3.6.1 Sampling

Participants were identified by their public profile, publications in journals and other forms and by recommendations given by significant others via the snowball method (Sadler, Lee, Lim, & Fullerton, 2010).

3.6.2 Coding of participants

A coding system was used to label each participant in order to keep their identity anonymous. This was organized as follows:

P for participants, # - participants were numbered, their organization was represented, their gender and their age group. The code was: P#/organization/Female or Male/Age group.

This system did not allow individual identification; participants did not recognize themselves in the codes nor raise concerns when research results were presented. Similarly, organizations like Ministries could not be linked to specific individuals due to the large number of potential staff members involved.

3.7 Methods of Data Collection

The collective case study design allowed the researcher to employ multiple methods of enquiry to address the research questions (Stake, 1995). This afforded the acquiring of various points of views in order to achieve a holistic comprehension of the phenomenon being researched. Three data collection methods were employed.

Interviews and a focus group discussion in Tonga were conducted in English or in Tongan or in both English and Tongan concurrently as appropriate. The interviewees were free to change language whenever they felt the need to do so. In Tonga, both English and Tongan are used as work languages. Interviews and focus group discussions in Fiji were conducted in English which is the official language of instruction in schools and the language in which work in Fiji is conducted. The researcher's first language is Tongan, her second language is English, and her third language is Fijian (Bauan dialect and Bua district dialect).

3.7.1 Talanoa

Talanoa sessions (eighteen key informant interviews and eight focus group discussions) were employed to gather the views of participants. Each participant was sent an email with attachments of all the necessary documents and asked for their participation. The attached documents include a formal letter of invitation, a summary of my research proposal, participants' information statement and consent form, and a questionnaire guide. I translated the questionnaire guide into the Tongan language for the Tongan participants. It was not translated into the Fijian language because the official working language in Fiji is English and most of the research target population are persons who are civil servants and leaders in their various organizations who use English as the work language. Participants were willing to speak in English and at times they spoke in *iTaukei* language and then they translated what they said into English. In all cases, participants were given copies of the Ethics Committee approval letters from Fiji, Tonga, the College Human Research Ethics Committee, and an endorsement from the James Cook University Ethics Committee.

There was a total of seven key informants from Fiji and eleven key informants from Tonga who accepted the invitation. Their beliefs and attitudes towards HRE activities and how they think of HRE principles in wider sociocultural contexts, were sought via the *talanoa* sessions (Smith & Otunuku, 2015).

A time and venue (or meeting via Zoom) were agreed upon. As I live in Suva, Fiji, I planned to begin the data collection activities in 2019 and end them in 2020, starting in Fiji and then travelling to Tonga where I intended to spend about a month or two collecting data face to face in 2020.

3.7.1.2 Amendments to data collection

The Fiji data collection went well until Fiji was struck by the global effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fiji's first wave of COVID-19 was in early 2020. This had a major impact on my data collection. I had to cease the face-to-face *talanoa* and include Zoom sessions for the last few scheduled *talanoa* in Fiji. I notified all the ethics committees of this change.

It was confirmed that I was not able to go to Tonga due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions which included closure of international borders, so I created major changes to the data collection plan in Tonga. The way forward was to hire a local counterpart as a research assistant who lives in Tonga to help me coordinate online *talanoa* talks with participants in Tonga. She agreed to keep the data confidential. This was not ideal, but it was the only

option. She assisted with the technological requirements for the Zoom/video calls and audio recording. In this process, she was very helpful as some participants did not have a laptop for the Zoom and did not know how to operate a zoom meeting. The research assistant managed the audio recording and the paperwork for the informed consent, sending these files via Google Drive and email for data management and analysis.

I also conducted some interviews with selected Tongan people who live in Suva, Fiji which was another less-than-ideal option. My research assistant in Tonga had to audio communicate with the selected participants and agree on a time and place to meet. From Suva, Fiji, I conducted the *talanoa* via Zoom while the research assistant recorded these *talanoa* sessions using her phone recorder. She created a Google Drive saved the audio files there then she shared the Google Drive link with me so I could access these audio files.

I was asked by the Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee to write a letter to the Prime Minister's office and notify them of the same change; I did so and received a reply from them to acknowledge the changes to my research. The change to conduct research via virtual mode for the Tonga case study posed many challenges culturally because I was unable to fulfil some of the expected cultural protocols of conducting research in Tonga such as gift giving and other cultural forms of respect via virtual mode. A book chapter was written and published regarding the research crisis that I faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further details of this process are presented in Appendix 2, which is a chapter in an edited book:

Lovo, E. (Fiji MOHMS Strategic Plan 2020-2025). COVID-19 research crisis management for a human research ethics research project in Fiji and Tonga. In *Researching in the Age of COVID-19* (pp. 61-69). Policy Press.

3.7.2 Talanoa in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Individuals with similar professional characteristics who have interests in HRE were invited to participate in focus group discussions *talanoa* (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Vaioleti, 2013). Table 3.1 presents details of the group who were selected to participate in these focus group discussions (FGDs). FGDs were considered an appropriate method of data collection as they allow a comfortable dialogue amongst participants who are from the same professional background and social standing in communal societies such as Fiji and Tonga. If the researcher does not follow traditional protocols, participants will either close up and just make small talk, or they will engage in *heliaki* (to speak words with indirect meanings,

talking in Tongan metaphorical terms and communicating indirectly or telling tales.) in which they will say one thing but mean another (K. Smith & Otunuku, 2015).

Table 3. 1: Groups invited to participate in FGD sessions.

Representatives of various groups	Groups participating in FGDs (Fiji only as there were no FGDs from Tonga)
HRE committee members and their affiliates	1 group representing a university HRE committee 1 government ministry level group
Representatives of Government departments	1 group from the Ministry of Education 1 group from the Ministry of Health 1 group from Ministry of <i>iTaukei</i> Affairs
Members of civil societies including human rights advocacy groups	1 NGO group 1 community service group
Health professionals	1 group of health professionals
Total	8 <i>talanoa</i> sessions with groups or FGD.

3.7.3 Documentary analysis

Documents were used as a source of contextual information about occasions that cannot be directly observed (Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, & Robertson, 2013; Stake, 1995). Preliminary documentary analysis was conducted utilizing available historical documents found in the CMNHS Research Office about the evolution of the College Human Health Research Ethics Committee. Using my own knowledge, and participants' collaboration (information from interviews or *talanoa* sessions), I was able to collect relevant documents available online on organizational websites such as the Research Ethics Guidelines from the University of the South Pacific and the Fiji National University. Historical records of HRE were very difficult to identify and access, but I was able to ask for permission. Once this was granted, I personally retrieved hard copy records of HRE from a Fiji Ministry of Health office. Minutes of meetings from the CHHREC were accessible because I am a member. Documentary analysis was conducted to identify historical dynamics such as the origins, theoretical underpinnings and social systems of HRE (Scholz & Tietje, 2002).

I was also given links to documents from participants. Such documents included government and department reports, minutes of meeting, internal organizational records, such as progress reports, annual reports, media reports and historical cultural documents, HRE Standard Operating Procedures, HRE Guidelines, HRE webpage contents and any other documents

identified to be relevant to HRE in Fiji and Tonga (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015; Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014).

3.7.4 Direct and indirect Observation

Participants in Fiji were observed face to face and notes were taken which were later included in the data management and analysis. Direct and indirect observation were employed in the CHHREC meetings. I jotted down these notes in a notebook, also recording how members of the CHHREC interacted and communicated, including my analysis of their approach to matters arising from the CHHREC meetings. I was also involved in other meetings with members of the Fiji Health Research Ethics Review Committee and in a meeting of the Research and Ethics Committee of the Ministry of Education. Members had signed informed consent before the meetings began.

Observations were also employed through the *talanoa* sessions to interpret participants' body language when they were making points. Body language that showed emotional voices and gestures, or if they showed some anger about some issues. I was also able to note from my observations certain organizational processes involving HRE that were not documented thus enabling an in-depth analysis of the Indigenous and international HRE principles discussed and the application processes for human research ethics activities in Fiji and Tonga. The practices and views of HRE members and their affiliates that involve Indigenous or foreign HRE principles were identified through observations. Apart from my notes, the CHHREC meetings were audio recorded. Once I requested access to and I was granted permission. I then made notes of these on important points discussed that were relevant to the research.

A semi-structured interview guide was developed to guide all data collection activities with the different FGD groups and key informant *talanoa* sessions. I translated the English version of the interview guide into Tongan before sending it off to the Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee. This translated version was kept for use in all the *talanoa* sessions conducted during the data collection process for Tonga. The guide questions were piloted face to face with two Tongans working in Suva, Fiji and two *iTaukei* (Indigenous Fijian) who fit the description of prospective participants. This was followed by individual interviewees feedback session. The interviewees clearly understood the interview guide and did not make any recommendations to change it.

The English version of the semi-structured interview questions is as follows:

- i. Where are the Human Research Ethics governance mechanisms placed in the national structure and what are its functions?
- ii. What are Indigenous principles of Human Research Ethics? Can you give some examples? Are these principles being operationalized in human research in country?
- iii. Given that the current HRE are guided by international guidelines, what are your views about an appropriate application method of Indigenous principles of HRE in Fiji and Tonga?
- iv. How can Indigenous HRE and international HRE principles be harmonized, or not, in Fiji and Tonga?
- v. What is the underlying theoretical underpinning(s) of Indigenous principles that inform HRE in Fiji and Tonga?

3.8 Data Management

Handwritten notes were typed and saved in a Microsoft Word file and included as data. Interviews and FGDs were audio recorded using my smart phone and downloaded onto my laptop for transcribing. I conducted most of the transcription with only a few interviews transcribed by hired assistants. Electronic data was stored on a password protected computer. The transcripts were uploaded to NVIVO for further coding and analysis (Lumivero, 2017).

All data on my laptop was saved onto the JCU One Drive and the FNU One Drive. Data management was also conducted according to the relevant FNU and JCU policies.

Transcriptions into Word text format was made first in the language of the interview or FGD. In Tonga, participants spoke Tongan and English or both concurrently. In Fiji, people spoke mainly in English, as English is the language of instruction in schools and at work. However, when they referred to *iTaukei* Fijian concepts or principles, they used the local common *Bauan* dialect or their own Fijian district dialect and then continued the rest of the discussion in English. Fijian dialects differ according to the local region. When I found some *iTaukei* concepts difficult to understand, I asked my husband who is *iTaukei* to discuss the meaning and he would sit and *talanoa* about the concept in a mix of *Bauan*, *Bua* and English language, for clarity. The discussion was briefly written up in my notebook for reference.

For the Tongan transcripts, I conducted all the translation from Tongan to English. Data was sorted into themes and categories in NVIVO. Files were coded and saved in password

protected digital files. For the confidentiality of participants, I created a code for each one (see Section 3.6.2).

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of making meanings of the data. This involves the categorical aggregation of defined items and their direct interpretation (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Stake added that “each researcher needs thorough experience and reflection to find the forms of analysis that work for him or her” (Stake, 1995, p.77). Merriam 1998 complimented Stake’s ‘making meanings’ model of qualitative data analysis by saying that data involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read (Merriam, 1998, p 178). This research employed Stake and Merriam’s model of qualitative data analysis which involved categorical aggregation, seeking a collection of emerging themes within each individual country case of Fiji HRE and Tonga HRE and describing and fully contextualizing how HRE are situated in local systems such as in academic institutions, government ministries and traditional research ethics processes in these settings.

The analysis of data from documents and direct observations allowed emerging themes to be linked to theoretical HRE principles, sources, events, or policies. Data collected from observation and document analysis notes, key informant interviews and FGDs was analysed using an inductive approach. I took the lead on conducting the first coding of all the transcripts through line-by-line coding, where themes that emerged were categorized to address the research questions and other interesting and relevant themes that emerged were identified.

Two transcripts were selected for a line-by-line co-coding process conducted with my supervisory team. I then matched the coding done by each of the supervisory team members so that similarities could be confirmed and differences discussed before the transcripts were loaded into the NVIVO software package for the qualitative data analysis used for further coding.

I conducted the coding of the rest of the transcripts in NVIVO. I further coded and recoded on NVIVO as appropriate. Some of the functions of NVIVO assisted with the coding, summarization and categorization to distinguish summaries of themes and subthemes

(Azeem, Salfi, & Dogar, 2012). Patterns and connections within and between categories and themes were identified. An interpretation of the data was conducted to bring all the study components together. Important findings were identified, and these are presented in Chapter 4.

A further cross-case analysis of the Fiji and Tonga HRE cases was conducted to identify common elements, differences, similarities and themes that emerged from the two cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I referred to the research questions to guide this comparative analysis.

At various stages of writing the data chapters, I had to return to the raw data. To do this, I read the relevant sections several times to clarify and enhance my understanding of Indigenous concepts to ensure that I interpreted the data accurately. The procedures for enhancing the trustworthiness of data analysis included triangulation, researcher reflexivity, collaboration and member checking (see Section 3.11) (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Participants from Fiji and Tonga who were identified as local counterparts (see Section 3.12) collaborated with me in conducting the research, by pointing me in the direction of written materials, sending digital documents and clarifying Indigenous concepts when needed. Our communication was through face-to-face discussions and email communications, and their views were included in the study.

I later returned to the participants in Fiji and Tonga respectively conducted presentations to confirm of the results' credibility and asked their permission to publish in peer-reviewed journals. I also triangulated data to identify common emerging themes from the interview transcripts, observation notes and the documentary analysis.

3.10 Activities, Equipment and Personnel

I conducted all interviews and focus group discussions face to face and virtually which required Zoom software, computer equipment and a phone for recording as a back-up of the zoom recording. It is a requirement in Tonga that a Tongan person living in Tonga be part of the research team as a local counterpart. I identified a Tongan woman and included her in the research team to address the need for capacity building strategies for research in Tonga. I also included my *iTaukei* husband to collaborate with my research in Fiji specifically with interpreting *iTaukei* concepts into English.

3.11 Rigour and Trustworthiness

To ensure that the study generated ethical and accurate data about HRE in Fiji and Tonga, as Stake (1995) suggested, “we need certain case study protocols - ... efforts that go beyond simple repetition of data gathering to deliberative effort to find the validity of the data observed” (p.109). Triangulation and member checking protocols were established for data validation in these qualitative case studies (Boblin et al., 2013; Stake, 1995). Both data source triangulation and methodological triangulation were used in this study (Stake, 1995). Data source triangulation is checking that the case remains the same at different times, places or if individuals interact differently (Stake, 1995). Methodological triangulation involves using various approaches in one case study. As noted above in this chapter, these methods consisted of observation, interviews and document reviews. Involving these various methods is necessary in the search for additional interpretations of concepts identified in the research.

Member checking refers to consulting with actors who played major roles in the study: participants and those who contributed critical observations and interpretations and at times provide information about data sources. This researcher conducted member checking by involving the participants and other major actors (especially participants from the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs in Fiji and from the Tonga National Health and Research Ethics Committee and Tonga Ministry of Education). These people contributed to the review of rough drafts to check the interpretations of cultural concepts for accuracy and acceptability. The researcher invited members to face-to-face presentations of the collective case study methodology and later, the preliminary results. Members were consulted to source information such as grey literature and organizational reports.

Table 3.2 presents a summary of all the activities conducted in this research to ensure the validity of the data.

Table 3. 2: Rigour and trustworthiness in this collective case study design.

Triangulation and member checking (Stake, 1995)	Collective case study tactics	Phase of research in which the tactics were used.
Data source triangulation (Stake, 1995)	Data source triangulation provides the researcher an opportunity to see that the case remains the same at other times and in other spaces or as persons	The goal of HRE is to protect human participants in research. Whether the HRE have a Western Biomedical approach or an Indigenous approach or people from different philosophical orientations are involved in HRE activities, HRE remains

	interact differently (Boblin et al., 2013; Stake, 1995).	steadfast as a platform for the protection of humans from harm or risk while they are involved in research. In the current research, the research questions dealt with various approaches, applications and principles of HRE in 2 different countries: Fiji and Tonga. One identified theme (see Section 4.4.3) is that there is a dual approach to HRE in both countries: Western biomedical and Indigenous. The Western biomedical approach to HRE was more respected than the Indigenous approach. Nevertheless, the goal of HRE in both countries is to protect human beings involving research and build relationships.
Methodological triangulation	Using multiple data sources offer rich real-life situations. These multiple sources of data are collected and analysed to obtain multiple perspectives and points of view for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Boblin et al., 2013; Stake, 1995).	Data collection and composition. Three sources of evidence were employed in this study. 1.Documentary analysis. HRE guidelines, HREC standard operating procedures, annual reports, research policies at government level, research and ethics and national research workshop reports and the Fiji Research Council Act, were identified for analysis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiji HRE case: See section 4.1.3.1 and Table 4.2: Chronology of the Development of Human Research Ethics Committees in Fiji. • Tonga HRE case: See Section 5.2.8. 2.Talanoa sessions. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in Fiji and Tonga with a total of 65 participants. 3.Direct and indirect observation of ethics committee meetings: How members interacted and communicated with each other. Organization processes, practices and views of participants were noted and participants' body language was also observed. Members consented. See Section 3.7.4.
Member checking	Participants review rough drafts that feature statements they made through interviews or	The researcher conducted member checking by involving the participants and other major actors (especially participants from the Ministry of <i>iTaukei</i> Affairs in Fiji

	<p>focus group discussions. This review is conducted at the end of the data collection phase. The participants review the statements for accuracy of language and interpretation, quality and acceptability.</p>	<p>and from the Tonga National Health and Research Ethics Committee and Tonga Ministry of Education) in the review of components of rough drafts of the findings that featured their statements.</p> <p>Some participants were consulted to source grey literature and organizational reports that feature in the document analysis sections.</p> <p>I returned to Tonga and Fiji to deliver public seminars in which the results of each of the case studies were presented to participants.</p> <p>These presentations' objectives were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present the findings of the case studies. • participants make comments on the results if they see some discrepancies needing revisions. • asked for participants' permission for me to publicize the study results. <p>The Tonga presentations were held in August 2023 at the University of the South Pacific complex and at a public seminar hosted by the Tonga National University in Nuku'alofa Tonga.</p> <p>Two presentations were held in Fiji in November 2023. All Fijian participants and all staff and students of CMNHS were invited. The first presentation was held at FNU. Staff members of the Fiji Ministry of <i>iTaukei</i> Affairs attended. They requested that I conduct the same presentation for their staff in their office complex which I later did.</p> <p>Both Tongan and Fijian participants who attended the presentations, approved the results of the current PhD research.</p> <p>See Appendix 5: Dissemination section.</p>
--	--	---

3.12 Administration, Monitoring and Utilization of Results and Publication

I monitored the progress of my research, assisted by regular reminders from the Graduate Research School of JCU. In addition to the presentations mentioned above, soft copies of the completed thesis document will be presented to the governments of both participating countries for their records and if they wish to use some of the ideas and materials to strengthen HRE at the National level. The same copies will be kept in the James Cook University Library and Fiji National University Library. More development work for HRE will be done in Fiji and Tonga and other PICTs after the PhD research project is completed (see Appendix 6 for workshops and activities conducted by September 2024).

3.13 Funding Received

Research funding was received from both FNU and JCU (see Table 3.3.).

Table 3. 3: Research fund applications and grants

Source of fund	Grants	Remarks
James Cook University Internal Research Support Training Grant	August 2019: A\$3,000	This grant was awarded for data collection purposes in Fiji and Tonga and for the publication of my literature review article.
	May 2023: A\$4,000	A second round of competitive grants was available for PhD students' research, specifically for the editing and design of the thesis document and publication.
Fiji National University Research Division	15th July 2020 F\$10,000	The original application consisted of a budget for the cost of travel and living in Tonga for data collection in the field. Due to COVID-19 boarder closures, I was not able to travel to Tonga for data collection. Rather I did <i>talanoa</i> interviews online and the fund remained unused. In 2023, prior to my pre-completion seminar milestone, I needed more guidance from my supervisory team to be able to complete the Pre-Completion milestone. I applied to the FNU Research Office to use part of my research grant to cover travel costs to James Cook University for this purpose. FNU approved this so I travelled to the Townsville campus of JCU in May-July 2023. Part of the same grant was reserved for travel costs to Tonga in August 2023, to present the results of my research to participants of my PhD research project.

3.14 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has been a description of the complete processes of implementing a qualitative research method that employed a critical ethnographic view. A collective case study research design was presented in this chapter. The processes of enquiry into the environments of HRE in the real-life context of the Pacific Islands of Fiji and Tonga was included. Apart from the scientific research methodology, other important aspects of the research were included in this chapter. They comprise the research ethics applications, recruitment and description of participants and the groups they represented and data analysis and management. The administration and monitoring processes of the PhD's progress at the JCU was also included. The researcher's intent is that this chapter provides sufficient information to enable replication of the research approach in other settings.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS: FIJI HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS

CASE STUDY

This chapter has two parts: an introduction to the Fijian study context and the presentation of results for the human ethics research study in Fiji.

4.1 Kingdom, Colony and Independence as the Background to Fiji's Health and Research Ethics

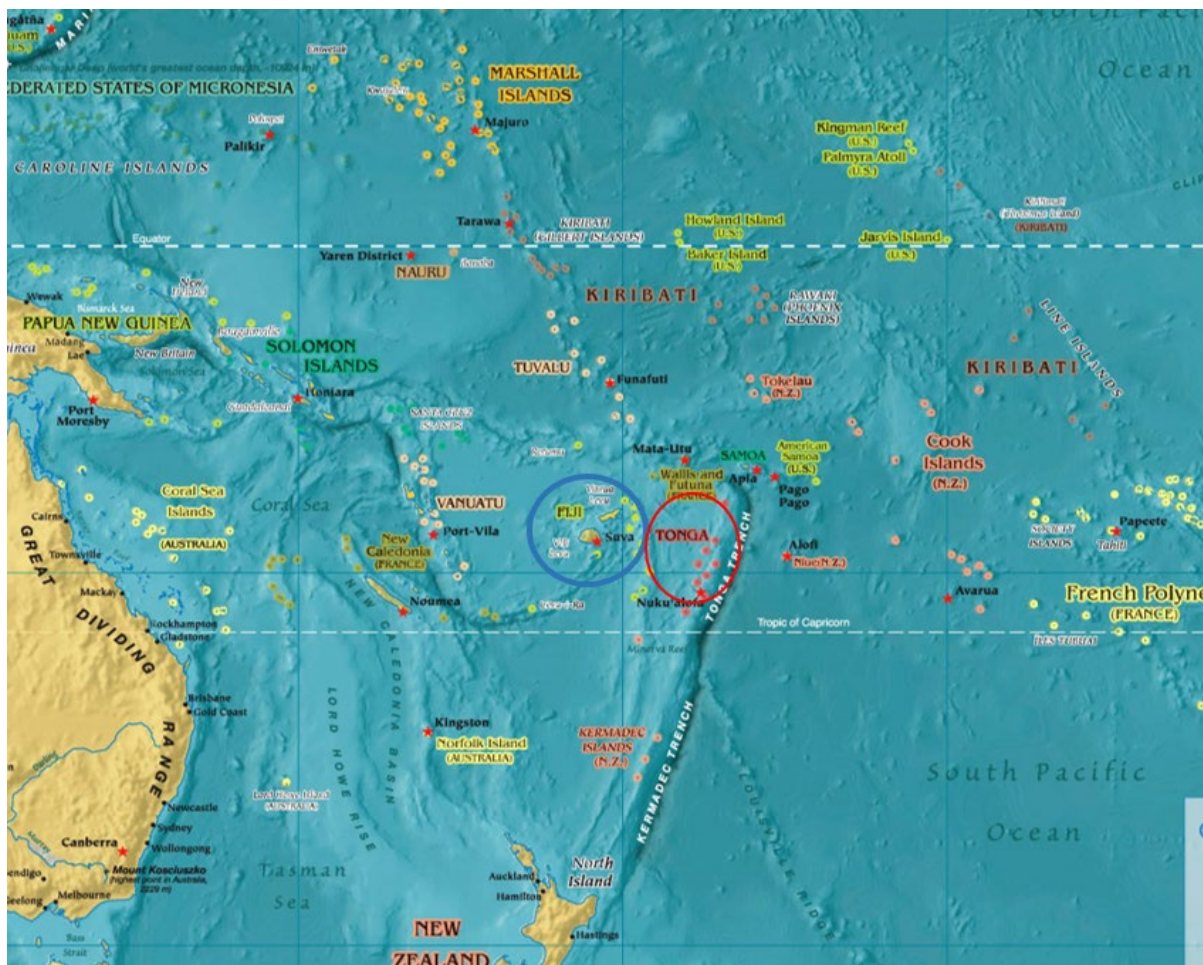
This chapter begins with a contextual overview of the human research ethics case study in Fiji, with an outline of its geography, demographics, constitution and colonial history. The chapter provides a brief look at Fiji's history as a colony of the British crown and a description of the significant events that shaped Fijian society from 1800s to the present time follows. When Fiji was a British colony, Fijians were fascinated with the Western world and the material things that the Europeans brought to Fiji, accepting their status as British subjects.

A discussion follows of the origin of HRE in Fiji which was facilitated by the Fiji School of Medicine (FSM), about a century after this was founded by the colonial government. Then a summary is given of Fiji's health care services, also highlighting research and research ethics development at the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. I include a discussion of various relevant institutional sectors in the country: government ministries and Fiji based universities that engage in HRE activities, with and a brief report from researchers of how *iTaukei* research protocols were practised in the absence of biomedical HRE. The introductory part of the chapter ends with a chronology of the development of human research ethics committees in Fiji. The Fijian case study results forms the second part of this chapter.

4.1.1 Demographics and the constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands

The Republic of the Fiji Islands (Fiji) is one of the larger and more developed economies in the Pacific region (Asante et al., 2017; Fiji High Commission to United Kingdom, 2021; World Bank Group, 2017). Fiji is located in the Pacific Ocean to the east of Australia between Vanuatu and the Kingdom of Tonga (Roberts et al., 2011) (see Figure 4.1).

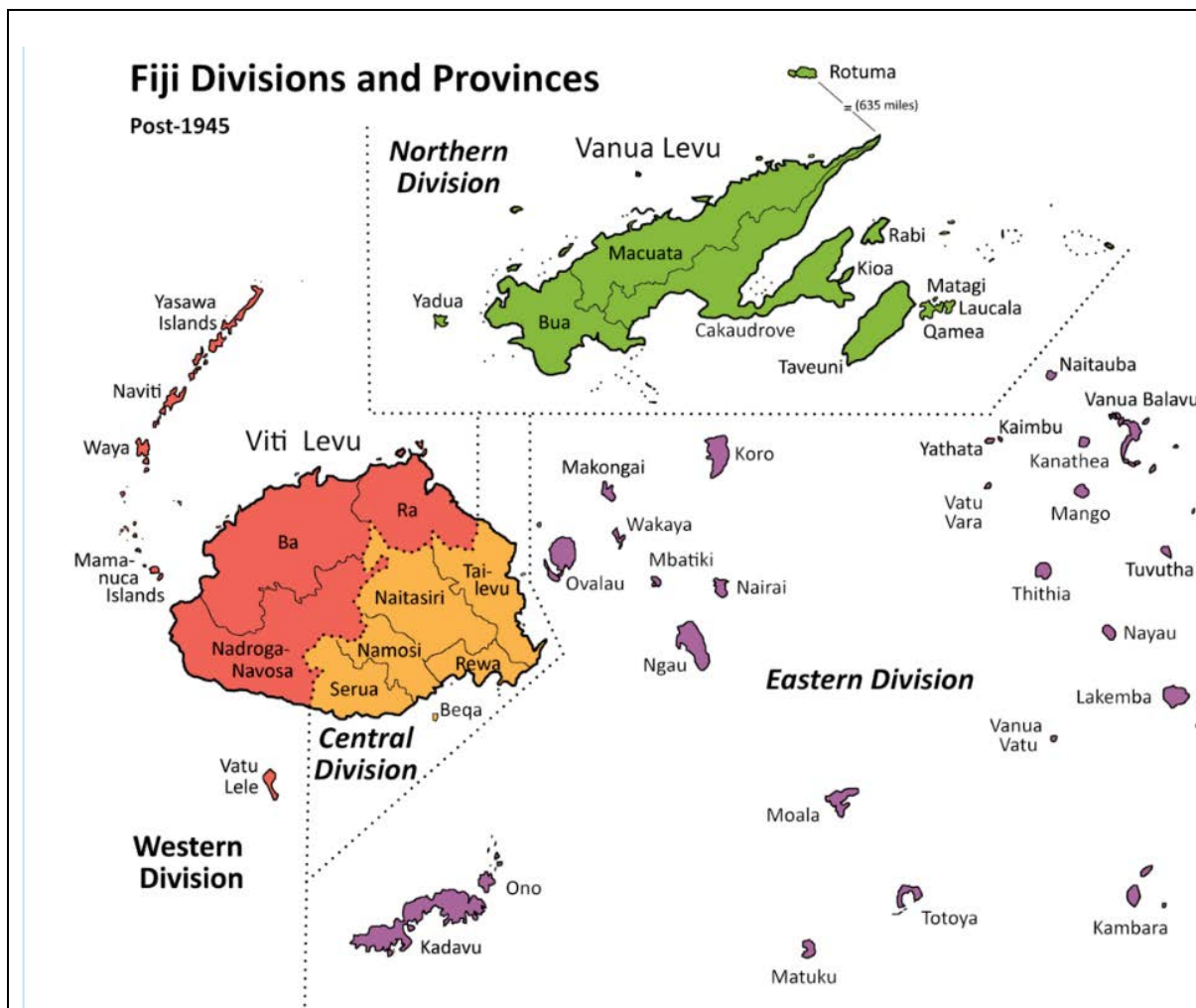
Figure 4. 1: Map of the Pacific Islands: Fiji Islands (blue circle) and Tonga (red circle).



Source: One World Nations: https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/oceania_map.htm

Fiji has a total area of 18,270 km² made up of 332 islands, 110 inhabited. Vitilevu and Vanualevu are its main islands with a total area of 10,429 km² and 5,556 km² representing 57% and 30% of the total land area of the country, respectively. Other smaller islands include Taveuni and Kadavu with a total of 4.6% of Fiji’s land area. Most of the remaining islands are very small (see Figure 4.2). The administrative divisions are Central, Western, Eastern and Northern divisions (Aubry et al., 2019). Fiji has 14 provinces and one dependency, the island of Rotuma, and its capital city is Suva (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2016).

Figure 4. 2: Map of Fiji’s provincial and divisional boundaries



Source: FamilySearch. Available: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Fiji_Genealogy.

Fiji’s population was 884,887 as of the 2017 census, an increase from 837,271 in the 2007 census. Fiji has a multi-ethnic population including *iTaukei* (Indigenous Fijians), Fijians of Indian descent and other ethnicities (Tavola, 1991). The 2007 census provided the last population distribution description by ethnicity with 475,739 *iTaukei* Fijians comprising the majority population who are predominantly Christians (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

The 2013 Constitution of Fiji is its fourth and it is currently the supreme law of Fiji (Fiji Government, 2013). The Parliament of Fiji consists of 50 members, elected through a democratic voting system (Fiji Government, 2013). The Parliament appoints the President as head of state and the President appoints the Prime Minister as head of government (Office of the Attorney General, 2019; WHO Western Pacific Region, 2017).

The Constitution of Fiji declares that the Fiji Government recognizes all the ethnic groups in Fiji as citizens of Fiji. The constitution acknowledges *iTaukei* as the Indigenous population

of Fiji and “recognizes *iTaukei* ownership of their land, culture, customs, traditions and language” (Fiji Government, 2013, p.1).

4.1.2 Fiji’s Socio-Economic Situation

Fiji is a market economy based on agriculture (forestry and fisheries), sugar cane, tourism, ocean fishing, mineral water, mining, manufacturing and tourism (Foster & Macdonald, 2021; WHO Western Pacific Region, 2017). Fiji’s Gross Domestic Product in 2018 was US\$5.5 billion and in 2019 it recorded a reduction to US\$5.48 billion (The World Bank, 2023). Fiji had a Gross National Income per capita of US\$5,910 in 2018, which dropped to US\$4,720 in 2020 and to US\$4,492 in 2021 (Asian Development Bank, 2021).

Fiji’s economic performance has been declining since 2018 due to reduced tourism revenue since Tropical Cyclone Winston hit the island country in 2016, and the COVID-19 pandemic further pushed Fiji’s economy backwards since 2019 (Asian Development Bank, 2021) with high unemployment due to the closure of borders and a tourism sector downturn (United Nations Pacific, 2020). Based on Fiji’s per capita gross national income, the World Bank categorized as an upper middle-income economy (Asian Development Bank, 2021). The average annual household income and expenditure for 2019-20 was, F\$26,249 and F\$11,961 respectively (Fiji Bureau of statistics, 2020). The Fiji Bureau of Statistics reported that about 30% (n=258,053) of Fiji’s population were living in poverty in 2019-2020. The National Basic Needs Poverty Line for 2019-20 was estimated at F\$2,179.39 per adult equivalent (AE) per year, or F\$41.91 per AE per week, and 22.9% (n=45,724) of Fiji’s population live below this and cannot afford to buy essential items. The majority (62%) of these people are living in rural areas, with the highest numbers in the Western division.

4.1.3 The Colony of Fiji

It is important to acknowledge the historical development of systems of governance that have helped inform the current *iTaukei* ethical protocols and systems in Fiji. In pre-colonial times Fiji was known as the Kingdom of Fiji. It was divided into three traditional confederacies (*matanitu*) namely *Kubuna*, *Burebasaga* and *Tovata* prior to British colonization (Tuwere, 2002) (see Figure 4.3). The confederacies had hierarchical chiefly leadership systems with people living in villages. There were small groupings of villages (*yavusa*), made up of family groups (*mataqali*) and even smaller family units the (*itokatoka*) (Lawson & Lawson, 2015).

Figure 4. 3: Fiji's three confederacies (*Matanitu Vanua*)



Traditional confederacy boundary. Image by ANU.

Source: Maps Online. Australian National University College of Asia & the Pacific. Provincial boundaries and traditional confederacy boundaries of Fiji. Available at: <https://asiapacific-archive.anu.edu.au/mapsonline/base-maps/fiji-administration-map>

Fiji became a British colony on 10th October 1874 and was called the Colony of Fiji (MacNaught, 1974; Veracini, 2008). The Deed of Cession was recorded to be discussed in a Fijian style family relationship manner between the two parties, considered by Fijians as a ceremonious charter for a British Fijian partnership which would maintain the respect of and uphold the cultures and practices of the Fijian people (MacNaught, 1974; Newbury, 2011). The first Governor of Fiji, from 1875-1880, Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, had previously served in Trinidad and Mauritius and having witnessed the exploitation of people by plantation owners (Knaplund, 1959), decided that he did not want Fiji to suffer similar disgraceful experiences. Governor Gordon's administration aimed to uphold progress and prosperity for the Fijian people (Cumpston, 1956).

During this time, the modern Fijian administrative structure was developed (MacNaught, 1974). Governor Gordon installed the first *Roko Tui* (Fijian leaders) in Fiji's 14 provinces, these positions were powerful and widely accepted by high chiefs (Scarr, 1970). In 1897 there were thirteen *Roko(s)* and four European Governor's Commissioners, *Buli(s)* who were government appointed district chiefs who became the head of three to four villages. Governor Gordon also established the Fijian Council of Chiefs, now known as the Great Council of

Chiefs as a government advisory body. Salaried administrators in villages, districts and provinces reported to the Council of Chiefs. The power of the Council of Chiefs escalated through the years after Fiji received independence from Britain on 10th October 1970 (Chand, 2015; Tagicakiverata & Nilan, 2018).

Gordon was very protective of the Fijians' ownership of their land, against the white European plantation owners who tried to obtain land for cultivation. He established "indirect rule" which mandated "minimum interference with established native institutions" (Knaplund, 1959 p.156). Nevertheless, the British rulers controlled all aspects of Fijian life, where Fijians were confined to their villages and did not participate in the commercial employment sector (MacNaught, 2016). The ancestors of present-day Fijians of Indian origin came to Fiji between 1879 and 1916, under an agreement of indenture. They were called "Girmitiyans" during Fiji's colonial times. Over 60,000 Indians were indentured as labourers to work in sugar cane plantations in Fiji (Lal, 2012).

Fiji remained a colony of the Commonwealth for 96 years. Official talks about an independent and self-governing Fiji began in 1965 in London (Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, 2021). In 1966, Fiji experienced its first elections with two political parties, the Alliance Party, and the Federation Party. A Westminster parliament system was adopted whereby government ministers were introduced. In 1969 Fijian political parties were pushing to form a new constitution. It was understood by the British colonial power in London that this might result in a fully self-governing nation or a totally independent nation of Fiji (Lal, 2008). Political parties agreed to the formation of the new constitution based on the principles of racial harmony, nation building and a common future for all people of Fiji. This paved the way for a smooth transition to an independent Fiji (Lal, 2008, pp. 67-69). In October 1970, Fiji gained independence from Britain without struggle and established a parliamentary democracy government led by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara of the Alliance Party (Kumar, M. 2012; Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, 2021).

4.1.4 Colonial Fiji, Native Medical Practitioners, Health and Research

An understanding of health research in colonial Fiji and post-colonial Fiji provides the background to the development of research ethics in Fiji. The Fiji School of Medicine and the Ministry of Health were the two organizations that began work in research ethics in the country.

Prior to the establishment of the Suva Medical School (SMS) in 1885 the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the Fiji colony, Dr William MacGregor proposed in 1879 to train Fijians as Native Medical Practitioners (NMPs) (Hill & Samisoni, 1993), following epidemics and health fatalities around 1875 (Brewster, 2010; Penman, Gupta, & Shanks, 2017). In 1918, there were a total of 48 NMPs in the SMS all of whom were commended for their excellent work during the global influenza epidemic (Barrett, 1937). The Colonial War Memorial Hospital (CWMH) was rebuilt in 1923 and medical training continued there (Barrett, 1937; Leslie, 2005a). The SMS was renamed, the Central Medical School (CMS) in 1928 and the Rockefeller Foundation support enabled the CMS to build modern research laboratories in 1936 (Brewster, 2010; Stuart, 2006).

Leadership in health and medical education was heavily reliant on non-Fijians and foreign funded development programmes originating from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, the World Health Organisation, the Nuffield Foundation, and the East West Centre in Hawaii (Lander, 1985; Penington, 1984). The Fiji School of Medicine (FSM) continued to play a major role in health research with a specific focus on tropical diseases and epidemiological studies of non-communicable diseases (Penington, 1984, p.318). It was later reported that “research at the FSM in recent years has not been good” (Lander, 1985, p.123) due to heavy clinical loads, no research budget and the Fiji government experiencing political turmoil that weakened the economy when GDP growth rate was 2.1% (Chand, 2015). A former staff member of the FSM confirmed that there was no ethics committee in the FSM in the 1980s (Gyaneshwar R., personal communication, 4 May 2023). He also stated that when he published his research paper, the publisher, the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, did not ask for ethical clearance (Gyaneshwar, Nsanze, Singh, Pillay, & Seruvatu, 1987). The FSM was the institution that played a major role in nurturing health worker training and health research and had the mandate to develop research ethics in the next decade.

The earliest documents of biomedical HRE records identified from Fiji were about the FSM and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS & WHO) working in partnership in a Research Ethics Committee (Bossert & Strech, 2017). Table 4.1 presents a list of the documents collected for this study; these documents provide evidence of the development of HRE in Fiji. The partnership between the FSM and the MHMS was based on the human health approach which is the core business of both organizations. The MHMS provided

health care services, and the FSM provided tertiary level health education and health research to Fiji and the Pacific Islands.

Table 4. 1: Key Institutions and documents involved in the development of Human Research Ethics.

NAME OF INSTITUTIONS	DOCUMENTS	DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENTS
Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS & WHO)	The National Health Research Committee (NHRC) 1999 Guidelines. (Fiji National Health Research and Ethics Review Committee, 2019)	The functions of the ethics committees of the NHRC of Fiji were guided by internationally accepted bioethical principles adopted by the WHO Council for International Organizations for Medical Sciences (CIOMS) Geneva 1993.
	Tanoa Hotel Stakeholders Meeting – Report 2019. (College Human Health Research Ethics Committee, 2021)	This report maps the plans designed by stakeholders to improve governance processes of Human Research Ethics in Fiji from 2019 onwards in developing a Human Research Ethics Guideline, Standard Operating Procedures and Policy to submit to Cabinet for approval and to strengthen a research data repository.
	Fiji National Human Research Ethics Committee (FNHREC) – Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) 2019 and Policy Document. (Fiji National Health Research and Ethics Review Committee, 2019)	The FNHREC – SOP 2019 and Policy are guided by the international Guidelines of the World Medical Association and the World Health Organizations.
College Human Health Research Ethics Committee (CHHREC)	Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) 2018 & 2021. Minutes of Meeting (College Human Health Research Ethics Committee, 2018, 2020)	The CHHREC’s SOP and research ethics reviews of research proposals are guided by the international guidelines of human research ethics such as the Nuremberg Code, the Declaration of Helsinki, and the International Ethical Guidelines for Health-Related Research Involving Humans by the Council for International Organization of Medical Sciences and World Health Organization.
WHO Western Pacific Regional Office	Review for the Fiji Human/Health Research Ethics system.	Review exercise recommended to strengthen the human research ethics processes in various areas,

	(WHO Western Pacific Region, 2017)	upgrade the online application portal, facilitate the continuing education of member of ethics committees and the accreditation of university ethics committees.
Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts	Policy on Research and Policy Process Diagram. (Ministry of Education Heritage and Art, 2019)	This policy promotes ethical research and provides a general guide on processes of the conduct of research involving the Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts.
Ministry of <i>iTaukei</i> Affairs	Indigenous Intellectual Property Project on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture (Naviticoko, 2023)	<i>iTaukei</i> (Indigenous population of Fiji) philosophies and emphasis of <i>iTaukei</i> culture and knowledge.
	Indigenous <i>iTaukei</i> Research: Defining Research Locally (<i>iTaukei</i> Institute of Language & Culture, 2017)	This document promotes the governance of <i>iTaukei</i> research through the recognition of <i>iTaukei</i> people and respect for <i>iTaukei</i> research ethics.
	Ministry of <i>iTaukei</i> Affairs – Power Point Presentation Vanua Research Framework, a Power Point presentation. (Ramoce, 2021)	The presentation is based on the <i>iTaukei</i> epistemology. It was conducted by Waisale Ramoce, Chair- Policy & Research Unit, Development Services Division at the College Human Health Research Ethics Committee, Stakeholders’ Meeting, Holiday Inn, 7-9 April 2021. It presented the <i>iTaukei</i> Research Protocol employed by the Research Division of the MITA, including 3 stages, <i>Na Vakata Dumata</i> Entry, <i>Na Solesolevaki</i> Engage and <i>Nai Vakatale</i> Exit. See Section 4.2.2 for more information.
University of the South Pacific (USP)	Human Research Ethics: A Handbook for USP Researchers, 2009 (University of the South Pacific, 2009)	This handbook provides a guide to the conduct of research by USP personnel. It incorporates universal principles accepted internationally and principles considered to be specific to the Pacific region.

4.1.4.1 Research Ethics in Development

Research ethics were unheard of until the 1990s, when the FSM and the MHMS partnered, established and managed the health research and research ethics committee. Table 4.2 lists the events and years of the development of HREC in Fiji.

Table 4. 2: Chronology of the Development of Human Research Ethics Committees in Fiji

Year	Description of the events
1990	National Health Research Committee Guidelines for Health Research 1999 recorded that a Research Ethics Committee was managed by the Fiji School of Medicine (FSM) around 1990, starting date unknown.
1990-1995	The Research Ethics Committee moved from the FSM to the MHMS to gain government authority. Nevertheless, the management and reviews were centralized in the FSM.
1998	The Fiji National Research Council (FNRC) at the MHMS resumed in 1998 after a few years lapse with a new name “the National Health Research Council” (NHRC). The NHRC Guidelines 1998 goal was to guide the review process of health research in Fiji.
1999	The NHRC developed guidelines for health research, <i>National Health Research, 1999, a comprehensive guide to the conduct of research in Fiji and the framework for developing health research policy</i> . One of NHRC’s committees was the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC). These guidelines adopted the WHO/Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) approach, Geneva 1993. Western bioethics took priority even though some members of the HREC were <i>iTaukei</i> .
2000	Fiji National Research Ethics Committee (FNREC) managed the review process of applications for ethical and scientific review of all research proposals submitted to the CHHREC and the FNREC.
July 2002	Ethics of Health Research Training workshop was conducted by staff of the Health Research Council of New Zealand during the Pacific Health Research Council Meeting at the Holiday Inn, Suva (Government, 2002). Topics were: ethical principles, consent, standard of care, “what happens when research is complete?”, ethical review of study design and content, duties to alleviate suffering, respect for persons, cultural sensitivity and no exploitation of vulnerable people.
2004-2009	The Fiji Health Sector Improvement Program (FHSIP) funded by Australian Aid Research assisted the MHMS Research Unit to develop a research guideline booklet and other research policies. The FHSIP and the Fiji School of Nursing (FSN) established a working relationship with the James Cook University. A research stream was introduced into the FSN curriculum (Freeman & Sutton, 2010).

2007	The 1999 NHRC Guidelines were revised in 2007. The FHSIP assisted the MHMS in developing health research policies which assisted in setting the platform for local systems of health research ethics.
2012	Strengthening of the governance of research ethics in Fiji by reviewing the system – a WHO initiative. A national consultation on research ethics followed resulting in the development of the Fiji National Health Research Guideline 2015 with policy guidelines and a Standard Operating Procedure for the Fiji National Health Research Ethics Review Committee (FNHRERC) (Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 2015).
2013	Development and implementation of the online health research portal (Fiji Health Research Portal, www.health.gov.fj/fijihrp), a digitized management system of health research ethics review for the FNHRERC at the MHMS.
2016-2017	Research Law: The National Research Council Bill was submitted to parliament in 2016. It became a law in 2017 titled <i>National Research Council Act 2017</i> (Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, 2017).
2017	Review of the Research Portal at the FNHRERC at the MHMS. WHO provided technical expertise and funds.
2019-2020	FNHRERC in partnership with the health research stakeholders, other government departments and Fiji based universities conducted a review of the FNHRERC SOP and research policy with the support from WHO. The SOP and the research policy were endorsed by the Permanent Secretary of Health in 2020.
2019-2022	The CHHREC SOP was accredited by the FNHRERC in 2019 and renewed in July 2022 for the years 2023-2025.
2022	<p>Research Ethics Policy for the University of the South Pacific.</p> <p>An FIPHR training programme on Research Ethics and approaches to the ethical review of health research proposals was conducted for members of research ethics committees in the Ministries of Health in the Pacific Islands including Fiji. The sponsor was the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for the Cook Islands' Support for Strengthening Health Professionals' Training During Covid-19 Project. I conducted the training through the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research at the College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences at the Fiji National University. (Lovo, 2022).</p>

This history of the FSM from 1980s sets the context for both health education in Fiji and the lack of health research and research ethics. The FSM was struggling to survive as a medical educational institution and within this struggle, health research by staff and other health

professionals were not supported. In the 1990s, the FSM and the MHMS joined forces and revived the health research and research ethics committee (Ministry of Health and Medical Services, 1999). The FSM and the Fiji School of Nursing together with other technical colleges in Fiji were brought together in a merger in 2010 to form the Fiji National University (FNU) with the College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) as one of its five colleges.

The governance of *iTaukei* cultural considerations in HRE is conducted by the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, but there is a need to strengthen the relationship of the HRE committees of the MHMS, CHHREC and the *iTaukei* Affairs research ethics committee. Fiji is considered to have an advanced ethics review capacity in comparison to other Pacific Islands that WHO WPRO has surveyed (Barraclough, 2017). Fiji's universities and the MHMS have been considered to have the capacity and potential to aid other PICs to develop human HRE governance and oversight mechanisms through sharing documents, experience, training, and education primarily for the protection of Pacific peoples.

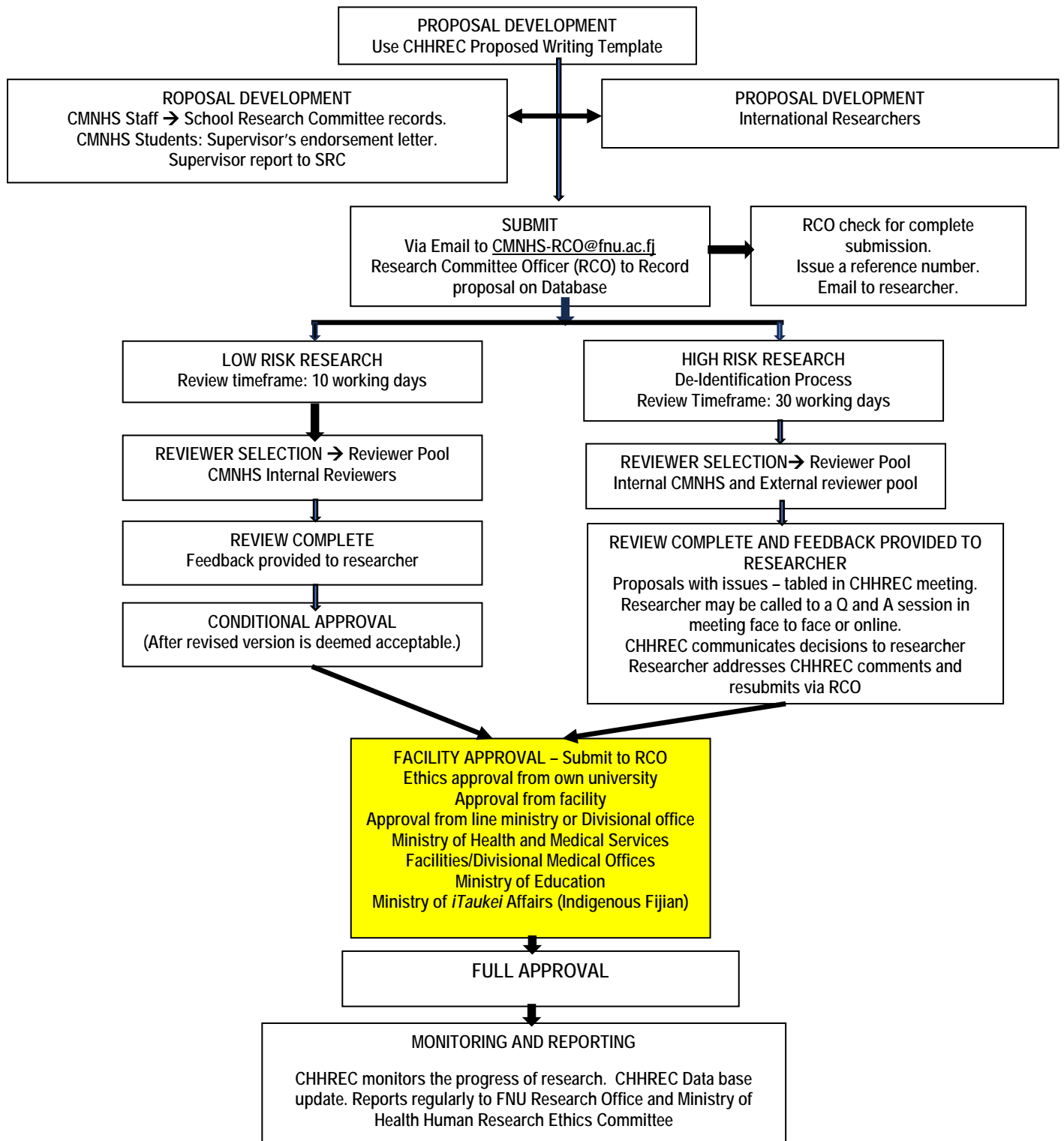
4.1.5 The Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research and the College Human Health Research Ethics Committee of College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences

The Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR) is the research arm of the Committee of College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS). The College Human Health Research Ethics Committee (CHHREC) is the research bioethics and oversight committee of the CMNHS, instituted in 2011 and now an independent part of the FIPHR structure (see Appendix 3). The primary role of the CHHREC is to manage the ethics and scientific review process. CHHREC activities are based on international guidelines of research involving human participants such as the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2001) and the International Ethical Guidelines for Health-Related Research Involving Humans (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, 2017). The CHHREC was accredited in 2019 by the Fiji government's National Human Research Ethics Review Committee as it met the international requirements for a Human Health Research Ethics Committee (Ministry of Health and Medical Services and WHO, 2019).

Participants were informed that researchers were to apply for research facility approval from other sectors or organizations before the research began. This facility approval is an important part of the College Human Research Ethics Committee at the Fiji National

University. Figure 4.4 is the flow diagram of the CHHREC review process in which the “facility approval” phase is highlighted in yellow (College Human Health Research Ethics Committee, 2020, p.25). Table 4.3 sets out the research centres associated with the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research, with affiliate institutions and funding partners.

Figure 4. 4: CHHREC Review process: Facility approval stage highlighted in yellow.



Source: Adopted from the CHHREC Standard Operating Procedures (College Human Health Research Ethics Committee, 2021b, p. 25).

Table 4.3 indicates the substantial and wide-ranging nature of health research in the region conducted at the FIPHR within the CMNHS/FNU. It is important to understand the role that the MHMS plays in the oversight of research and research ethics as this organization is the custodian of Fijian people’s health and wellbeing, discussed below in Section 4.1.6.

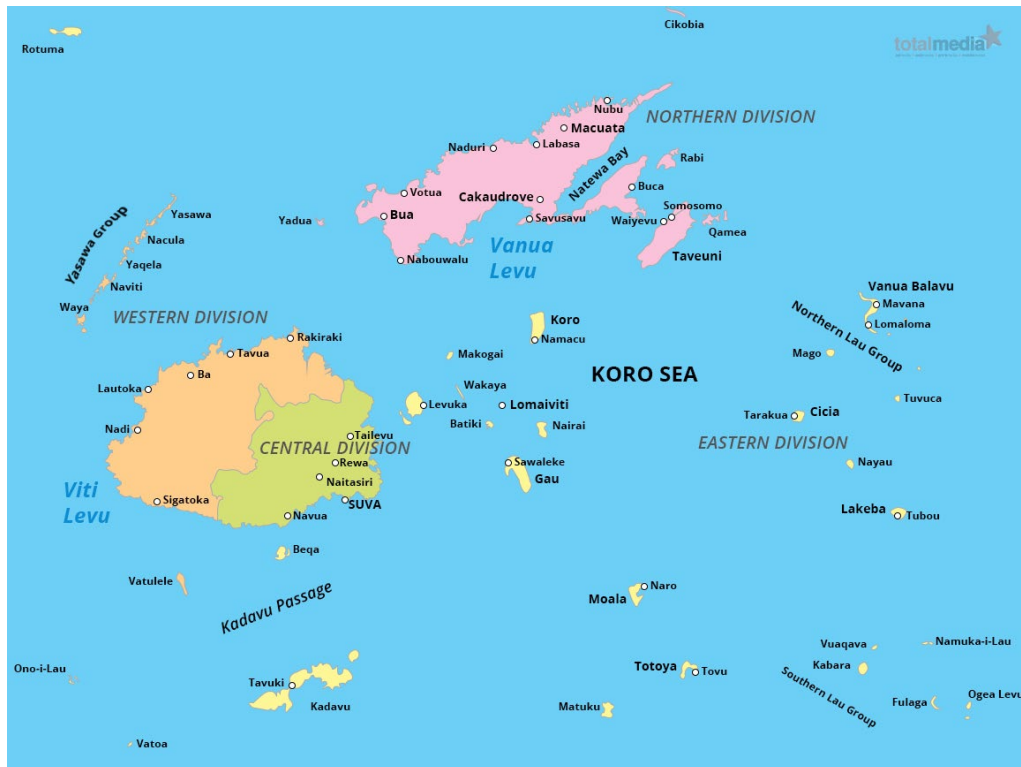
Table 4. 3: Research centres in the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research

Research Centres in the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR), College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) Fiji National University (FNU)	
Research Centres/Activities	Research Partners
The Pacific Research Centre for the Prevention of Obesity (CPOND), WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention and Management. Aim is to address non-communicable diseases in the Pacific.	George Institute for Global Health, Deakin University and the WHO.
The Communicable Disease Research Centre (CDRC) primarily conducts research in communicable diseases and capacity building in research of communicable diseases in the PICs.	CMNHS and The University of Otago, Global Health Institute (OGHI) and Mercy Hospital, New Zealand.
The Centre for Health Information Policy and Systems Research (CHIPSR) conduct research in health financing, health information and health systems and policy.	CMNHS
The Pacific Sexual and Reproductive Health Research Centre (PacS-RHRC) conducts research and capacity building activities.	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) International Planned Parenthood (IPPF) Pacific Community (SPC) Pacific AIDS Foundation (PIAF) and the Oceania Society for Sexual Health and HIV Medicine (OSSHHM)
Revitalizing Informal Settlements and their Environments	Monash University: Monash Sustainable Development Institute- MSDI), FNU, The University of the South Pacific (USP), Live & Learn Environment Education. Hasanuddin University – Makassar, Indonesia. Funding Agencies: NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Wellcome Trust (UK), Asian Development Bank, the Fiji government and Indonesian government.
The Watershed Interventions for Systems Health in Fiji (WISH Fiji) Project.	University of Sydney and, Fiji National University. Funded by the Australian government, Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security and Bloomberg Philanthropies Vibrant Oceans Initiatives.

4.1.6 The Ministry of Health and Medical Services providing Fiji's health care services

Fiji's Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS & WHO) manages the health care services for the people of Fiji through four main divisions, the Central, Eastern, Northern and Western Divisions (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4. 5: Map of Fiji with Main Geographical Divisions for Health Care



Source: Ministry of Health and Medical Services. <https://www.health.gov.fj/>

4.1.6.1 Regionalized structure of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services

The MHMS services are delivered through all levels of health care to all people in Fiji living in urban, rural and remote communities. Figure 4.6 presents a summary of the MHMS divisional health care services provided through tertiary hospitals, health centres and nursing stations to the people of Fiji.

Figure 4. 6: Tiers of the Fijian Health System



Source: Reproduced from (Johnston, 2021), with permission of the author.

The Health Information, Research, and Innovation Unit of the MHMS is responsible for management of appropriate health research and coordinates the functions of the Fiji Human Health Research and Ethics Review Committee (FHHREC). The FHHREC is the ethical and scientific oversight mechanism of health research in Fiji. Research proposals are submitted

through the FHHREC for review before being implemented. The review process involves the scrutiny of research proposals for ethical standards according to international guidelines and local context, and that the research addresses the research priority areas of the MHMS. The review also involves consideration of the research design's scientific accuracy and appropriacy for the involvement of Fijian people. The FHHREC is also responsible for the accreditation of other health research ethics committees in Fiji.

Health professionals employed in the MHMS, most of whom are members of the Fiji Medical Association (Wanjohi et al., 2021) and Fiji Nursing Association, among other professional organizations, are encouraged to conduct health research and publish (Kumar, 2021).

Medical and pharmacy interns working in government hospitals across Fiji conduct research in their clinical disciplines (College Human Health Research Ethics Committee, 2021).

The MHMS has been involved in an increasing amount of research in partnership with international partners and donors, summarized in Table 4.4. It is important to highlight the various research activities of the MHMS to indicate the significance placed upon health research and to also strengthen its stewardship role in Fiji people's health. Funding for health research is mostly sourced from international donor agencies through research partnerships with Australian and New Zealand research institutes and universities.

Table 4. 4: Research projects associated with the MHMS Fiji at end of 2020.

Research Project Title	Research Partners and Countries involved	Funding Agency
Pneumococcal Vaccine (PCV10) post introduction impact research. 2012.	Fiji Health Sector Support Program. Victorian Government's Operational Infrastructure Support Program; Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Dunne et al., 2018).	DFAT
Rheumatic Health Diseases (RHD) problems in Fiji	MHMS and Cure Kids.	Multiple donor agencies, including the MHMS which funds RHD research.
The World Scabies Program (WSP).	Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI). UNSW, Kirby Institute, Fiji MHMS, Ministry of Health Solomon Islands.	MCRI
The WHO-TDR Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative (SORT-IT) 2017-2018.	James Cook University Fiji National University Ministry of Health and Medical Services Fiji Biosecurity Department.	DFAT

4.1.6.2 Research Priorities Areas of the MHMS

The MHMS identified priority areas for research in their 2020-2025 strategic plan (Ministry of Health and Medical Services Fiji, 2020) as outlined in Table 4.5.

Table 4. 5: Fiji health research priority areas

No.	Health Topics
1.	Non-Communicable Diseases
2.	Communicable Diseases
3.	Sexual Reproductive and Child Health
4.	Health Services
5.	Food and Diets
6.	Health Systems
7.	Climate Change and Health
8.	Mental Health
9.	Oral Health
10.	Environmental Health
11.	Clinical Services
12.	Public Health Services
13.	Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Services
14.	Adolescent Health
15.	Public Health Emergencies
16.	Population Health
17.	Disability
18.	Injuries
19.	Burns
20.	Disaster Preparedness

(Ministry of Health and Medical Services Fiji, 2020)

4.2 Fiji Sectors that Engage Human Research Ethics

This section presents discussions on the Fiji National Research Council Act, 2017 and HRE in government ministries including the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs and the Ministry of Education as well as in the University of the South Pacific. The international influences on the development of health research in Fiji are also described.

4.2.1 Fiji National Research Council Act, 2017

The Fiji National Research Council Act, 2017, from here onwards referred to as “the Act”, has two objectives: i) to conduct research fund management activities; and ii) promote the ethical conduct of research involving persons, animals, and the environment. The composition of the council includes a Chairperson, a Permanent Secretary responsible for strategic planning and a Permanent Secretary responsible for education, three academics with a strong research background and other persons appointed by the Minister who represent an institution designated by the Minister. Council membership is for three years. The Act describes the roles, responsibility, and authority of the Council and operating procedures for

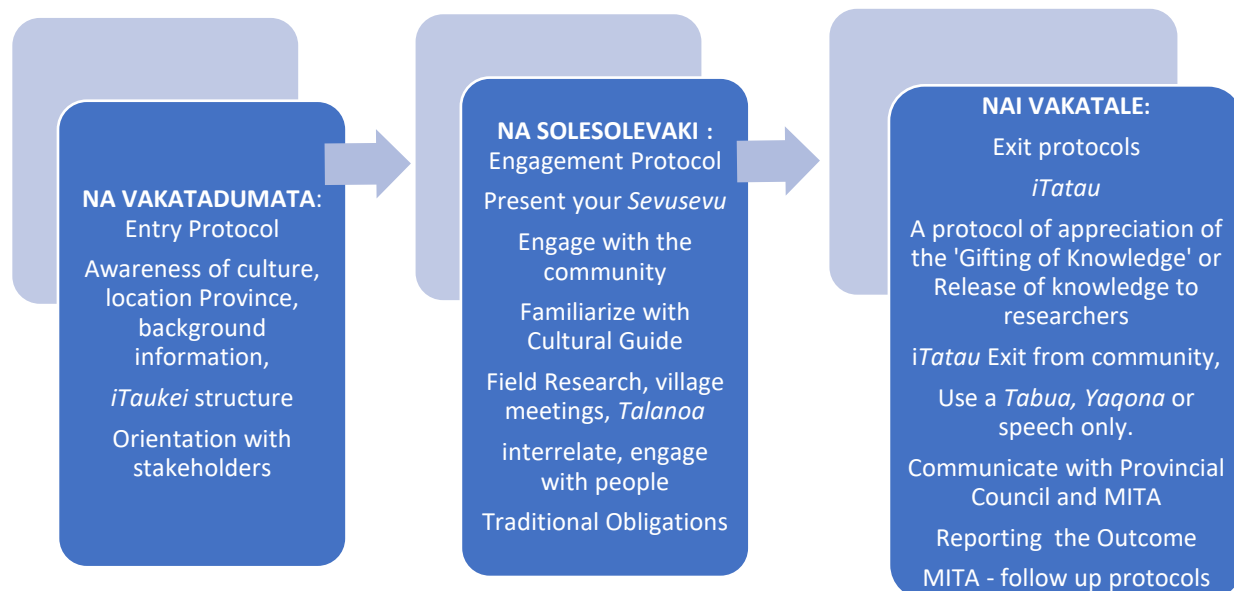
research fund management and the protection of human research participants (Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, 2017). The Act has a provision for handling research misconduct or unethical behaviours in research. It also makes provision for legal action against researchers and the termination of research if evidence is found that there were breaches, such as dishonest acts, misrepresentation, falsifying research results, plagiarism, authorship issues, conflict of interest issues, deception in a proposal to get research funds, compromising the safety of human participants in research or other research misconduct (Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, 2017).

In July 2019, the Minister of Education announced that a National Research Council (NRC) would be established (Government Media Centre, 2019). The Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts (MEHA) stated on their website that it coordinates the Fiji National Research Council activities (Ministry of Education Heritage and Art, 2023). Despite the existence of the Act and the public announcement, as of August 2024, no members have yet been appointed to the Council, nor any activities conducted under this Act.

4.2.2 Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs

The Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs (MITA) is responsible for the governance of research involving *iTaukei* people with specific focus on *iTaukei* people living in their traditional villages and their natural heritage and environment. The MITA is also responsible for reviewing applications to conduct research involving *iTaukei* people and monitors the process of research. Its governance is founded on the *Vanua* (an *iTaukei* word that means a combination of people, their natural resources and the physical and spiritual world of the *iTaukei* ancestors). The *Vanua* concept is to be factored into all research involving *iTaukei* people. The fundamental *iTaukei* values involved in the governance of research include respect for culture, communal relationship and the spirituality of the *iTaukei* people (*iTaukei Institute of Language and Culture: Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, (nd)*). The Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs has articulated a process of research protocols to be employed (see Figure 4.7). The process for application for an approval from the Ministry of *iTaukei* is further discussed in Section 4.4.3.1.

Figure 4. 7: Research Protocols Employed by the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs Research Unit



Source: Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs Presentation at College Human Health Research Ethics Committee, Stakeholders' Meeting, Holiday Inn, 7-9 April 2021. Presented by Mr Waisale Ramoce, Chair- Policy & Research Unit, Development Services Division, Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs.

When assessing research proposals, the reviewers in the MITA employ an *iTaukei* approach based on the above *Vanua* protocol. If the researcher requires an assistant, the MITA provides the relevant advice and guidance. The MITA's Provincial Council is part of the research review and approval process as well as having an advisory role.

4.2.3 Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts (MEHA)

The MEHA Research and Ethics Committee provides a mechanism for the review of applications from researchers within Fiji and internationally for research permits to conduct research in all Fijian schools including students and staff, and research involving the MEHA. Its membership comprises six directorship level staff including a senior education officer as secretariat (Ministry of Education Heritage and Art, 2019). The ethical considerations of the committee include the protection of students from risks, protecting the learning and teaching environment from risks posed by research and maintaining privacy and confidentiality of participants in research. It also ensures that the research has scientific validity, generates benefits to schools and school stakeholders and provide recommendations for policy advice

through evidence-based research outcomes. The research results and reports are to be made accessible to policy makers and educationalists. Researchers from outside Fiji need to have an ethics approval from an external ethics committee. They also need to have a local affiliation whose role is to support the research processes in Fiji, for example, a letter of support from relevant government ministries or local Fiji Universities they are affiliated with. The MEHA charges a fee for processing research ethics application (Ministry of Education Heritage and Art, 2019).

4.2.4. University of the South Pacific (USP), Research Ethics Review Process

The USP Research Ethics Committee is a sub-committee of the University Research Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Applications for ethics review begin at the Faculty Research committees. The Human Research ‘*Ethics Handbook*’ consisting of the code of ethical conduct and the ‘*Animal Research Ethics Handbook*’ are made available as an information package for all researchers. Screening of questionnaires is guided by the UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (UNESCO, 2005) which uses an internationally accepted approach to HRE (University of the South Pacific, 2009).

Like USP, the other higher education providers of Fiji have HREs at institutional and at college levels. Table 4.6 gives a summary of their research ethics committees.

Table 4. 6: Human Research Ethics Committees at Higher Education Sector in Fiji

Institution	Name of the HREC
Fiji National University	(i) Fiji National University Human Research Ethics Committee
	(ii) College Human Health Research Ethics Committee
University of the South Pacific	(iii) University Research Ethics Committee
The University of Fiji	(iv) Human Research Ethics Committee

4.2.5 International influences on the development of Health Research and HRE in Fiji

This section presents information identified from interviews and documents of development aid for health research and HRE from neighbouring countries in the Oceania region for Fiji.

New Zealand: A training activity in research ethics was conducted in July 2002 by staff of the Health Research Council of New Zealand during the Pacific Health Research Council Meeting at the Holiday Inn, Suva, July 2002 (Ministry of Health, 2002).

Australia: One of the participants recalled the development assistance of the Australian Government to the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

“... there was a guideline that we were using, that guideline was developed in 2007 with the systems of the FHSIP Fiji Health Sector Improvement program which is under the Australian Aid, they were the ones who assisted the Ministry of Health and its research unit to put together some of these policies ...” (P24/Health Staff/Female/40-50 years).

The Fiji Health Sector Independent Programme (FHSIP) Completion Report 2010 records the successes of the programme in Fiji which includes the initiation of a partnership between the FHSIP, the Fiji School of Nursing and James Cook University of Australia. A new curriculum was introduced which had a research stream and eleven 11 staff of the School of Nursing received training up to Masters degree level (Freeman & Sutton, 2010).

In 2012, the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office based in Suva initiated and funded a national consultation meeting of stakeholders with the aim of revising the health research ethics and governance activities in Fiji. The stakeholders of this national consultation included representatives from government ministries, including the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, and the Fiji National University College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences (formerly FSM). The WHO continued its work with the MHMS by funding and developing a Health Research Portal for the Fiji National Research Ethics Committee. The result of the revision conducted at the national consultation in 2012, was the Fiji National Health Research Guidelines launched in 2015.

The WHO and UNESCO convened the Asia Pacific regional meeting for national ethics committees in 2017. Member countries represented in the meeting, included a representative from the Fiji’s MHMS, accepted that health ethics is integral to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as ethical consideration placed on health policies and practices are keys to achieving health related SDGs. Ethics underpins SDG 3 “no one is left behind” that aims to attain the goal of universal health coverage (Ministry of Health and Medical Services and WHO, 2019). In 2019, the MHMS ensured that

HRE capacity was maintained, by implementing an activity to build the HRE awareness and ethics review skills of the members of the FNHREC. The WHO Western Pacific Regional Office (WHO/WPRO) funded and provided experts in HRE to facilitate a National Human Health Stakeholders meeting in March 2019 (Ministry of Health and Medical Services and WHO, 2019).

4.3 Part 1 Conclusion

In this first part of the chapter, an overarching view of Fiji was provided as a setting for this research, starting from Fiji's colonial history and the origins of health research in the Fiji School of Medicine. Development of HRE in Fiji was outlined, including the international and local influences. Through all the efforts of international and local partners in Fiji, HRE is growing in strength and Fiji's social responsibility is to share its HRE knowledge and processes with other Pacific Island countries (Barraclough, 2017). The awareness of HRE amongst health researchers is high and the governance functions of existing human research ethics committees in the MHMS and in the College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences of the Fiji National University is also strong. The second part of this chapter presents the results of the current study concerning *iTaukei* (Indigenous Fijian) HRE.

4.4 RESULTS. HRE in Fiji

The second and final part of this chapter provides the results of the research conducted in Fiji for the Human Research Ethics Case Study. Table 4.7 outlines the organizations involved and Section 4.4.1 is a description of the participants in *talanoa* sessions for this case study. A glossary of *iTaukei* words and their meaning in English is included on pages 13-15.

4.4.1 Research participants in *talanoa* sessions

In total, 54 participants were included in 17 *talanoa* sessions about HRE in Fiji (see Table 4.7). The participants' backgrounds were varied and all were Indigenous. Participants from the government ministries were senior staff such as heads of divisions/sections, the head of a hospital and other staff members who were affiliated with an ethics committee. Participants from the universities were from all levels such as senior management academics, the head of school and heads of sections within schools, all of whom were affiliated with ethics

committees. There were also participants from NGOs who are familiar with Indigenous research expectations. An NGO group leader was a member of an ethics committee, and she recruited others who represented a group of vulnerable persons. Participants also included ministers of a Christian church, one of whom was a community member of an ethics committee. A fuller description of the participants and *talanoa* sessions is presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4. 7: Participants

	Type of organization	Description of participants/group	Number of Participants	
			Males	Females
1	University Staff	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with Health Professionals.	2	5
2	Ministry of Education Heritage and Art	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with Senior Education officers.	5	
3	Ministry of <i>iTaukei</i> Affairs	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with 15 staff members.	8	7
4	Ministry of Health and Medical Services (participants were members of the MHMS ethics committee.)	1 <i>talanoa</i> Session with senior members of staff of 2 divisions of MHMS.	2	
		1 <i>talanoa</i> session with a senior staff of the research division of the MHMS		1
		1 <i>talanoa</i> session with a senior member of staff of a MHMS hospital	1	
		1 <i>talanoa</i> session with a head of division of MHMS	1	
5	Colonial War Memorial Hospital	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with hospital staff members		5
6	Women’s NGO	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with a retired politician, head of an NGO and a former member of the MHMS research ethics committee.		1
7	Movement for Mental Health group	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with a group of parents/guardians of persons with mental disability. A community member is on an ethics committee.	1	5
8	Head of a Religious organization	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with a senior staff member.		1
9	<i>iTaukei</i> elder and Clergy	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with an <i>iTaukei</i> community elder and Methodist minister.	1	
10	Clergy	1 <i>talanoa</i> session an <i>iTaukei</i> Methodist minister	1	
11	Fiji University	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with an <i>iTaukei</i> senior academic.		1
12	Pacific Islands Regional NGO	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with members of staff.	1	3
13	Clergy	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with staff of the Catholic Church and an academic.	1	
14	Pacific Regional Organization	1 <i>talanoa</i> session with staff of a Pacific regional organization	1	
	TOTAL	17 <i>talanoa</i> sessions	25	29
			Total participants 54	

4.4.2 Introduction to the themes, sub-themes and a synthesis of themes

Four major themes and 24 subthemes were constructed from the data analysis. The themes were integrated to develop a decolonizing Indigenous framework for HRE guideline, presented before the summary of the chapter.

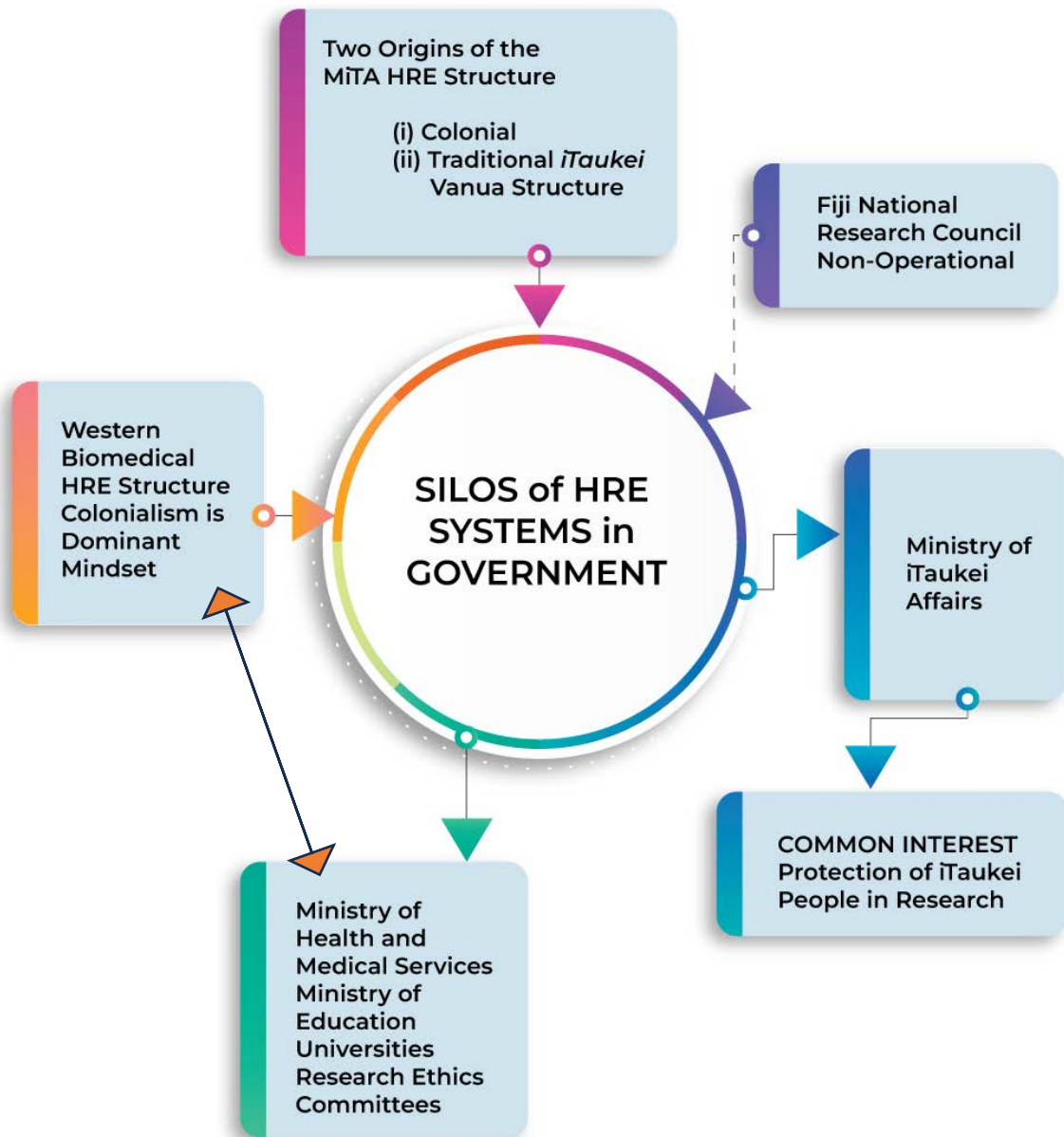
- i. Theme 1: Dual approach to HRE in Fiji. Exemplifying biomedical and *iTaukei* Indigenous involvement in HRE. Under this theme, four subthemes are included.
- ii. Theme 2: Fiji HRE mechanisms need strengthening. The five subthemes included here describe the various gaps identified by participants in the HRE mechanism in Fiji and highlights the need to either develop or strengthen the gaps.
- iii. Theme 3: Axiology of research in *iTaukei* context: Culture of protocols. Nine subthemes are included that describe features of the culture of protocols.
- iv. Theme 4: Theoretical underpinnings of *iTaukei* research ethics. Seven subthemes are included as features of *iTaukei* ontology and *iTaukei* morality.

For a synthesis of these themes, please see Figure 4.14 which comprises and the decolonizing Indigenous framework for a HRE guidelines for Fiji. In both key informant *talanoa* and focus group *talanoa* sessions participants expressed their appreciation for this research topic investigating *iTaukei* principles in HRE. They were all eager to discuss their research experiences and the *iTaukei* expectations in research, which they had not considered in depth previously, although they were all *iTaukei* by ethnicity.

4.4.3 Theme 1: Dual approach to HRE in Fiji: Exemplifying Biomedical and *iTaukei* Indigenous Involvement in HRE in Fiji

The participants discussed the current approaches to HRE in Fiji as comprising two approaches: i) the Western Biomedical Model of HRE, such as that used in government ministries and universities, and ii) the *iTaukei* structure in the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs which has a combination of two origins, from Fiji's colonial government and from the *Vanua* (*iTaukei* people and land). Figure 4.8 illustrates this dual approach.

Figure 4. 8: Dual Approach to HRE in Fiji



As discussed in Section 4.1.6, the Fiji National Health Research Ethics Review Committee's (FNHRERC's) approach is based on a Western biomedical model of research ethics guidelines. It is explained in Section 4.2.3 that the MEHA's HRE also follows a Western biomedical model where an ethics review focuses on the four fundamental principles of research ethics: respect for autonomy, justice, non-maleficence and beneficence, along with scientific validity. The USP research ethics handbook cites UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights as a guideline. This is supported by remarks from participants:

"... so we are coming from a government system which is Westernized to a traditional cultural systems..." (P5/Academic/Female/50-60 years)

"...to show our difference eh so if we visit the village, we don't sit in the front, they do. It is a colonial thing, if government, we sit in front. But us we are different, we are servants, we put ourselves at the bottom, or if at the tanoa, we don't sit in front, viavialevu (pretentious), so again we are wearing the Fijian hat. Wearing the colonial hat, sit in front, be respectful, be commanding. Over here we listen, we have 2 ears and one mouth, we speak less and listen more." (P18/Min of iTaukei Affairs/Male/50-60 years).

4.4.3.1 Two Origins of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs' HRE Structure

The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs and the iTaukei Vanua HRE structures are two different sectors with parallel authority to grant permission for research in the iTaukei community. Decision-making processes that permit research to be conducted in Indigenous populations follow the hierarchical structure of the iTaukei society. The decision-making is by the chiefs of the iTaukei communities. Participants reported this has changed over time, from individualistic decision making to more democratic decision-making processes. This change may be due to iTaukei chiefs being educated in modern times prior to and during the colonial period. The democratic style of decision making of iTaukei chiefs is now informed by issues such as individual members' consent, priorities of the community, and assessment of outcomes of research that is beneficial to people.

“...There are so many processes, they don’t go to iTaukei Affairs, and they go ahead to do their research...” (P8/MEHA/Male/40-50 years).

Participants in a group *talanoa* session shared the view expressed by a group member, that the existence of these authorities to grant research permission create conflicts between people in the village, government officials and the scholars who are aware of the formal government systems:

“... we just go and do a sevusevu to the Turaga ni koro (village headman) and he says, “ok bring them in”, no one else can say anything, so we will just allocate the things, and the Provincial Affairs (Ministry of iTaukei Affairs) will go with it, “suit themselves”. Sometimes the silences, sometimes the Fijians iTaukei culture itself is allowing it, but with us, the educated ones, who are aware about research ethics, sometimes we think otherwise, and the conflict is there... they are willing to come and give us information and accept us...” (P4/Academic/Male/40-60 years)

Tensions between the systems were recognized by participants. One participant opposed the *iTaukei Vanua* system saying that it lacked protection and national security:

“...the government now have in place a policy that for visits to a Fijian village or settlement, it has to go through the provincial administration” ... “...you also need to say, who conducted this for national security, who has come for what purpose? This is important for national security.”

She contextualized “national security”:

“...For us in our culture, the security aspect, was what to do with what we own, our cultural norms. That was protected because it kept us safe, kept our knowledge safe, it kept our agriculture safe, food security and ensured that we have food security so that has to be an ethical issue, the national security aspect, for us, Indigenous also to protect intellectual property, heritage. If we don’t do that it is going to be diluted and they lose their importance...”
(P32/Head of NGO/Female/50-80 years).

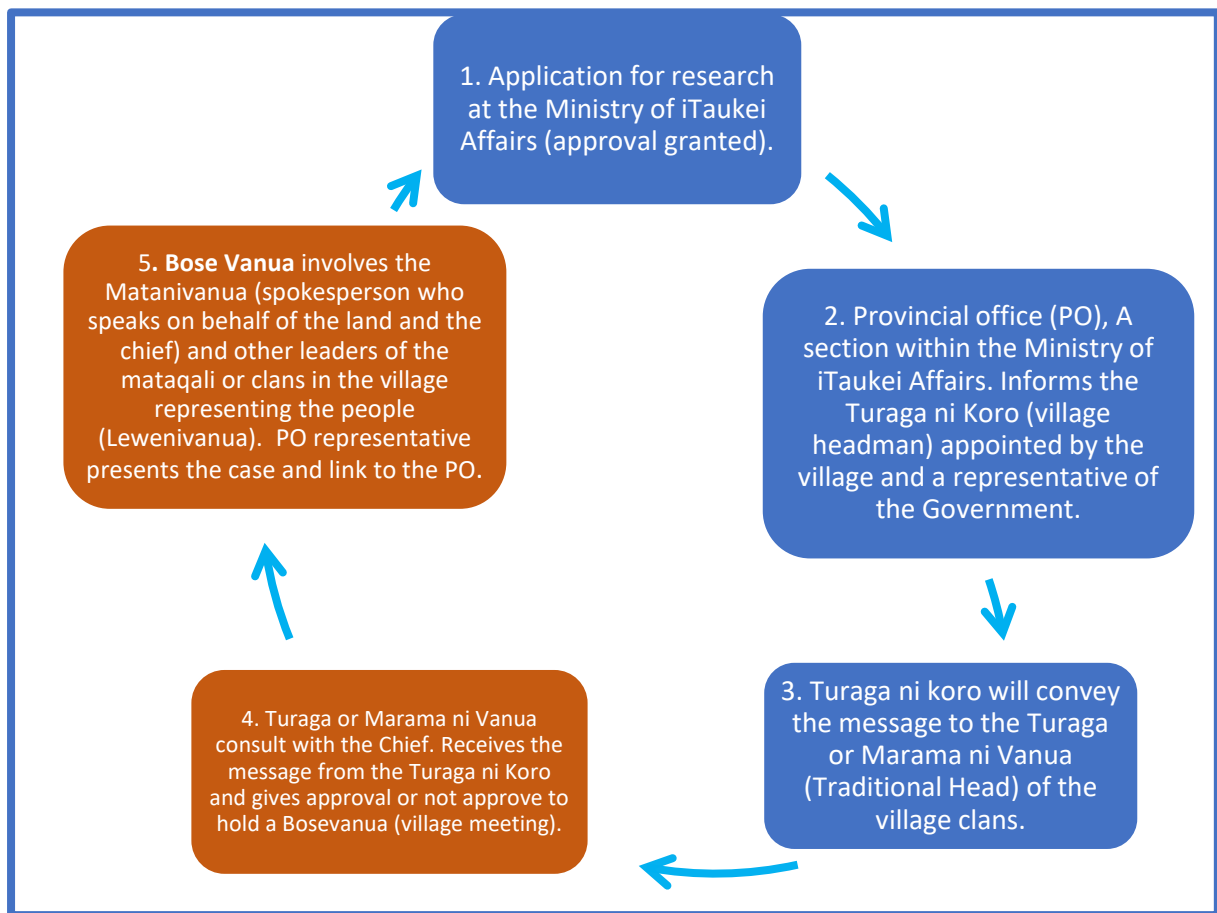
Although the discussions were based on the various authorities that grant permission in an *iTaukei* setting, an important point also raised is the need for an HRE system that protects *iTaukei* interests and contributes to national security and cultural continuity.

Despite the authorities in the *iTaukei* settings some *iTaukei* researchers were known to be non-compliant with any of the *iTaukei* protocols or authorities. These researchers wanted to use the easiest way to access *iTaukei* people for their research. This type of *iTaukei* research seems to be very disorganized, as one participant said:

“...But who in the village? But if they go through this kind of system, it protects them as well...” (P32/Head of NGO/female/60-80 years).

It was acknowledged that going through the proper channel of *iTaukei* protocol protects people and intellectual property and creates formal systems for keeping research records. Figure 4.9 portrays the application process that combines the government and the *iTaukei Vanua* structure.

Figure 4. 9: Application Process for Research Oversight that Combines the Government and the Vanua



Step 1: All research involving *iTaukei* people or environmental resources in their traditional village settings follow this process. The researcher prepares and sends an application to the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs for permission to research in *iTaukei* communities.

Step 2: The Provincial Office (a section within the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs) informs the *Turaga ni Koro* (village headman) who was appointed by the village and is a representative of the government.

“... Without the approval, there is no research. Once approved, (ethics approval and Ministry of iTaukei Affairs approval) we get in touch with the Provincial Office, and we inform them that the proposal has been sent. We will give them a brief of the proposal, or the entire proposal. They have a copy, they know the intentions, and once they are notified, and once we draw near to the date of arrival, then we go to the Provincial Office. And with the

Provincial Office, then we go the villages, and we inform the villages of the intentions of the research...” (P26/MHMS /male/40-50 years).

“When you get the approval from the iTaukei, the province – they will have the rules on the boards...Some villages no longer have chiefs, they have only Turaganikoro (village headman). Or perhaps chiefs live in town. ...Mata-ni-Vanua a spokesperson, Turaga ni Koro is the representative of the Government...” (P10/MEHA/male/40-50 years).

Step 3: The *Turaga ni Koro* in the village will convey the message to the *Turaga* (male chief) or *Marama* (female chief) *ni Vanua* (traditional head of the clans within the village).

Step 4: The *Turaga* or *Marama ni Vanua* (male or female chief of the clans) consults with the higher chief, receives the message from the *Turaga ni Koro* and gives approval or not to hold a *Bose Vanua* (village meeting).

Step 5: The *Bose Vanua* involves the *Matanivanua* (spokesperson) and other leaders of the *mataqali* or clans in the village. These *mataqali* or clans are the *lewenivanua*, the people. The Provincial Office representative presents the case to the Provincial Office of the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs. The decision from the *Bose Vanua* is taken to the Chief:

“...when [making] the decision, to hold certain meetings or to do research in the church or in the Vanua, again things have to go through the Vanua system...”, *“Every discussion that has to take place in regard to some programmes in the church or in the Vanua, has to come through the Bose Vanua (village meeting. It involves the leaders of the mataqali, the clans, they come together and because the information is to be fed up to the chief, they inform the chief if this can be done next week, ...” (P42Clergy/Male/40-50s).*

The decision to accept a proposal for an occasion to happen in the *Vanua* setting (*iTaukei* communities all over Fiji) is a consultative process amongst the chief and people who are holders of specific roles in the village, like the heads of the various clans. This decision may be an approval or not. This is final and is entirely up to the chief and his or her people.

The timeframe for getting an approval from the *Vanua* is unpredictable because it depends on when people involved in the consultation process are available for the meeting to take place. The researchers can only make a formal request through the chief’s spokesperson to the chief

to ask for an approximate time when the approval will be received. The *Vanua* has the strongest decision-making power in *iTaukei* settings. This process is traditional to *iTaukei* communities prior to the Western biomedical model of HRE in modern Fiji.

4.4.3.2 Strong Adherence to the *iTaukei* Research Protocols Before Biomedical HRE, “The *sevusevu* gave us the okay”

There was no Western biomedical HRE and governance in Fiji before the 1990s. One of the participants expressed her view about a lack of national coordination for approvals, based on personal experience:

“... So, there is no national control. Who is doing what, in terms of coming in to do research? They come and work, collect data, and write it. They have not gone through any approval process at all. Often it is not known even within that institution where that group of people are ...” (P7/Academic/female/50-60 years).

While some participants said they followed the *iTaukei* protocols when researching *iTaukei* people, other researchers discussed how it was conducted and driven, most often by external researchers with external interests (Finau et al., 2000). One participant, who conducted research in the 1980s and 1990s mentioned their strong adherence to the *iTaukei* research protocols before any biomedical HRE system was developed in Fiji. They were using the *iTaukei* protocol of *sevusevu* to ask for permission to conduct research in *iTaukei Vanua* setting.

“...So, when we go in, we go through the Provincial Office, then before we collect data, we go to the big chief and do a *sevusevu* there, ... So those are the system we followed, so whatever we did, collecting data, writing in our diary, the *sevusevu* gave us the ok...” (P4/Academic/Male/40s-50 years).

There was a reference to participants’ verbal consent sought through the *iTaukei* research protocol, but no mention of an ethics application nor an ethics approval from any ethics committee. There was an attempt to develop some guidelines for research involving *iTaukei* people. However, participants mentioned that there are no records of activities conducted in the past. The government ministries were reported to have been involved in a multisectoral meeting in 2017, where National Research Guideline for research involving *iTaukei* were to be developed, but again there were tensions and confusions between these ministries as to who is mandated to develop these guidelines.

“... The meeting comprised the provincial level to district level - District Officers. The workshop was conducted in Fijian and English. For them they keep saying it is us. ... Yes, that was what we talked about. It will be interesting to see how far they have developed this framework...” (P10/MEHA Officer/Male/40-50 years).

I enquired about the report from this workshop, but participants were unaware of any report. This gap in documentation across ministries highlights the lack of a clear individual or combined Government Ministerial mandate on research ethics and guidelines for *iTaukei* people in Fiji.

4.4.3.3 “We Just Follow the Review Guide Given to us without Questioning”

Although there were HRE committee members who were *iTaukei*, they stated they found it difficult to apply their *iTaukei* knowledge to their work in HRE. The international biomedical principles approach was adopted to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and they simply just followed instructions, as one of the participants said in a *talanoa*.

“...so it says that what we have in our own selves as people, it does not mean anything. You got to abide by this one, that is the world, that is development...” (P7/Academic/Female/50-70 years).

During the *talanoa* session with members of the CHHREC, one participant (P6/Academic/Female/50-60 years) mentioned that they merely conform to the guidelines that are given to them to guide the review of research proposals without questioning these. The rest of the group, six participants, nodded in agreement, indicating a general unconscious submissiveness to dominant foreign rules while suppressing the values of the self as an *iTaukei* person(s).

This could be indicative of a colonized mindset amongst *iTaukei* people. However, in practice, the *iTaukei* person in a leadership role, such as CHHREC membership, lives and practices *iTaukei* cultural traditions in family life and community circles.

The guiding documents for HRE in CHHREC are sourced from the World Medical Association and World Health Organization and the International Ethical Guidelines for Health-related Research Involving Humans from the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences. This group’s perspective demonstrates the value given to the Western educational approach and a devaluation of the *iTaukei* person’s own wealth of important and relevant knowledge to inform institutional agendas such as HRE regulations. The *iTaukei* research protocols and their hierarchical communitarian nature is considered inferior in

higher educational settings. The same participants stated that they were aware of the *iTaukei* research protocols at the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs and considered these originated from colonialism.

4.4.3.4 The *Vanua iTaukei* HRE structures are communicated orally and practiced formally.

Results show that the *Vanua iTaukei* HRE structure is orally discussed and very formal. The *Vanua iTaukei* HRE system is powered by chiefs, so all formal processes are performed for the chiefs and community. If the chiefs are educated, either in Fiji or abroad, there is a greater possibility that they will approach HRE with a Western perspective. The Fijian education system is considerably influenced by Western ideologies. The real *iTaukei* research ethics protocols are being observed more in rural villages and in some urban *iTaukei* communities. They are independent of government structure and influence. The participants stated that these *iTaukei* groups have the power to allow research without going through the government HRE systems.

Participants mentioned that top-down power to consent overrules individual consent. Although the *iTaukei* research protocol has the power to allow research, some participants expressed that, from a Western perspective, there is a sense of vulnerability of individual people in those *iTaukei* groups or communities. This is because the authority to provide an informed consent is centred at the top of the hierarchical structure – the chief. This authority is absolute and respected without question because the *iTaukei* people's perception is that the chief's actions is based on their best collective interests.

Participants who were not from academic settings emphasized the importance of the establishing systems of HRE in Fiji for the protection of *iTaukei* people from harm through research:

“... It is important, ethically it is important, because at least you are adhering to something that you can always fall back on... for reference and for corrections, and we need to establish these kinds of things. This is also for their protection because if their research results are ever questioned, how do they defend the result? But if they go through this kind of system, it protects them as well.” (P32/Head of NGO/female/60-80 years).

4.4.3.5 Triple bottom Line of Colonialism in *iTaukei* HRE Paradigms: Education, Political Environment and Christianity

Participants felt that the *iTaukei* paradigm was being ignored and devalued. The political environment, the international education standards and beliefs in Christianity are three strong social forces that added more weight to the devaluing, or “going away” from the *iTaukei* ways of doing things (P5/Academic/Female/40-50 years). Another member shared similar opinions:

“... this is the standard, the strong influence of education and religion, we are still trying to meet that standard, I think that when you are trying, that colonization, you are de-colonizing us, in our mindset. But all standards are set from outside, education and everything are decided from outside. Our traditional structure is still there, but it is going away slowly, and it is being compounded now by our government system. (P7/Academic/Female/50-60 years).

The quotation directly above indicates that the participant is aware of acts of decolonization in this research. Decolonization was mentioned in four different *talanoa* sessions by academics, ethics committee members and a representative of the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs. This is also embedded in Sub-theme 4.4.3.2 above, which refers to the implications of colonialism in *iTaukei* people where participants talked about the difficulties faced if they attempted to apply their *iTaukei* knowledge to their work such as for HRE. Hence, colonialism can be said to have moulded *iTaukei* mind to devalue their own *iTaukei* paradigms as one participant discussed in a group *talanoa*. She concluded that it is time to decolonize and re-value *iTaukei* paradigms especially for HRE:

*“...it became our culture before lotu (Christianity). We have become fascinated by all the new things that are coming, from the palangis (Europeans) with their boats and discoveries that got to our country. Those are some of the things that moulded us to what we are today, e? Except for those of the *iTaukei* who are educated, we can stand and say no, but the fascination with the Western world...we are the cause of our own downfall, (“yes” from the group). Because we are not valuing our own people our own knowledge our own epistemology, it is us and that has to change eh. ...” (P7/Academic/Female/50-60 years).*

From the perspective of participants, the decolonization of *iTaukei* paradigms is strongly expressed as the way forward in HRE.

4.4.4 Theme 2: Fiji HRE mechanisms need strengthening.

Various needs for strengthening of the Fiji HRE mechanism and structures were raised by the participants. There are five sub-themes related to this overarching theme.

4.4.4.1 Need for a National Governing Body for HRE in Fiji

Participants discussed the need for a national coordinating body for HRE. They expressed a desire to promote cross government ministerial collaboration in HRE with the aim of being a national governing body to consolidate all HRE activities.

“... The MEHA is tasked with the formation of National Research Council. Unfortunately, the grant is there but we are just trying to work out on how best we can take this forward – the implementation. The responsibility was given to the Fiji Higher Ed Commission, and we are all waiting. So, for us, in terms of the research ... we act as a focal point for researchers overseas and local ... (P8/MEHA/Male/50-60 years).”

Participants lacked confidence when they considered the Fiji National Research Council (FNRC), because it is yet to be operationalized despite the National Research Council Act having been launched in 2017. Participants felt that either the MEHA or the FHEC will be mandated to implement the FNRC.

“...The establishment of the National Research Council [will] determine the priority of research in the country, it will give out the funding. The research institutions can apply, and the TOR needs to be set up first. But who is to set it up...”
(P10/MEHA/Male/40-50 years)

This indicates an uncertainty which is causing tension and anxiety among the staff of the MEHA and staff of other research ethics committees who also felt the absence of a coordinating body such as the FNRC. They expressed the need for a national body to guide human research ethics activities in Fiji and a general reliance on the FNRC to take up that role as an independent organization.

“...Nobody wants to take up this task as this National Research Council should be independent...” (P9/MEHA/Male/40-50 years).

“...That is why, three or four years back, we have recommended for someone from the ministry to be part of the National Health Ethics Committee...”

(P17/MITA/Female/40-50 years)

Government ministries have a strong common interest in protecting Indigenous people involved in research. They are aware of each other's roles, but they operate independently and have their own policies.

4.4.4.2 Need for an Indigenous HRE Committee.

Researchers need an Indigenous committee with combined *iTaukei*, academic and international knowledge of HRE. Participants reported that the HRECs in government and university structures mostly work independently but connect to the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs' REC when the need arises to review a proposal for research involving *iTaukei* people. HRECs in government ministries and universities guide and facilitate the submission of the proposal to the HREC at the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs. Participants were of the view that it is advantageous for Fiji's HRE sector to have an Indigenous ethics committee in the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs because of the need to include people in the HREC that have a combination of international, national, academic and Indigenous research knowledge. This perspective is summed up in this comment:

“... They also receive the applications from the University of the South Pacific (USP) even though USP has its ethics committee. They submit it to the iTaukei Ethics Committee, so anything to do with Indigenous, or academia, and the Ministry of Health, or the College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences, they send it to us and then we will send it to iTaukei. So it does not look parallel, but the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs has its own ethics committee. I think it is good because you need Indigenous committee that has both Indigenous knowledge and skills, academic knowledge and international knowledge. They probably debate on what is of interest to the Indigenous community and what is not...” (P22/MHMS/Male/40-60 years).

Participants raised that time will be a concern in this process but that this may be the best approach to the ethical review of a research proposal involving *iTaukei* people. There was a lot of faith in the research department of the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs to take the lead role in the governance of human research that involves *iTaukei* people.

4.4.4.3 Need to Strengthen Transparency and Systematic Approach to Review of Research Proposals

The principles that underpin the ethical review at the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs were unknown because this is not documented. The *iTaukei* participants discussed the values of the *iTaukei* as including the *vakarokorokotaki* and *vakaturagataki* respect for persons and *vakaviwekani* relationality (see glossary and Section 4.6.3). How far these values are used in the review process was not discussed.

Therefore, there is a general lack of transparency in review and decision-making processes in the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, discussed in a focus group discussion *talanoa*. For example, major challenges were raised by one of the participants (*P23/Health Staff/Male/40-60 years*) and all agreed upon by members in this FGD *talanoa* regarding the reviews of research proposals submitted to the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs. The decision was either to redesign the research project or reject it outright:

... “our research in villages, we have to go through certain processes, we have to present first to the Divisional officer, where the *iTaukei* Affairs person will be and they are analyzing how exactly things are happening practically on the ground. Then they will give their comments on exactly how to make it more appropriate. Usually, they don’t give us why, so that we can fully understand the principles involved.”
(*P23/MHMS/Male/40-60 years in MHMS FGD talanoa.*)

This implies that the review process at the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs described in this FGD *talanoa* is based on the practicality of *iTaukei* cultural protocols. However, the underlying principles of the *iTaukei* culture which informs cultural protocols are not identified and included in the review.

The participants raised another challenge regarding the FHHREC reviews: The approach of the ethics review was not disaggregated by ethnicity. Research data disaggregated by ethnicity is important for decision making for medical treatment and public health initiatives. The FGD *talanoa* informed the researcher that despite evidence of the high prevalence of infectious diseases among *iTaukei* populations, the review decision was to aggregate data, ignoring ethnicity. This decision has been challenging for doctors and other health professionals who needed to target treatment for the ethnic group with the highest disease burdens.

“... research with iTaukei, when it went back up to the ethics committee, they would want an equal number of samples, for us to be able to create a targeted intervention, we needed research that is targeted. But with the ethics committee, they say that is not appropriate...” (P23/MHMS /Male/40-60 years).

The outcome of the ethics reviews was that the researchers were forced to re-design the research based on the ethics committee reviews so as to include all ethnicities in the research. This research design was then approved by the ethics committee. The results of this research were generalized to all ethnicities of Fiji, thus the disease burden of the *iTaukei* people cannot be resolved through a targeted evidence-based intervention.

“... the results give us different pictures, and when we do the intervention, it cannot be targeted anymore. So that is why we cannot resolve issues in the iTaukei. With the policies, it becomes very difficult for us.”
(P23/MHMS/Male/40-60 years in MHMS FGD talanoa.)

Although *iTaukei* people seem to have the highest disease burdens of all the ethnic groups in Fiji, the efforts to provide empirical evidence of their disease burden has been difficult because of the ethics committee’s decision that any research should provide an equal opportunity for all ethnic groups to participate, according to the principle of equality. In addition, the political push for a united Fiji without ethnic divisions may be the reasons for this decision (Naidu, Matadradra, Sahib, & Osborne, 2013; Prasad, 2019).

In this case, the lack of empirical evidence poses major challenges for the development of interventional strategies for *iTaukei* people. Another opaque area was research priorities. Participants reported that the research about disease burdens of *iTaukei* communities were driven by researchers from outside Fiji in partnership with local clinicians as research partners. Research skills capacity was underdeveloped in Fiji; thus, health research was mostly driven by people from other countries.

4.4.4.4 The Role of Capacity Building in *iTaukei* Research and Ethics

Despite the gaps in capacity, participants noted that formal training on research involving *iTaukei* people is not offered by any of the government ministries. This creates tension among senior staff of two ministries, the MEHA and MITA, who expressed uncertainty as to

who should be mandated to take on the task of delivering a training program. The current practice is that the Provincial Offices are responsible for conducting a brief discussion of *iTaukei* values with researchers.

*“... The researchers should liaise with the provincial council offices ... [who] should brief these researchers on these values, ... this will carry more weight. Someone from relevant authorities...” Because every village are different from each other – the expectations. So each province is to have their guidelines written – of what is expected. When you get the approval from the *iTaukei*, the provinces – they will have the rules on the boards.” (MEHA Staff/Male/40-60 years).*

4.4.4.5 Research Approval from Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs does not Confer Protection of *iTaukei* Communities

Participants outlined how research involving *iTaukei* people needs permission from the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs before commencement. The process requires the researchers to go through an ethics review for their research proposal in their own institution. Then they apply for approval from the Ministry of *iTaukei* for research involving *iTaukei* people. An approval may be granted when the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs Research Unit confirms that all *iTaukei* research requirements are provided. One female academic participant mentioned that the approval granted by the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs is top-down, without any mechanisms in place to protect *iTaukei* people by enforcing issues like the confidentiality of personal data disclosed to researchers by *iTaukei* people who are forthcoming with this information as it is required in the research.

“...blanket approval, to the community, but it does not protect the community, because research you need to do that. The human subject, regardless of what you go there and do, particularly, as assigned, you get all those personal data. For them they happily go along...” (P7/Academic/Female/50-60 years)

This participant’s views may indicate a level of vulnerability of *iTaukei* persons and the government’s lack of monitoring systems for research.

4.4.5. Theme 3: Axiology of research is a culture of protocols: *iTaukei* rules of engagement are the ethics of research.

This theme explores how *iTaukei* culture informs all research ethics processes in the *iTaukei* community. Through the interviews and the documentary analysis, I identified *iTaukei* research ethics principles and cultural protocols that could inform researchers and reviewers in ethics committees about the ethics of *iTaukei* research. The understanding of these principles and protocols is important to maximise the reciprocal benefit of research involving *iTaukei* people and a robust ethics review process in human research ethics committees.

4.4.5.1 *iTaukei* Truth is Measured by the Correctness of the Process.

Participants highlighted *iTaukei* culture as a culture of processes or protocols (participants used these terms interchangeably). Activities performed are judged by the correctness of conducting a process or protocols of that activity in the *Vanua*. However, what constitutes the correctness of the process varies by geographic locations in Fiji. In research it is crucial that researchers find avenues of accessing for the *sala dodonu* or right path to accessing *iTaukei* intellectual properties (IP).

“...and local ethics (iTaukei) because their version of truth depends on how they read the correctness of the process” (P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60years).

The right pathways are also hierarchical, signifying the social status of ownership of knowledge in the selected *iTaukei* setting:

“...Some of the researchers are breaking the iTaukei systems because they are not following the ethical systems of research in iTaukei communities. They have just gone through one person and not through the mataqali (clan) or the tokatoka (several family units) so that it does not come out good...” (P25/MHMS/Male/50-60 years).

Although the *Ratu* or chief can give an approval for the research to take place, the chief may not be the traditional owner of the knowledge sought by the researchers. Knowledge belongs to different groups in one village and the *sala dodonu* to accessing the owners of knowledge needs to be identified and respected in the planning and implementation stages of the research. The chief will inform the researchers who the traditional owners of the knowledge

are and the need to approach them by conducting another *sevusevu* to ask the traditional owners of the knowledge, permission to share their knowledge with the researchers.

The IP of the *iTaukei* is based on ownership in the 14 provinces in Fiji and the hierarchical social status of owners. Researchers are to respect and recognize the IP and the processes of accessing this by conducting *sevusevu*, along with the process of voluntary informed consent deployed appropriately in the selected province and for each of the required hierarchical level of IP for research:

“...When that information comes, because we have an oath with the villages through sevusevu, they give their permission. So they will say, 'I will give my clan's secret information and you are going to keep it'... they bless us so that we don't have any bad mana⁵ coming after us...” (P18/Min of iTaukei/Male/50-60 years).

When researchers do not recognize *iTaukei* knowledge owners there can be negative consequences. Researchers can be rejected from a village because they did not respect the traditional owners of knowledge by following the right path and performing the *sevusevu* for the various owners of knowledge:

“...And even if the chief said yes, we still have to ask the heads of the different groups. This is the negotiation understanding and lack of processes. That is why internationally, people may think there is one way. No there is no one way. ...The worst is when the group of people are told go find yourself another village because the way they handle knowledge, because of the way they did not recognize local knowledge gatekeepers, knowledge owners. Because knowledge does not necessarily belong to the chief in the base society. There are different types of knowledge belonging to different groups (P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60 years).

Researchers must be mindful to seek guidance from people who know the *iTaukei* processes so that they can be context relevant. In doing so, the right knowledge will be shared with them, and the research will be successful. Participants spoke of the result of not respecting and performing the *sala dodonu* processes. *iTaukei* participants may be reluctant or refrain

⁵ Mana: an implication of magic or supernatural effect. (Gatty, 2009)

from sharing the knowledge with the researchers truthfully because of a perceived lack of respect and recognition of them as knowledge owners.

“... *Otherwise, they will play with the data, protect themselves, and we know it happens all the time. ...but more importantly your relationship with people that matter to you. ... They will make sure they tell you a long story to cut out your hour, they will make sure there is lots of silence ... we will go in a round-about way, and we will expect to somehow come to our answer...*”

(P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60 years) “...*They can also not get the right information because people in the village they can play the fool, they can say, we don't know...*” (P18/Min of iTaukei/Male/40-50 years)

IP is still a topic of discussion in Fiji government departments. Ethics committees are also unclear on guidelines to acknowledge traditional knowledge in research. A report in the mainstream media stated the need for *iTaukei* IP to be protected by law and that the *iTaukei* should be given rights over them (Naviticoko, 2023).

4.4.5.2 Sala Dodonu, the Straight Path of iTaukei Research

Researchers must consider that the *iTaukei* culture has very definitive processes and rules of engagement that apply when *iTaukei* participate in research. These definitive processes are referred to in *iTaukei* culture as *sala dodonu* which literally means ‘the straight path’. This a metaphoric representation of the right protocol to follow in work involving *iTaukei* people, thus it is appropriate for *iTaukei* research ethics.

As expressed by a few of the participants, there is a *sala dodonu* for all activities in *iTaukei* daily lives including ceremonies, from the simplest occasion such as the seating arrangement at dinner time in a family setting to the most complicated occasion such as a funeral of a high chief. The *sala dodonu* is defined and respected in all *iTaukei* occasions. People are to follow the right path of conduct for if they deviate, this is a deviation from morality.

Following the right path also removes obstacles. The expectation to follow the right path applies to all visitors including researchers as this is the ethical requirements for research in *iTaukei* society (Katz, 1999). Researchers in *iTaukei* settings are to ask the question, “What is the right path of accessing knowledge from *iTaukei* people?” A person with excellent character or good behaviour would fit well with expectations for persons traveling the *sala dodonu* or the straight path of *iTaukei* knowledge (Katz, 1999). Researchers are to abide by *iTaukei* morality:

“... In *iTaukei* when we talk about ethical behaviour, we use the word sala dodonu. In *iTaukei* thinking, anything you do ethically will make comment about every process, every ceremony, every relationship. There is a path that is straight to conduct research, knowledge gathering, to borrow. If somebody comes to borrow our dance knowledge there is a *sala dodonu* to ask for knowledge. There is a *sala dodonu* to gift, to thank people who provide knowledge, [the] straight path. And they expect people to come to their context and understand, what is the straight path? So, in terms of research, the ethical question would always be. Why access the knowledge that belongs to those clan? What is the proper way?” (P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60 years).

Complying with the *sala dodonu* is important in *iTaukei* life.

“So, a lot of these are hidden. Sometimes we don’t talk about it, but it doesn’t take away that fact that these are the ethics of how we live our life.... recognize what is really important locally...”
(P43/SeniorAcademic/Female/50-60 years).

The axiology of *iTaukei* is a culture of protocols that informs the code of conduct for those associated with *iTaukei* people like researchers. This culture of protocols has been and is communicated orally through past and present generations.

“... it is to do with the protocols. If we follow the right protocol, the right protocol will lead you to the ethical ... the right way, *sevusevu* and sit down and the protocol will provide the ‘ok’ for you.” (P4/Academic/Male/40-50 years).

As discussed by participants, there is an established protocol for each ceremony in the *iTaukei* community such as dance, weddings, funerals, meetings and research. The effectiveness of *iTaukei* activity is subjectively measured by the correctness of the practice of the protocol. Given that *iTaukei* protocols are communicated orally, *iTaukei* people’s and others’ awareness of such protocols can only be approximated. However, forming deep relationships and ongoing discussion with *iTaukei* community members is necessary to truly follow these *Vanua* principles:

“... What do you need to do well? Take time to understand Indigenous and local ethics because their version of truth depends on how they read the correctness of the

process. Not the correctness of what you are asking, but the correctness of the process...” (P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60years).

Researchers are to take time to understand the meaning and nature of *iTaukei* relationships and values. Identifying and applying the correct protocols, *sala dodonu*, in research will ensure that it meets the highest expectations and measurement of the true worth of *iTaukei* values. In the following sections, I examine a few of the *sala dodonu* the participants have discussed for application in research.

4.4.5.3 Traditional and Religious Pathways for Relationship Building for *iTaukei* Ethical Research.

Participants highlighted the importance of building relationships for ethical research involving *iTaukei* people. Relationship building utilizes traditional *iTaukei* links which have been influential in maintaining social cohesion in research. Researchers could identify a connection through any one of or a combination of some of these four pathways of *iTaukei* systems: i) *Veimataki*, ii) *Vasu*, iii) *iTaukei* traditional role structure which was formed in ancient *iTaukei* traditions and ancestral origins, and iv) through Christian groups.

The following sections elaborate on these pathways for relationship building in research as informed by participants.

4.4.5.3.1 *Veimataki*, Homebased Ambassador System (Unique ancient *iTaukei* relationships)

The Fiji/English dictionary translates a *mataki* as an official representative from one village or one territory to another. A *mataki Burebesaga* is a local representative who receives visitors from *Burebesaga*⁶ and acts as a go-between in any communications. The people are said to be *veimataki* (Gatty, 2009). It is a normal practice in Fiji for people to ask each other which district they are from upon meeting for the first time, so that they would each identify the traditional relationship which determines the appropriate behaviour towards each other.

“... then we have cultural relationships which is reflected in the special nature of those relationships. The system is called veimataki. ... When you go to a village, you feel at home because you know your relationship with the village.... And they protect you and give you the same rights as them. ... we

⁶ Burebasaga is one of three confederacies of Fiji's House of Chiefs, comprising of the provinces of Rewa, Nadroga, Serua, Kadavu and parts of Ba and Namosi districts in the Island of Vitilevu (Pauwels, 2015).

have Tauvu, Kabani, Tako Lavo, Tovata, and Mataqali, these are relationships, unique to us” (P32/Head of NGO/Female/60-80 years).

Another participant added to this discussion by elaborating on the cultural relationships.

“... It is the system of mataki or matanikatuba (doorway). We go, we attach to somebody who is a home-based ambassador there, that is the mataki or our doorway... means that you can attach to someone to be your guide.” (P18/Ministry of iTaukei/Male/50-60 years).

The *mataki* home-based ambassador is a person who inherited the traditional role through his or her ancestors. *Veimataki* or *mataki* is an important concept for researchers to know for accessibility of *iTaukei* research settings at any stage of their research projects. The various ancient relationships that link to the *veimataki* system and how they apply to research ethics are discussed in the next four sections.

4.4.5.3.2 Tauvu

To define *tauvu*, the word is divided in two, *tau* and *vu*. *Tau* literally means friend and *vu* means ancient gods. The *iTaukei* understand this concept as friendship via ancestral spirituality. *iTaukei* people who identify as *tauvu* believed that their ancestors worshipped the same ancestral gods, thus they have a relationship.

“... When some of us go into our village and clan and we have traditional links, that system also opens the gates... “Tau” as soon as people go in and they are tauvu to them, that connection is old, and it opens up....”
(P18/Ministry of iTaukei/Male/50-60 years)

“... you are actually applying it not to individual but to a group of people, ... you are coming as an ally and as a friend and that is more likely to be of benefit ..., it improves the efficiency of the conduct of the research.”
(P22/MHMS/Male/40-60 years).

The significance of *tauvu* in research is that it promotes relationship building. Through establishing this relationship, accessibility, anticipation of success and reciprocity of outcomes are expected.

4.4.5.3.3 *Tako and Lavo*

Relationships are easily established amongst people of these provinces via the *tako* or *lavo* ancient relationship concepts (Ravai, 2014). These are concepts to describe the genealogy of ancient *iTaukei* siblings and are mostly used in particular locations: *Ra*, *Namosi*, interior *Ba*, *Nadroga-Navosa*, interior *Naitasiri* and *Serua* on *Vitilevu*. The generations of the eldest sibling are referred to as *tako* and the generations of the younger siblings are the *lavo*. Now (in 2024), these terms are used as an expression to show respect to someone who is older than oneself or of high rank in traditional Fijian society. People do not call their parents or someone older than themselves by their name, or by their family relationship such as mother or father, aunt, or uncle. Instead, they call them *tako*. On the other hand, a father, aunt or uncle calls their sons, daughters, nephews or nieces *lavo*. It is also an expression of love and affection towards family members:

“... *I am always surprised when we are with people from Vitilevu, and when we go to Naitasiri, Namosi, Serua or Ra, they already know their relationship with the village that we are going to. They know if they are tako or lavo, and that tells us their relationship...*” (P32/Head of NGO/Female/60-80 years).

iTaukei people have this knowledge from their ancestors. If people want to use this pathway and they are foreigners, they only need to find someone from the relevant districts of Fiji and ask them to become their cultural guide.

4.4.5.3.4 *Kaivata*

Kaivata is a concept used to indicate a relationship among people who originate from the same geographical province in Fiji, for example, the province of *Ba*, *Kadavu*, *Lau* and *Tailevu*. People from all over Fiji identify with *kaivata*. Researchers can use the *kaivata* relationship as a pathway to enter the districts or villages that they are researching.

Researchers should include a person of *iTaukei* origin from these districts as a cultural guide in research. The foreign members of the research team will then be treated as a *kaivata* and not a foreigner. This relationship will enable the smooth implementation of research in the *iTaukei* community.

4.4.5.3.5 *Tovata*

Another form of relationship is *tovata* and includes people from the Fijian geographic provinces of Lau, and Vanualevu, the second largest island in Fiji. The provinces of Bua, Macuata and Cakaudrove are identified as the *Tovata* confederacy. The *tovata* confederacy was founded by the Tongan Prince Ma'afu in 1867 (Lal, 1992). Researchers may also build relationships for their research through the *tovata*. If the research setting is in one of the *Tovata* confederacy districts, it is advisable that researchers find an *iTaukei* person from any one of the districts to be their cultural research guide. This guide will inform the research team of the most appropriate pathways to follow and how to comply with cultural protocol requirements.

4.4.5.3.6 Family relationship links – *vasu*, maternal and paternal links

The *vasu* is an ancient concept that describes *iTaukei* people's maternal relationships in villages and in a *mataqali* (clan). Intermarriage through the *vasu* was utilized by *iTaukei* ancestors to enlarge an empire, reconcile, and bring peace within rival groups and consolidate family ties. Likewise in research, the *vasu system* is a pathway that is already strong within *iTaukei* cultures for research relationship building in *iTaukei* settings. A participant gave an example ...

“... Example, Fijian ladies, we marry our ladies off to kingdoms. If there is something, we have our ladies, we follow our maternal line, whether it is war or funeral, sports, we go there and we want to find out our setting, because we have traditional links in that setting. Particularly if you want Indigenous knowledge... why do *iTaukei* getting more and more NCDs [Non-communicable diseases]? We have to use this system (*vasu*) to find out the root of NCDs in *iTaukei*. ...This is how we have evolved, developing our knowledge.” (P26/MHMS/Male/50-60 years).

Researchers can identify a person with the *vasu* hereditary system and involve them in the planning and implementation of the research project involving *iTaukei* people. A pathway to research with Indigenous communities is the *vasu system*. The *iTaukei* community identify strongly with a person of *vasu* heredity so that they will happily open doors for research.

4.4.5.4 *iTaukei* traditional roles

The third pathway to building relationships in *iTaukei* research is through the hierarchical roles and responsibilities of people in their *iTaukei* settings. Participants discussed the various roles that people have inherited in the *iTaukei* cultural setting, described in the last two paragraphs of this section (see also Figure 4.8). The roles involve duties to be performed by each person for the prosperity of their communities, and they are interdependent. Levels in the hierarchy are equal in rank to each other. Participants spoke about the hierarchy and interdependence of roles in this structure:

“... and the hierarchy of our culture, cause, each one of that hierarchy, has a special role and responsibility. It does not mean that [if] you belong to the lower rank that you are unimportant. No, the role is important, the chief is not a chief if you don't play your role. And if the chief does not play his role too. That is a very important part of our society, the hierarchy...” (P32/Head NGO/Female/60-80 years)

Below are brief descriptions of the titles and roles or duties of each title traditionally bestowed upon a person or persons through ancestral inheritances. Understanding these is important for research and research ethics as these are the people who hold authority in the *Vanua* and can grant permission to allow research in their communities. (see Figure 4.10).

Figure 4. 10: Titles with the Authority to Grant Permission for Research



The first three roles are the *Ratu* (high chief), *Bete levu ni kalou vu* (traditional priests) and *Bete Matanivanua ni tui* (spokesperson). The first two roles are practically self-explanatory. The third is pivotal for researchers. The *Bete Matanivanua* is the spokesperson and mediator between chief and people. This spokesperson's role is to mediate between the chief and other people, for example, to receive gifts presented for the chief on his or her behalf. For researchers, the *Bete Matanivanua* is a very important person because the research team will seek an audience with the spokesperson to introduce the research and ask for permission to come into the village to conduct the entry protocols required before the research can be conducted. The spokesperson will relay all the information received from the research team to the high chief. The high chief will grant permission and when all the cultural protocols are done, then the research can be conducted.

“... the Matanivanua, he is the mata or the face of the land, and at the same time, the mouth. He is the face because he sees things, because he has all these senses also, because these are alive the Vanua is alive. He is informed, and goes out to the chief, and the chief inform the Matanivanua, what goes out to others. ‘We are having this meeting, because of the programme next week,

to come and decide whether to allow them to come in or to stop them from coming into the village' ...” (P42/Clergy/Male/40-50 years old)

The final three roles are the *Gonedau* (chief's fishermen), *Mataisau* (chief's carpenters and boat builders) and *Bati* (warriors who guard and protect the chief). An example of how this relationship works is that according to one of the participants, any *Mataisau* visiting another village will ask for the house of the *Mataisau* of this village and goes and stays there because they have an existing relationship as *Mataisau*.

Researchers may identify and approach any holders of these roles as appropriate and ask them to assist them with entry and research in their communities.

4.4.5.5 Christian groups to the *Bose Vanua*

The third pathway to building relationships in *iTaukei* research is through Christian groups. In every *iTaukei* community, a Christian church building is commonly seen. The majority of *iTaukei* people are Christians of different Christian denominations, such as Methodist, Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, and others. Although Christian groups within the *iTaukei* communities can be identified as strong pathways to research, the church does not have an independent authority in *iTaukei* communities. The church parties are obliged to observe all the *Vanua* research protocols. After the *Vanua* grants approval to the church groups, then they can go ahead and work with the researchers in all stages of the research. The church and the *Vanua* have a strong respectful interrelated association.

The Christian groups work alongside the *Vanua* in most activities.

“... There are people from the government or from the church that are coming to visit our village, and the purpose. For the church, it has to go through the church to the Vanua... the talatala (church pastor) himself cannot decide. No, it has to go to the Bose Vanua (village meeting)...”
(P42/Clergy/Male/40-50 years).

The church and the *Vanua* are both involved in a joint protocol, and their interdependence is a significant aspect in this relationship post Christianity. One participant made a very significant contribution to this topic:

“...A spiritual life has elements which are of biblical origin and traditional origin, and that makes the spiritual life of the iTaukei...” (P22/MHMS/Male/50-60 years).

When researchers build awareness of the research project in the *iTaukei* community, the church groups can be relied upon to disseminate information to prospective participants, via the church announcements sessions or meetings. The church is a trusted communication channel and source of information in *iTaukei* communities.

4.4.5.6 Reciprocity is Honourable and Spiritual in the Context of *iTaukei* Relationality

At the entry point and exit of research investigations in *iTaukei* communities, the exchange of tangible and intangible assets between researchers and *iTaukei* people in the research forms part of the traditional protocols required. When the protocols of exchange are performed well, this is honourable and shows that the researchers respect the *iTaukei* community. The outcome of these exchanges is a relationship formed between researchers and *iTaukei* community which is expected to last a lifetime.

The spirituality of the *iTaukei* people in their communities is embodied in the protocols performed, therefore respect will be reciprocated. Trust of researchers by *iTaukei* community emerges through the respectful conduct of protocols. Doors will open; the community will engage in research and protection from harm will be provided for the researchers:

“... they bless us so that we don’t have any bad mana coming after us, witchcraft, sorcery. [Taking about personal experience] There are people who do not agree with what we do in the village, there are those who have almost died because somebody want to do witchcraft to stop the transmission of information. Some of us have already had, actually, mysterious illness in the village, because every good thing has its downside, there will always be... so when that information comes because we have an oath with the villages through sevusevu, they give their permission, ‘I will give my clan’s secret information and you are going to keep it...’” (P18/Min of iTaukei/Male/50-60 years)

Knowledge needs to be shared the right way with acknowledgement and *iTaukei* involvement. Researchers are obliged to include in the traditional protocols the tangible asset of *kava* (*yaqona*), while food and clothing are optional gifts. “

“... sharing food, sharing wealth this is all part of our ethics. Gifting is very important, veiwekani relationship, gifting reciprocity ...” (P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60years).

Intangible assets include *iTaukei* people’s and researchers’ knowledge and skills that are exchanged during the research. The release of knowledge of the *iTaukei* people is connected to their spirituality and protocols.

“... It is an honourable, very highly regarded activity, the exchange of things, exchange of knowledge. So, when you reciprocate, you have to reciprocate well ... most importantly ... you must maintain the rapport with the communities. Not one off, you come and you give them money and assist them in development projects and then you leave. No, you have to maintain the connection, maybe they become your family and you become their family as well.” (P13/MEHA/Male/40-50 years).

If the protocols and reciprocal exchange of assets do not take place, several negative repercussions may occur.

- Information sought in research may not be given. The research outcome may not exactly be the desired outcome because *iTaukei* people have not released the knowledge to the researchers.
- There may be some difficulty in achieving a trusting relationship between the two parties.
- Harm may result, such as physical illness.

“Fijians do the same, they make sure they misinform you they will make sure they tell you a long story to cut out your hour, they will make sure there is lots of silences, So, the best thing to do is be quiet, because ..., they don’t owe anything to the researcher, but already in their knowledge system, they know, they misrepresent their people or they speak wrong of their people or they don’t enhance their people in the process of their talking they will be punished locally ...” (P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60 years)

4.4.5.7 Lack of Reciprocity of Benefits and Power Dynamics

Participants explained that they had experienced a lack of reciprocity because where the power is held by international organizations and academics doing research in Fiji

and the *iTaukei* people are powerless in negotiating benefits for their involvement in research.

“So we also did some surveys on forests, but those surveys they were determined [by] what the World Bank wants, cause when we provided the reports, we made the comments that the information that we were gathering was of no benefit to the Indigenous people. It was only of benefits to outsiders who wanted to study us. Because we are the Indigenous people and we are the forest, we are the cultivators, where we the iTaukei are about 60% of the population ... and we own all the natural resources.” (P32/Head of NGO/female/60s-80 years).

“...on sites we are upfront and straightforward, the benefit will go to the researchers, and those students doing research. Not us...”
(P12/MEHA/male/50-60 years).

The participants spoke with disappointment because they felt that their role was just to facilitate the research of international research organizations such as the World Bank which leaves them powerless. Research from academic institutions was also mentioned as beneficial only to the academic researchers and not the *iTaukei* community.

Various negative aspects were mentioned: i) no reciprocity of benefits (tangible and intangible), ii) a lack of the respect when traditional protocols are not performed well, iii) a lack of trust, iv) a lack of spiritual blessing meaning that the Vanua did not release the information shared with researchers.

Researchers are to practice inclusivity, participation and respect of *iTaukei* people and protocols that are important to reverse this pattern. In the next section, the three *iTaukei* protocols are highlighted that researchers can comply with to solve the problems of a lack of reciprocity and benefits.

4.4.5.8 The three *iTaukei* research ethics protocols

The first on the list of *iTaukei* research protocols is the *na vakatadumata* involving awareness building through an orientation process.

“...When there is a function the researchers should go to the Matanivanua. So that the researcher will be taken to the chief’s house. You cannot go directly to the chief’s house.... Sometimes we go earlier, and we inform the village that we will be coming at so and so time, so the villagers are informed directly.

They are also informed of the work that is going to take place and what the work is. This is given out to the villages...” (P8/MEHA/Male/40-50 years).

People of the village will be informed and will prepare themselves to receive the visitors or researcher in their homes or take them to the site of the research. Another way to conduct a suitable entry protocol is to utilize Provincial Office field officers, to lead the team in this process of *sevusevu*:

“... Yes, the field officers/assistants, are the spokespersons, mostly once we engage the Provincial Office, and with the provincial officers, your point of contact is already made. The village headman already knows. If there is any problem, we approach the village headman. (P8/MEHA/Male/40-50 years).

Participants considered it inappropriate for researchers to just turn up to *iTaukei* villages and request to do things in the village just as asking villagers questions without the proper protocol being followed strictly:

“... One of the things mentioned to researchers, when we go to a village, we ensure that we know where we are going to, we cannot just go to a Fijian village and you go in and say, ‘I want to...’ No, we go into a village and see the turaganikoro (village headman). He is the representative of the government in the village...” (P4/Academic/Male/50-60 years).

The second protocol is the *na solesolevaki* (engagement protocol). A *sevusevu*⁷ presentation is required to ask for permission to engage the community and for the leaders of the community to appoint a team of cultural guides or assistants. This denotes a spiritual messenger or supernatural effect (Gatty, 2009). When they accept the *sevusevu*, it “opens a door” (P32/Head NGO/female/60-80s years) for the researchers’ work to be implemented in the village with the blessing of the *Vanua* which is an *iTaukei* ancestral spiritual belief. This participation of villagers will be done willingly and happily after the protocol of *sevusevu* is completed and accepted by the chief. After this protocol, the research can take place with the planned method of data collection, such as meetings with community members, familiarization via the cultural guide, or field research, meetings or *talanoa* (FGD or key informants’ interviews).

⁷ *Sevusevu*: Presentation of yaqona root (waka) in a ceremony of introduction or greeting by a visitor. (Gatty, 2009)

“...So those are the system we follow, so whatever we did, collecting data, writing in our diary, the *sevusevu* gave us the okay. So, in the village meeting, they will announce that the (visitors/researchers) will come and they will collect data” (P2/Academic/Male/50-60 years).

One participant had a nuanced view of authority of the *sevusevu* in relation to individual persons. According to her the *sevusevu* opens a door to enter and do work and other things in the village, but it will not coerce every individual to participate in the research or other functions. “*Sevusevu, you are allowed to come into the community, but that does not mean that everybody will participate*” (P7/Academic/Female/50-70 years).

At times researchers stay in the village while conducting their research. The participants discussed how visitors must comply with the appropriate dress code, sitting arrangements and other daily living protocols in the villages. Respect underpins these acts.

“... so mostly we stay together in the village, for a length of time. All protocols in the village is adhered to. Even though the research group is large, the village protocol is adhered to. We inform the researchers before, what we wear in the village, how we should sit, this is mentioned to the researcher...” (P18/Min of ITaukei/Male/50-60 years).

A participant emphasized that these processes of asking permission for research must recognize the importance of the prospective research participants for without them the community is dead. (P42/Clergy/Male/40-50s). Some villages do not have a chief, so the leader of the clan *turaga or marama ni mataqali* (descendant of traditional leaders of the village appointed traditionally to hold the leadership role of the village) should be approached. If the traditional protocol of the village is not respected, the people of the village will not support the research because they feel disrespected.

The third is the exit protocol *Nai Vakatale* that involves *iTatau*, which represents the exit point. When the research is completed, then there is a final traditional process to be conducted, the *iTatau*.

The *iTatau* has four important dimensions. Firstly, the visitors say thank you and express their gratitude for the villagers allowing the implementation of the project in their village. Secondly, the visitors seek forgiveness for any unintended shortfalls they may have made. Thirdly, visitors ask for their traditional release so that they may depart with the village blessings of the Vanua that shared their Indigenous knowledge with these researchers.

Fourthly, the relationships built via this occasion does not cease at the *iTatau* ceremony, rather it is strengthened, and both parties express their willingness to maintain the relationship for life. This is important based on the reciprocity of research benefits. The researcher is already part of the community; thus, he or she can return to the community anytime to translate the results of the research and help with community development activities based on the research findings. Or the researcher may just visit on a courtesy call to the community to attend church or someone's wedding:

"...And when that is done, we have a final custom again, the presentation of the yaqona to close and to ask for the blessings so we leave, and not leave with a bad or negative..." (P8/MEHA/Male/40-50 years).

"...When the final iTatau yaqona is done and when we depart and the promises made over the yaqona that we will keep your stories, your Indigenous knowledge." (P18/iTaukei Staff/Male/40-50 years).

4.4.5.9 Voluntary Informed Consent, Top-Down or Individual Rights-based

Analysing the views of participants regarding the process of voluntary informed consent (VIC) was an interesting task involving exploring the varied viewpoints. The viewpoints were synthesised into two main themes, i) the hierarchical top down *iTaukei* traditional and more communitarian decision-making process, versus ii) the individual rights-based decision-making process promoted by international research bioethics guidelines.

There were mixed feelings in the discussions. Participants stated that top-down voluntary consent for research is the chief's responsibility. The people of the village will not object to the chief's consent because they respect their chief, and their communal culture allows for top hierarchical level authority to prevail:

"... when the chiefs say that there's this group coming to do research, it is like a cover consent given. There is no objection, from them. The activity has to be conducted. That is the form of ethics, because everyone understands that there is a way of making decisions. It is not made by individuals, but it is made. Even the elders, the hierarchy, that makes the decision..." (P22/MHMS/Male/50-60 years).

"... the individual consent does not really have any value there because of the hierarchy, it is a communal, it is the chiefs who give the consent ...". (P25/MHMS/Male/40-50 years).

The top-down decision making then overpowers the individual consent in *iTaukei* setting thus the Western standard of informed consent taken on paper confuses people and creates tension, as one participant discussed,

“... I see that there is tension happening there, where the villagers thought. We have given these researchers the approval, through the head of the village, why do they want my authority again when the authority is up there? There is some confusion, we are using both: hard copy individual consent, as well as the chief’s consent through the *sevusevu* ...” (P7/Academic/Female/50-60 years).

Participants felt that it is a disrespectful act to ask for individual consent while there was approval granted through the *sevusevu* process. Rather, researchers should stay under the cover of the *sevusevu* and not ask for individual consent for two reasons: i) individuals may not want to commit to something new by signing a formal document, and ii) they do not want to be held accountable for something that one signs.

Despite the strength of the top-down informed consent authority, other participants discussed the influence of education in the contemporary *iTaukei* leadership style. Through the years, the chiefly decision-making has been influenced by education and democracy. The chief’s decision making can both be traditional and democratic through traditional *sevusevu* permission as well as allowing individual people in the village to make their own decisions to consent or not. There are no regulations, rather is based on the prerogative of the chief.

On the other hand, it was discussed in the *talanoa* sessions that some *iTaukei* people are challenging this communitarian principle with the ideas of individualism, “...you have to think of family first...how come you are taking the best things there?” (P26/Health Staff/Male/50-60 years). Thus, a proposal was made that “...there need to be some modification...”, (P25/Health Staff/male/50-60 years) to enable *iTaukei* to combine both communitarianism and individualism and make it beneficial to *iTaukei* living in modern times. This topic needs further respectful research.

4.4.5.10 The Right to Speak is Influenced by the *Digitaki Vakavanua* (*iTaukei* Selection Process)

Participants were asked if there is a word to describe the ethical process of seeking out the right person with the right knowledge in the *iTaukei* research setting. Participants from government ministries spoke about the *iTaukei* method of selecting research participants,

which not the same as the Western sampling method of “random” selection. The *iTaukei* selection method is *Digitaki Vakavanua* (traditional selection method), “... *traditional selection of subjects, iTaukei have their own qualifications*” (P25/Health Staff/Male//40-50 years).

The *digitaki vakavanua* method is the selection of persons with the appropriate *iTaukei* authority, qualification, skills, and background to talk on a topic or issue of interest, representing the interest of the *Vanua*. The selection is done by authorized persons in the *iTaukei* setting, based on existing traditional inheritance and authorized by the chief to represent the *Vanua*. “... *Focus group, for example, you don’t just choose anyone, Indigenous – we choose the ones who can participate and [are]supposed to speak...*” (P26/MHMS/Male/50-60 years).

This is very similar to purposive sampling. Traditional authority is also based on the hierarchical structure of the *iTaukei* setting. When this process is fulfilled the *iTaukei* people are happy to share an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter with researchers:

“... *We are happy to share our depth of traditional knowledge, we know who are in authority to talk on those topics and are allowed by the iTaukei system ...*” (P25/MHMS/Male/40-50 years).

This is a formal process in the *iTaukei* setting:

“... *It is formal to us. The formal system enables you to get exactly what you want. Not randomization it is conditionally supplied ...*” (P26/MHMS//Male/40-50 years).

Because of this understanding of who holds knowledge, there are some issues regarding the method or member selection for a focus group discussion (FGD).

“... *In research Focus Group Talanoa session researchers have to consider the hierarchical status of persons in the group. If a high person is there, for example, a chief, the others will not talk...*” (P3/Academic/Female/50-60 years).

“...*So, in a research, context, if you want to get the right people, you need to get the people that have the entitlement to speak in such a group...*” (P26/MHMS//Male/40-50 years).

When this happens it contradicts the aim of an FGD *talanoa* session from an international perspective in which the researcher wants each of the members of the group to have an equal chance to share their knowledge. When a person with high social status speaks, others who

are present in the FGD will not. Therefore, the researcher needs to rethink the data collection process so that views of other members of the group can be accessed freely:

“...If the researcher is interested in what others’ views in the group, you have to find strategies of trying to talk to them individually... You can do that in your role as the data collector, to facilitate that, to find time to talk to the others on their own. I am sure that with their education and experiences, they have something else to share. They will elaborate things; you will learn so much from them...”
(Academic/Female/1/50-60 years).

It is a challenging situation for the researcher if the *digitaki vakavanua* is not complied with. So, the selection process needs to be implemented by using the *iTaukei* formal systems appropriately.

4.4.5.11 Veitabuki: Caution about Unique Relationships among iTaukei People in Focus Group Discussion Talanoa Sessions

Participants in three focus groups (MHMS, Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, MEHA) discussed the *veitabuki* relationship because of its relevance to research. They stated that certain people in *iTaukei* family relations are prohibited by culture (*taboo*) to talk to each other freely. This *taboo* applies also in focus group *talanoa* session in research. One example of *veitabuki* in a family is that brothers and sisters are not allowed to sit in one focus group and discuss issues freely. Another example is that fathers and sons-in-laws are not allowed to freely talk (P18/Min of *iTaukei*/Male/50-60 years). People in certain villages are not allowed to talk to each other or eat certain foods, like fish or pork, in each other’s presence.

“... veitabuki there are certain villages that cannot talk they cannot eat [together]. I can eat fish, you can eat pork but when we are together, I can’t eat fish and you can’t eat pork...” (P24/MHMS/Female/40-50 years).

The researchers need to be aware of and understand the *veitabuki* relationship in *iTaukei* research. It is best to consult with the villagers about the selection of people for group *talanoa* to avoid placing people in *veitabuki* relations in one group. If there are some *veitabuki*, then they should be placed in different groups. *“They can say, first in the introduction to focus group discussion. Is everyone comfortable with talking to each other?”* (P10/MEHA/male/40-50/years). The repercussions can potentially be fatal if this *veitabuki* is not observed, especially for someone who cannot eat certain food in the presence of another.

“... So, we need to understand this kind of relationship because when you look deeper into this it could be very grave. Some even can die, choking on the bones of the fish because you’re not supposed to be eating those kinds of things in the presence of persons of *veitabuki* relationship...” (P24/MHMS/Female/40-50 years).

4.4.6 Theme 4: The Theoretical Underpinnings of *iTaukei* Research Ethics

Theoretical underpinnings are linked to practical guidance in research such as how to behave, speak less and listen more, respect for ancestors, ancient sites and the human body, the dress code and use of respectful language and the staring in a person’s face is rude.

It is crucial to understand the dimensions of the theoretical underpinnings of the *Vanua* as a foundation of *iTaukei* research ethics. When participants were asked to describe the dimensions of the theoretical underpinnings of *iTaukei* research ethics the answers given were varied. The various dimensions of the theoretical underpinnings raised by participants are presented below.

Seven thematic concepts emerged from the data. These are treated in this research as seven sub-themes related to the theoretical underpinnings of *iTaukei* research ethics:

- (i) The *iTaukei* ontology is based on the concept of *Vakavanua* – the way of the land which includes ancestral *spirituality* and a community approach to *iTaukei* life.
- (ii) Within the *iTaukei* ontology of *Vakavanua*, is *Vakarokoroko* or respect, the principle that underpins all research protocols in the *Vanua*.
- (iii) Research is ceremony. The ceremony involves the first *sevusevu* and presentation of gifts to the people of the village as an act of fulfilment of an obligation of asking for entry into the village. The ceremony opens doors for research and contributes to the protection and safekeeping of *iTaukei* traditional knowledge.
- (iv) Intellectual property is important as it is about *iTaukei* ownership of knowledge and other resources in their community,
- (v) *iTaukei* community participation in research. Researchers are not to rush in with their research agenda. They need to take time and wait for the community representatives as they will dictate the appropriate time for research.
- (vi) Vulnerability of *iTaukei* communities. Participants mentioned that some communities are vulnerable and can be distracted with bribes.

(vii) A communications approach is based on humility.

Participants highlighted that the *iTaukei* knowledge system originates from the *Vanua* culture during pre-Christian times. The *Vanua* implies that people are the living soul of the physical environment of *iTaukei*, in which there is a mutual intimate belongingness to each other (Ravuvu, 1987). The *Vanua*, as a source of knowledge for the *iTaukei*, needs to be recognized and given equal worth in international research ethics:

“...We can no longer accept that the ethics and the framing and the way we conduct research which is knowledge gathering will be entirely that space...”
(P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60 years)

“...but we have our own ethics in research in *iTaukei*, which originate from our traditional knowledge...” (P25/Health Staff/Male/50-60 years).

4.4.6.1 The Three-Legged Stool of *iTaukei* people, *Vanua* (people and land), *Lotu* (religion), *Matanitu* (government)

The three-legged stool of *iTaukei* people defines the three important systems that are ingrained in an *iTaukei* person’s life and interplays within the *iTaukei* community every day. The three-legged stool has the combined strengths of colonial and Indigenous systems pre- and post-colonial times that are important for the *iTaukei* HRE.

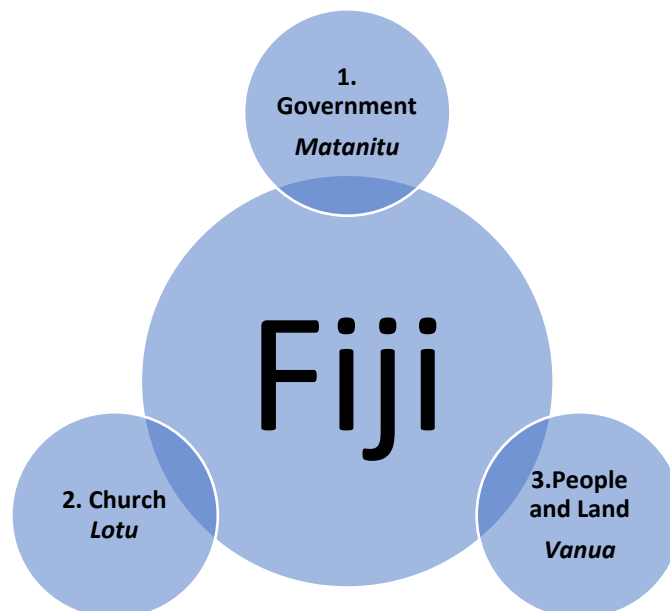
The term three-legged stool was first coined by Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna (1888-1958), a high chief and statesman of Fiji who laid the foundation for a self-governing and modern Fiji (Sukuna, 1983). Ratu Sukuna’s three-legged stool represented the three ethnic groups of Fiji, the *iTaukei*, the Indo- Fijians and the Europeans who have settled in Fiji and formed the government of Fiji (Kotobalavu, 2023). This metaphor has been adopted in another portrayal of the three legged stool as the *vanua* (people and land), *lotu* (World Council of Churches, 2002) and *matanitu* (government), also the three pillars of the Fijian society, was “predominantly a Fiji Methodist religion-cultural ideal structure that came into being during the colonial period (1874–1970)” (Ryle, 2005, p.65). This is illustrated through an imaginary structure of a stool with three legs that hold up a base for a seat. The three legs of the stool, *vanua*, *lotu* and *matanitu*, represent a platform which is the nation of Fiji.

Each of the legs (pillars) are of equal lengths and strengths – enabling them to bear the weight of the nation of Fiji equally, emphasising strengths and stability (Narube, 2018). This means that all three legs must treat each other as equal partners with respect, share responsibilities, and play their rightful roles in holding up the seat (Fiji) and so the nation of

Fiji will come together as one to live in peace and harmony. If one leg fails, the other legs will also be affected (see Figure 4.11).

The three-legged stool concept is applied in all levels of *iTaukei* life. It defines an *iTaukei* person's life and the systems in which the *iTaukei* individual exists and interplays within the *iTaukei* community every day. (The image of three-legged stool can also be used to describe the three kinds of the participants, an academic, a church minister and a health professional, as an important concept to understand in research involving *iTaukei* people.

Figure 4. 11: The Three-Legged Stool



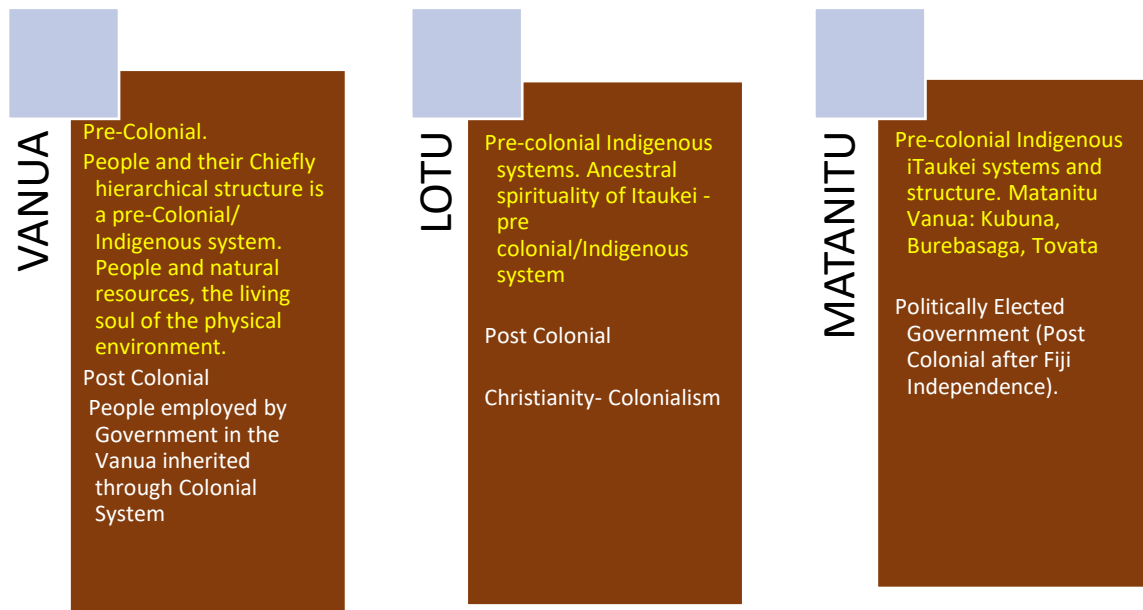
Participants stated that the ideology of the *iTaukei* three-legged stool should be central to *iTaukei* research ethics and governance. The Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs HRE component is the common factor between the current political government and – *Matanitu Vanua* (pre-colonial governments) of Fiji. Its staff support principles such as reciprocal benefits – as such communal benefits prioritized over individual benefits. The proposed benefits include the researcher translating the results of the research to be understood by lay persons in the village, which will be useful for community development.

The *Vanua* and *Matanitu* components were also explored in relation to HRE. Participants observed tensions in various features of the three-legged stool. The following discussion

includes the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs as a possible structure to engage *iTaukei* research ethics and governance mechanisms. The *Vanua* system is strongly observed and widely practiced throughout Fiji, but it is not well documented in research ethics and governance literature.

Participants reported that some researchers use the *iTaukei* system to ask for permission to conduct research in the *Vanua* and disregard the government system at the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs. The *iTaukei* system involves the *iTaukei* cultural authority within the village held by the head or the chief of the village. Researchers were reported to go directly to the *iTaukei* community and identify this cultural authority and perform the traditional protocol of the *sevusevu*, asking for permission at this level and thus being granted permission. Participants were of the view that the *iTaukei* culture is allowing this process which may be detrimental to the *iTaukei* communities, because of issues of security, intellectual property, a lack of reciprocal benefits and other issues.

Figure 4. 12: Pre-colonial and Post-Colonial Views of the Three-Legged Stool. The Combined Strengths of Colonialism and Indigenous Systems for the *iTaukei* HRE Framework



Through this research, a dual view of the three-legged stool was identified comprising pre-colonial and post-colonial developments. The pre- and post-colonial description of each leg of the three-legged stool is included in Figure 4.12 diagram.

VANUA LEG: This depicts that the *lewenivanua* (the people) are the living soul of the physical environment and their chiefly hierarchical structure. Their natural resources existed in the pre-colonial/Indigenous era. Through colonialism changes were made in the *Vanua* structure. These changes included the creation of government positions, such as the *Roko*, the *Buli*, the *Turaga-ni-Koro* (village officer) as well as the Great Council of Chiefs and the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs discussed in Section 4.1.2.

There is a power struggle between *iTaukei* researchers in Fiji who identify as part of the *Vanua* and the structure created in the MITA in the Fiji Government administration. *iTaukei* researchers who feel a privileged identity with the *Vanua* structure disregard the HRE system of the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs and only seek the endorsement of the *Vanua* in research. However, findings of this research explain the risks that are caused by this power struggle. To manage the risks, the combined strength of both views in the *Vanua* leg are needed for a strong HRE governance mechanism.

Lotu leg: This represents an aggregate body of traditional ancestral spirituality of the *iTaukei* people pre-Christian era, and the Christian-based religious beliefs brought in by missionaries in the post-colonial era. These two features are engaged in HRE governance mechanisms and ethical research protocols because they are the core components of the spirituality of *iTaukei* life.

Matanitu leg: This portrays both the politically elected government of Fiji as well as the *Matanitu Vanua*, which is the pre-colonial traditional governments of Fiji, *Kubuna*, *Burebasaga* and *Tovata*. These traditional governments formed the basis for the *Veimataki* Indigenous research ethics pathways discussed in the subthemes of Section 4.4.5. The post-colonial development forms the foundation for the Great Council of Chiefs⁸ forum and the government administration that formed all the line ministries that provide HRE oversight mechanisms now. The outcomes of this research suggest a need to go back to pathways that were created in the pre-colonial era to re-establish *iTaukei* research ethics and the use of traditional *iTaukei* protocols in research.

4.4.6.2 *iTaukei* ontology *Vakavanua* - the way of the land - the ethics that are covert

The ethos of *iTaukei* life is the *Vanua*. The living being of the *Vanua* is the *iTaukei* people and their land (physical environment) combined as one intimate body that is interdependent for survival. There is an intimate involvement between people and land, “*lewenivanua* is the flesh of the land. If the land has no flesh it will die, and people without their land cannot survive.” (P42/Clergy/Male/40-50 years).

The ethos of *Vanua* manifests itself in *Vakavanua* (the way of the land) and includes the following dimensions: *iTaukei* paradigms, spirituality, systems and processes, behaviours, practices, and aspirations (see Figure 4.13).

⁸ The Great Council of Chiefs *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* was a formal gathering of Fiji's Indigenous chiefs. It was established by the British colonial government in 1876 and ran for 131 years. (University of the South Pacific, 2023)

Figure 4. 13: iTaukei Ontology - Vakavanua



The spirituality of *iTaukei* people in pre-Christian times was based on ancestral beliefs. Another version of spirituality, the Christian faith, was later added. In contemporary Fiji, although many people are adapting to the Western way of living through globalization, they unconsciously observe the ancient *iTaukei Vanua* ways.

“... I have observed Fijian way of living still very strongly observing this ancient Vanua principle sometimes unconsciously...” (P24/MHMS/Female/40-50 years).

Participants explained the *iTaukei* paradigm of spirituality through the story of a person with an illness. The interpretation of the illness and treatment methods will not commonly be approached from a biomedical model, rather from a *Vanua* perspective.

If an *iTaukei* person is physically or mentally ill, the belief is that the illness is a result of some disrespectful acts towards the ancestral world or the non-compliance with the required protocols of the *Vanua*⁹:

⁹ **“Vanua:** *The living soul or human manifestation of the physical environment which the members have since claimed to belong to them and to which they also belong. The land is the physical or geographical entity of the people, upon which their survival...as a group depends. Land is thus an extension of the self. Likewise, the people are an extension of the land. Land becomes lifeless and useless without the people, and likewise the people are helpless and insecure without land to thrive upon.*” (Ravuvu, 1983, p. 76).

“...Ancestors, that’s what they believe in, if someone gets sick in the village, it has nothing to do with religion. It’s to do with their belief system that these people disrespect some of the things in the Vanua...” (P24/MHMS//Female/40-50 years).

“... So, when the medical people come and interview him, he will just talk about what is safe... the physical element. He will not discuss the fact that they’ve given over the chiefly title to the next clan wrongly, in the wrong manner...” (P43/Senior Academic/female/50-60 years).

The *sevusevu* is recommended as a requirement, because it is a ritual that acknowledges and recognizes the ancestral spirituality in the *Vanua*. One of the participants discussed an experience of how he applied to the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs for permission to conduct research. The researchers were asked to give an oral presentation of the research project to the *iTaukei* Affairs research department for assessment. They were assessed according to the research protocols presented. Afterwards, the *iTaukei* Affairs officers presented the result of their assessment orally. The assessment was based on the correctness of the research protocols:

“...usually we have to present, oral first to the Divisional officer, where the *iTaukei* Affairs person will be and then they will give their comments, ... they are assessing and analyzing on how exactly things are happening practically on the ground ...” (P23/Health Staff/Male/40-50 years).

The correctness of the protocols of conducting ceremonies is very important in *iTaukei* ethics, which also applies in research. Researchers are to ensure that they consult with *iTaukei* advisor about the *sala dodonu* (straight path) for their research.

iTaukei paradigms are based on communitarianism, “... our thinking in Fijian, it is community first...” (P25/Health Staff/Male/50-60 years), which links people to their *Vanua*. Researchers are to understand the cultural context in which they are researching, “...they still need to understand them, the culture that you are working in...” (P23/Health Staff/Male/40-50 years).

Human behaviour and practices follow the communitarianism of *iTaukei* life, which is evident in the principle of *solesolevaki*, which means working together as a community of people who are connected through family links and feel an intrinsic responsibility to work together for a collective good (Ravuvu, 1987). “*Solesolevaki is one body of different parts, we wait for the hand, leg, mouth, ears, until the body is complete then we can act as one.*”

(P26/MHMS/Male/50-60 years). The body is the *iTaukei* community itself and the different parts of the body are the people that hold various roles in the community. There are underlying concepts that can be understood as elements of *solesolevaki*. One is *vakamalua* (unhurriedly). This is seen in the common term, “Fiji time” which refers to the slow pace of life (Gatty, 2009). *Solesolevaki* requires all the parts to gather before the one body of communitarianism can function.

“...we do things slowly, we wait for each other. Never mind who comes late, we will wait, we will not rush, until the (whole) leader of the community knows that everybody is there. If there is a need to wait two to three days, we will wait, *vakamalua*. We are broken now because we have broken that tradition, because we want to be fast...” (P26/MHMS/Male/50-60 years).

Solesolevaki and communitarianism are important for researchers. *Solesolevaki* requires the researchers to set an appropriate research timeframe to accommodate the communitarian nature of *iTaukei* society. If research is approached with urgency, this violates the traditional communitarian approach. Researchers are to coordinate their work to accommodate the time required to research in *iTaukei* settings and their request should not impose on the *iTaukei* community. There is a need to see the *iTaukei* village schedules ahead of time, be flexible with time and request for an appropriate time when people will spare the day from daily routine to sit and *talanoa* and share knowledge, “... we should find a good time, time is an important factor in research...” (P46/NGO/Male/30-40 years).

The aspiration of *iTaukei* is *bula sautu*, defined by one of the participants as “... the ultimate quality of sustainable life where people are economically well off, but more importantly, good relationship with people that matter to you...” (P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60 years). *Bula* is life and *sautu* is prosperity and the ultimate reward for good deeds in the *Vanua*. The prosperity in the *Vanua* is achieved through people’s their respect for their ancestral worlds and following the straight path (*sala dodonu*) of morality.

“...They say you will achieve good health, your children will multiply, you’re not going to be rich now, it will come, because keeping relationships, spending time with people that matter sharing food, sharing wealth this is all part of our ethics. Gifting is very important because the *solu solu*, gifting reciprocity, *veiwekani* relationship listening and talk, gifting is very important...” (P43/Senior Academic/Female/50-60 years).

In terms of non-compliance with the *Vanua* consequences may follow:

“We are sick, we are hurting the chiefs, we are hurting God. If bula sautu is achieved by some people, they do not talk about it as it is not appropriate amongst iTaukei people to talk about the high quality of their lives. Might be considered as boasting. Sautu is the one that governs why we want to do things correctly. You might want to break a few rules and get profit, get research done quickly but in the long term, those things we say don’t last...” (P43/Senior Academic/Female/40-50/ years).

Silence in the *Vanua* setting indicates respect to the speaker if he or she is a high chief or church leader. But silence in meetings can also suggest a wide range of feelings from one extreme to the other (extreme opposition to extreme of support). Only a person who is appointed by the *Vanua* as a speaker is allowed to talk and can explain the reason for the silence. In research setting, it is important that a spokesperson be appointed by the *Vanua*. This spokesperson will interpret the meaning of silence to the researchers.

4.4.6.3 Respect *Vakarokoroko*, this underpins *iTaukei* morality

A theoretical principle that underpins *iTaukei* research ethics is that which one participant referred to as *vakarokoroko* “the core value” in the inter-relationality in the *Vanua*:

“... Respect for the iTaukei person, vakarokorokotaki, respect the Vanua, respect of elders, respect for veiwekani – family relationship, and Vakaturagataki (to be treated like a chief) and honesty...” (P18/Min of iTaukei/Male/40-50 years).

Respect for the *iTaukei* identity, the *kawa* (family lineage) (Gatty, 2009) is defined by a combination of geographical locations and family genealogical lines to which one belongs. These geographical locations include the province, district and village. The genealogical line comprises the clan’s and the family’s genealogical maternal and paternal lines. Respect for the hierarchical structure of the *Vanua* (*rokova nai tutu vakavanua*) the traditional confederacies of *Kubuna*, *Burebasaga* and *Tovata* and the Great Council of Chiefs are features combined in the description of the identity of *iTaukei* persons. *iTaukei* people learn the specificity of their identity from childhood and are supposed to express it when meeting other *iTaukei* people in formal and social settings. Human persons hold the highest regard and dignity, individually and as a community, expressed in *iTaukei* language as, “*Vakaturagataki*”.

The *iTaukei* people demand respect as a behaviour from others towards themselves in any formed relationship, such as in a research project. Respect for the social dimensions of *Vanua* – communal living and relationships among people of the *Vanua – Vakaveiwekani* communality or relationality of the *iTaukei* life created the ancient forms of relationships in Fiji as discussed in previous chapters include the *Veimataki* relationships.

Respect underpins the *sala dodonu* (Section 4.4.5.2) and the correct process of voluntary informed consent (Section 4.4.5.9). The “*respect that is genuinely shown towards iTaukei people in their villages is a reciprocal notion,*” (P22/MHMS/Male/50-60 years) where researchers will also be shown respect. Respect underpins the mutual exchange of kind words, exchange of information, and implementation of cultural protocols, as expected in an *iTaukei* setting. Acts of *Veidokai* (respect for each other) are based on *Vakaveiwekani* relationality among human beings in a communal system such as the *iTaukei*. One of the participants defined reciprocity in *iTaukei* setting as “*mutual exchange of respect*” (P32/Head of NGO/female/60-70 years). Other participants echoed this:

“... *When someone comes to your home, from your own village, – we welcome them, we do a sevusevu, when we have visitors from outside, we give them that respect too. Out of that respect, we give them protection. This respect is given individually and by all members of the community...*”
(P12/MEHA/male/50-60 years).

In everyday life, respect is learnt at home among people in the family circle. The expectations of *iTaukei* life are for members of the family to act in respectful ways all the time. The father and mother are expected to be respected by their children all the time, this is an obligation of children towards their parents. Respectful ways apply in common everyday life activities such as mealtimes, dress codes, oral communication and so on. Children are not allowed to shout in the household and show disrespectful ways towards people. Respectful language is expected in the family and in the whole community. Outside the family circle, participants described respect as addressing people formally, by use of “Sir” or “Madam”, *Vaka sakasaka*” (P24/MHMS/Female/1/40-50 years) and the habit to “*speak less and listen more*” (P18/Min of *ITaukei/Male/40-50 years*).

Body language too must be respectful, especially around a person of authority.

“If someone comes there and you have to present your case, and only the *matanivanua* has the authority to speak, the rest of you have to sit there and you have that polite look, *vakarokoroko* (respect).” (P18/Min of *iTaukei*/Male/40-50 years).

The circle of respect is extended towards the *mataqali* (clan), the whole village and amongst villages, districts and provinces in Fiji. During the formal setting of research presentations and data collection, respect is expected, until a time when the formality is over. Then people can relax and enjoy informal conversations. The *talanoa* for research takes place while people are relaxed. The members of the community will inform the researchers when they can be available for a *talanoa* because that is when they are most relaxed. The researchers are to wait for this time to conduct the *talanoa*, in the form of focus groups discussions or key informants’ interviews. (*Talanoa* is also discussed in detail in Section 7.3.6).

Respect for the spiritual life of *iTaukei* has two features, Christian beliefs and the belief in the *Vu* or ancestral gods (*vakabauta vakavanua*). The respect for ancestral spirituality is described as “strong principle ...reflected in the belief of the people in terms of ancestral background...” (P24/MHMS/Female/40-50 years). Respect is extended to non-human things in the Vanua such as sacred sites and burial grounds. Two participants talked about the *yavu* which is the physical site of the chief’s residence in the village. This site is very sacred in *iTaukei* communities and is greatly respected. Ancient sites of worship and burial grounds are respected and known by everyone for many generations as forbidden places.

There is also respect for the human body. Scientific research that involves the human body needs to maintain the sanctity and dignity of the human body as according to the *iTaukei Vanua*. Participants noted that the *iTaukei* respect the human body, living or dead, equally to maintain dignity. For example, the umbilical cord of a new-born baby is accorded a burial ceremony in a specially selected spot in the family residence. There is an anticipation that the child will always return to the land of his or her birth.

There is also some village ground rules for respect. *iTaukei* people are always accommodating towards visitors to their village. Nevertheless, when visiting an *iTaukei* village, there are some ground rules that enforce the respect for the village, physically, socially, and culturally. Respect is a must for people, for the land boundaries of the village and land resources, for the rivers, the sea and other the surrounding areas. These rules involve keeping a quiet and pristine environment in the village. When people eat, they sit

down properly to do so. Standing and walking around while eating is disrespectful. When going to wash and bathe, it is not allowed to walk around with a towel over the shoulder.

One of the participants emphasized the dress code:

“... the way you dress up when you go to the village, you have to wear jaba (dress with a sulu) because they do not like it if you come there with shorts and miniskirts for women,” (P35/Health Community Group/Female/40-50 years).

When women go to church in the village, they must wear a dress with sleeves.

The use of respectful language was highly valued by participants.

Discussions focused on the challenges in using the *iTaukei* language generally in Fiji because of the multi-ethnic population and English being the official work language. Use of the English language as a Fijian official language is perceived by participants as maintaining colonialism and downplaying traditional *iTaukei* paradigms.

“...problems that we are having in Fiji, the multi-cultured country. Parliamentarians cannot use the iTaukei language in Parliament. In schools, our students are discouraged to speak iTaukei language, and even a lot of the government institutions are de-valuing the true value of the iTaukei language and culture...”
(P2/Academic/Male/50-60 years).

English is the official professional language in Fiji used in government offices and all schools as an instructional language. The *Bauan* dialect of the *iTaukei* language is the most commonly used dialect among all people in Fiji. Each of the 14 provinces in Fiji has its own *iTaukei* dialect. For clear, respectful, and meaningful communications in researching in *iTaukei* settings, the identification of the appropriate *iTaukei* home dialect is crucial during the introduction of the research and data collection. Interpreters and translators are to be identified to assist:

“...They should at least know, one ... maybe get somebody to go along with them who understands the dialect of the people to make it easy for the communication...”
(P24/MHMS/Female/40-50 years).

Participants mentioned some of the values associated with the respect shown to *iTaukei* people via the use of appropriate language as being courteous, being diplomatic and ensuring that researchers are accepted. This approach also involves inviting and welcoming people into the village to come and sit and *talanoa*. *“...It is no longer about me blaming you or finding out what’s gone wrong, it’s me listening to you about your views on this ...”* (Senior

Academic/Female/50-60 years). Based on this, participants recommended the *talanoa* as the appropriate approach to researching with *iTaukei* people. This is discussed in detail as a research method in this study (see Section 3.7.1) and in participants' recommendations (see Section 7.3.1.3).

4.4.6.3.1 Research is a Ceremony of Respect of the Vanua in the iTaukei Community.

The ceremony of respect of the *Vanua* involves the first *sevusevu* and presentation of gifts to the people of the village. According to one of the participants, it is an act of fulfilment of an obligation as part of the respectful protocols of asking for entry into the village and conducting work such as research. It contributes to the protection and safekeeping of *iTaukei* traditional knowledge. The gifts are commonly used items such as lengths of cloth and food items that can be shared with all in the village, then doors open for research.

Participants assessed the lack of benefits received through past research projects and stated that the perceived benefit has only been for the researcher. Two key informants and two focus group *talanoa* sessions agreed that *iTaukei* people participating in research, they should receive benefits. “...*On sites we are upfront and straightforward, the benefit will go to the researchers, and those students doing research. Not us*” (P12/MEHA/Male/50-60 years). Participants who were representing vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities and those in remote and isolated settings in Fiji stated that they want both tangible and intangible benefits from research activities.

4.4.6.4 Intellectual property

The concept of *iTaukei* traditional knowledge and understanding and the IP involved is not recognized. Understanding of *iTaukei* ethics involves intellectual property issues. Five participants expressed the need to recognize, protect and safeguard traditional *iTaukei* knowledge. Knowledge gained through research is to be translated and shared for the benefit of future generations through publications for free and ready access by *iTaukei* people, the traditional owners of knowledge:

“...*we need to do research for our people our resources our land but make it accessible to our people not to go and pay sums of money to get this information. At least we'll have it somewhere accessible to ourselves first...*”

(P24/MHMS/Female/40-50 years).

There has been progress in this area. Fiji's Cabinet approved that legislation be developed to protect intellectual property (Naviticoko, 2023). Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka supports protection of intellectual property of the *iTaukei* people (Naviticoko. 2023; Daucakacaka,

2023). In 2023, the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs established a project that included the protection of *iTaukei* intellectual property consisting of *iTaukei* languages culture and knowledge (Daucakacaka, 2023).

4.4.6.5 *iTaukei* community participation in research

After the *sevusevu*, the researchers would wait patiently for instructions about when to meet and talk about the research. A participant spoke metaphorically about the interaction with the villagers in research as *talimagimagi* (weaving coconut fibre) and *talanoa* (*Health Staff/Male/4/50-60 years*). Literally, *talimagimagi* is a work of art that requires a lot of time. During this time the hands and eyes are employed in the weaving while the cognitive processes take place and verbal discussions are held about the topic of interest; it will take a while to complete, but they do have the time. Through this process, the villagers and researchers can engage in dialogue freely allowing both parties to make contributions of ideas and make joint decisions about the topic or issues at hand. Audio recording and later transcription is an acceptable method of data collection in this context.

Two participants spoke about further community participation in the research. They stated that when researchers are accommodated in the villages, they employ selected villagers to be research assistants, guides, translators or interpreters. The participants felt that it is best that researchers stay in the village while undertaking research because through contact with the villagers they get more interaction and more information from the villagers. The researchers are to abide by the time allowed by the villagers to conduct research and not to rush any process.

After the research is done, then at the exit point, the *Na i vakatale* is conducted where they perform the *iTatau* (see Figure 4.7) along with the *vakavinavinaka* (thank you) in one ceremony (see Figure 4.7). This is a very highly regarded, respectful and honourable ceremony. Researchers provide gifts such as bales of clothes and basic food items among others. “...So, when you reciprocate, you must reciprocate well, so this is for us. We present another kava (*yaqona*) to say thank you, *vakavinavinaka*...” (*P13/MEHA/male/6/40-50 years*). This protocol is an act of reciprocity, a duty of respect. Then the community accepts the *iTatau* and *vakavinavinaka* gives the researchers their blessings on the knowledge that they have shared through the research and bids the researchers to depart in good spirit. The participants emphasized that this process is not to be mistaken as an exchange for material gain but following the *sala dodonu*, the straight path:

“...gifting is a *kai valagi* (European) perspective, rather it is good will, it is goodwill

relationship...” (P18/Min of iTaukei/male/40-50 years).

A very important outcome of this research is the finding that the relationship established between the two parties does not end through this exit ceremony, the relationship continues.

4.4.6.6 Vulnerability of iTaukei communities

iTaukei communities can be accessed through many pathways, some pathways are unethical, and others are ethical. Participants argued that some people may be attracted by material gain through the gifts that researchers bring, and they accept people into their communities blindly:

“Because the villages can be blinded with the gift there because they are still vulnerable...” (P18/Min of iTaukei/Male/40-50 years).

The participants agreed that some communities are vulnerable and can be distracted with bribes. There may also be elements of being patronized in this process. Therefore, it is appropriate that the research ethics and governance system enforces accessing *iTaukei* communities via ethical pathways so that they are not exploited. *iTaukei* communities should have knowledge about the research and their rights.

4.4.6.7 Communications approach based on humility

Participants expressed that ideally, *iTaukei* people’s approach to communication is grounded in humility. Humility means the quality of having a modest or low view of one’s importance (Oxford Languages, nd). *iTaukei* persons do not self-praise, rather, the praise of a person comes from others. This behavioural approach applies to research:

“...come with a position of smallness and the other guy is the big guy and you make sure that you establish the fact that you will not be effective unless...He has more knowledge than you that you are trying to get...” (P32/Head of NGO/Female/60-70 years).

One of the participants told an interesting story.

“...when we were part of the British realm, there was something called the Queen’s Birthday Awards and people were given knighthoods on the Queen’s birthday. We were the authority responsible for the nominations for the Queen’s awards. It was proposed that we nominate, and it was discussed and most of the members agreed and passed. Then there was this lady who objected, she said, “I am Taukei, and we don’t go promoting ourselves...”

“that is something that others do, we don’t do that, we wait to be invited, and you are proposing something that we are not supposed to do.” (P32/Head of NGO/Female/60-70 years).

Self-promotion amongst *iTaukei* is an arrogant behaviour that is not encouraged. *iTaukei* people live in an oral society and encourage others to praise one’s achievement.

These themes and sub-themes presented above show in significant empirical detail the basis for the *iTaukei* Decolonizing Indigenous Framework for an HRE Guideline Framework, developed through this research. This is discussed next.

4.5 A synthesis of themes of the HRE in Fiji case results. Decolonizing Indigenous Framework for an HRE Guideline Framework

A synthesis of the themes was conducted to develop a decolonizing HRE guideline framework to harmonize international and Indigenous principles of HRE in Fiji. This section addresses the fourth research question in this PhD thesis (see Section 3.3 (iv)).

The views of participants were sought about an appropriate model framework for HRE guidelines that engaged *iTaukei* Research Ethics in Fiji. The process of developing these HRE guidelines started by presenting two existing models of HRE guidelines for Indigenous people to participants during the *talanoa* sessions, but they did not have time to read the complete documents.

The first one was the *“Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders, 2018*, (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018). This sets out principles that ensure that research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities is safe, respectful, high quality and of benefit to them (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018).

The second example was *Te Ara Tika. Guidelines for Māori research ethics. A framework for researchers and ethics committee members* (Hudson et al., 2010). These guidelines recognize ethical issues in health research. Their main principles are drawn from Māori traditional knowledge, the Treaty of Waitangi and Western ethical principles (Hudson & Russell, 2009). After discussing these two Indigenous approaches to HRE, the participants put forward their

views of what should constitute a set of Indigenous HRE guidelines for the Fijian context. I categorized and consolidated participants' viewpoints and developed the *Yavu Koula ni iTaukei, The Golden Foundation of iTaukei, a Decolonizing Indigenous Framework for HRE Guidelines*. Figure 4.13 presents a diagram to illustrate various levels and features of these *iTaukei* HRE guidelines.

The *iTaukei Vanua* approach is embedded in the *Yavu Koula Framework* and it is important to promote because its elements are uniquely *iTaukei*. The framework respects and recognizes *iTaukei* people and their ethics:

“... *It is pure. It is not borrowed from any. That is why we are successful. We run with our Vanua way...*” (P18/Min of *iTaukei*/Male/40-50 years).

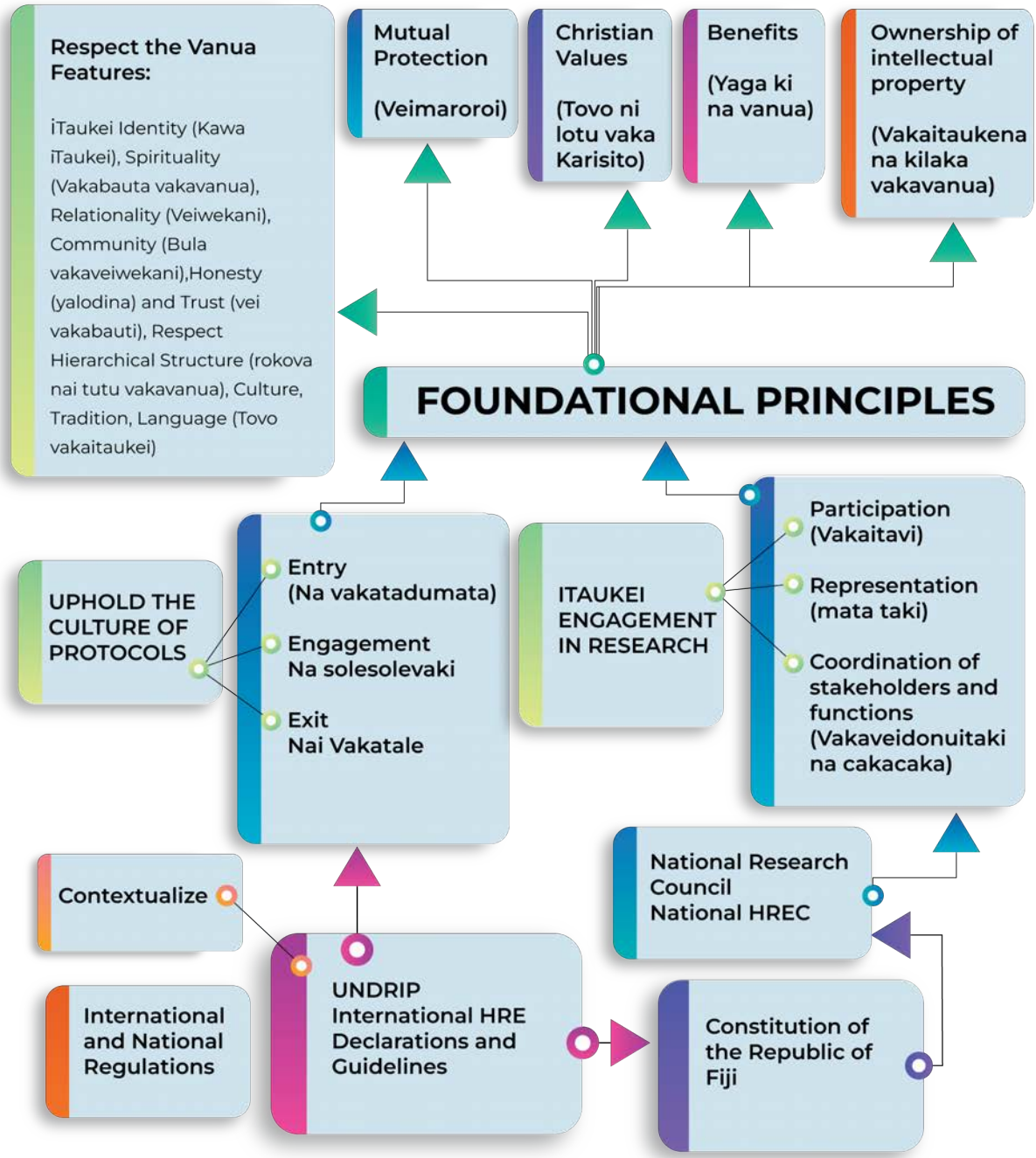
The *iTaukei* Fijian guideline model, from here onwards, will be referred to as the *Yavu Koula Framework*. The idea for the name is based on the concepts of the (*i*) *Yavu* (*the foundation*) of *iTaukei* people and the *Koula* (golden) is to match the name for the Tongan HRE Guideline framework “*Fa Kavei Koula*” (The Four Golden Principles of Tonga) Research Ethics Framework a Decolonizing Model for Tongan Human Research Ethics Guidelines (see Section 5.7.1.2), as these are the two frameworks developed through this PhD research project.

4.5.1 Features of the *Yavu Koula* HRE guideline framework

4.5.1.1 Contextualization of International HRE guidelines

International HRE guidelines such as the Declaration of Helsinki and national regulations such as the Fiji National Research Council Act 2017, are important overarching regulations that govern HRE in PICTs. A contextualization process against international regulations is recommended for relevancy and accuracy in the national HRE context.

Figure 4. 14: Yavu Koula ni iTaukei, The Golden Foundation of iTaukei, a Decolonizing Indigenous Framework for HRE Guidelines



4.5.1.2 Coordination of Stakeholders and Functions.

There is a need for a body at the national level to coordinate the stakeholders and functions of HRE in Fiji. The National Research Council (NRC) is yet to be populated and operational (as of July 2024). However, most participants of this research from government ministries discussed the need for the NRC to be operational to fill the gap of coordination of stakeholders in research. The NRC needs to be clearly defined and is relied upon by participants in this research to be responsible for the coordination of all stakeholders, functions and the structure of HRE mechanisms in Fiji.

4.5.1.3 *iTaukei* Cultural Protocols are Central in the Yavu Koula Framework

iTaukei cultural protocols are essential requirements in all activities involving *iTaukei* people. Upholding of *iTaukei* protocols in research ensures efficient research.

The entry protocol ***Vakatadumata*** involves an orientation and information sharing session. The researchers learn about the local culture and other background information while community is being informed about the details of the research. Mutual understanding of the research is achieved.

The engagement protocol ***Na solesolevaki***, involves *sevusevu*, which is the presentation of *kava* to the people of the *iTaukei* community and their representatives. The performance of *sevusevu* shows respect to the *Vanua* and this is the appropriate way of asking the *Vanua* for permission to conduct research in the *Vanua*. In turn, the research team will be blessed by the *Vanua* spiritually. The blessing includes being welcomed formally, accommodated, protected and assisted throughout the phases of research project. After the *sevusevu* people of the community are engaged in planning meetings, a person to guide in cultural matters, village meetings to organize data collection, and the exchange of knowledge via data collection and discussions.

The exit protocol ***Nai vakatale*** is a protocol that enables the exchange of appreciations and gratitude for the knowledge shared to all parties. This exchange of knowledge is traditionally released from the owners of knowledge to the researchers (the borrowers of knowledge). The research is complete, and the researchers formally ask for permission to leave the community by performing the exit protocol *iTatau* and it is time to say goodbye, although relationships are expected to continue.

When the protocols are performed in totality, the *iTaukei* community requirements are fulfilled and an important development has taken place: a new relationship is established between community members and researchers which lasts forever.

4.5.1.4 The Engagement of *iTaukei* People in Research is an Ethical Expectation

Engagement involves *iTaukei* people's **participation, representation and coordination** of stakeholders and functions. *iTaukei* persons are to participate in research and HRE at all levels, with a responsibility to be vigilant and make decisions that benefit *iTaukei* people and protect their human and other resources. Capacity building of *iTaukei* people in research and in developing skills in research ethics is to be strengthened. **Inclusivity** requires the inclusion of *iTaukei* person(s) in research oversight and in ethical discussions. This view is consistent with the effort to champion the inclusion of *Maori* culture in ethical discussions in New Zealand (Smith, 2014). The discussion of the notion of inclusivity leads to participation *Vakaitavi*¹⁰.

4.5.1.5 *iTaukei* Foundational Principles

The *Yavu Koula* HRE Guideline Framework is underpinned by the *iTaukei* world view, which includes five fundamental principles of respect for the *Vanua*, mutual protection, Christian values, benefits and intellectual property ownership. Each principle is elaborated on below.

- (i) **Respect the *Vanua*.** See Section 4.4.6.3 for a detailed description of the *iTaukei* principle of respect.
- (ii) **Mutual protection (*veimaroroi*) of people in research**
Research should protect people, sacred knowledge, IP and the reputation of *iTaukei* people and their communities. *iTaukei* people are to participate in research for capacity building. All research involving *iTaukei* people and the *Vanua* will ensure protection of humans and non-human things that are interrelated in the *Vanua*.
- (iii) **Pre-Christian and Christian values.**
Research must respect *iTaukei* people's spirituality. Pre-Christian spirituality bestowed values first and later these values were aligned with Christian beliefs in the Bible and the Christian God. Christian beliefs are a source of *iTaukei* values and ethical principles. Christianity has influenced peace and solidarity and helped develop good characters in *iTaukei* people through its teachings and Christian

¹⁰ *Vakaitavi*: to participate, serve, be occupied with or assigned to some tasks, involved. E.g. They are involved in the release of the report. (Gatty, 2009)

education. The Bible teachings have set a solid foundation for good values to guide *iTaukei* people's way of life in the community. Values such as respect, virtues of love, kindness and compassion for other human beings in the communal society are related to Christian beliefs.

(iv) **Benefits (*yaga*).**

Research in the past had benefitted non-*iTaukei* people with minimal benefits to *iTaukei* people. As the Indigenous people of Fiji, traditional custodians of *iTaukei* culture, land, forests, natural resources and comprising the majority of Fiji's population, *iTaukei* people need research to be beneficial to them in both tangible and intangible forms. Research is also to have reciprocal benefits.

(v) **Ownership of intellectual property (IP): *Vakaitaukeni na Kilaka Vaka Vanua***

The components of the *Yavu Koula* framework for HRE guidelines are to inform regulations that govern HRE in Indigenous research in Fiji. (IP is also discussed in Section 4.4.6.4).

4.6 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, I have provided an overarching view of Fiji as a setting of this research, starting from Fiji's colonial history and the origins of health research in the Fiji School of Medicine. Also included is a section that outlines the development of HRE in Fiji including the international and local influences. Through all the efforts of international and local partners in Fiji, HRE is growing in strength and Fiji's social responsibility is to share its HRE knowledge and processes with other Pacific Island countries. The awareness level of HRE amongst health researchers is high and the governance functions of existing human research ethics committees in the MHMS and the College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences of the Fiji National University is also strong.

The results of the Fiji HRE case are divided into 2 Parts. Part 1 include section 4.1-4.3. These sections provide the history of Fiji as a colony and also the sectors that engage HRE in country. Part 2 includes section 4.4 - 4.6 and these sections present the results of the thematic analysis of the data collected from the *Talanoa* sessions in Fiji. These themes are summarized in Table 4.8.

Table 4. 8: Summary of Fiji HRE Case Results in themes.

Chapter 4: Results of Fiji HRE Case study:

Section and number	Description
Part 1: Sections 4.1-4.3	<p>Chapter 4, Part 1 presents a contextual overview of HRE in Fiji. The geography, demographics description, constitution and colonial history of Fiji. Then a brief coverage of significant events from 1800s to the present time that contributed to shaping Fijian society. After the historical coverage, the next section discusses the origin of HRE in Fiji highlighting the Fiji School of Medicine as a main actor the establishing and development of HRE in Fiji. Next is a discussion of health research and HRE development at the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. Furthermore, other sectors such as government ministries and Fiji based universities in Fiji who were engaged in HRE mechanism are also mentioned. A brief report from researchers of how <i>iTaukei</i> research protocols were practised in the absence of biomedical HRE is also included in this section. Part 1 ends with a chronology of the development of HRE committees in Fiji. The Fijian case study results from the second part of this chapter.</p>
Part 2: Sections 4.4-4.7	<p>Part 2: Chapter 4, Part 2 provides the results of the HRE Case Study in Fiji in detail, divided into four main themes.</p> <p>Theme 1, include a dual approach to HRE in Fiji: Exemplifying Biomedical and <i>iTaukei</i> Indigenous involvement in HRE in Fiji. Theme 1 is further divided into 5 subthemes. The subthemes included detailed discussions of power dynamics between the <i>Vanua</i> and Government in HRE. Included also is an overview the strong adherence to <i>iTaukei</i> process prior to the existence of the Biomedical model of research ethics in Fiji. A report from one of the <i>talanoa</i> groups that research ethics guideline sourced from developed countries were used without any critical analysis nor any questioning of its strengths or limitations. This seems to indicate colonized minds of people as a result colonialism. Further discussion emphasizes that the <i>Vanua</i> HRE structures are communicated orally, and practices are formal. The last theme outlined the ‘Tripple bottom lines of Colonialism’, education, politics and Christianity that influenced HRE.</p> <p>Theme 2: Fiji HRE mechanisms need strengthening. This theme highlights gaps in the current HRE governance systems in Fiji and suggestions to address these needs. These needs are organized into five sub-themes: i. The need to have a National Governing Body for HRE in Fiji: ii. The need to</p>

establish an Indigenous HRE Committee: iii. The need to strengthen transparency and systemic approach to the ethical and scientific review of research proposal: iv: The role of capacity building in *iTaukei* research and ethics. v. Research approval from the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs does not confer protection of *iTaukei* communities.

Theme 3: Axiology of research is a culture of protocols. *iTaukei* rules of engagement are the ethics of research. This theme was further analysed and the subthemes were identified as important components of the culture of protocols that needed in-depth clarification. These subthemes were organized into eleven sub-themes. Sub-theme 1. '*iTaukei* truth is measured by the correctness of the process', which raises the importance of performing the *iTaukei* protocols in research: 2. The straight path of *iTaukei* research: 3. Traditional and religious pathways for relationship building for *iTaukei* ethical research: 4. *iTaukei* traditional roles: 5. Christian groups to the Bose Vanua: 6. Reciprocity is honourable and spiritual in the context of *iTaukei* relationality: 7. Lack of reciprocity of benefits and power dynamics: 8. The three *iTaukei* research ethics protocols: 9. Voluntary informed consent, top down or individual rights based: 10. The right to speak is influenced by the 'digitaki vakavanua' (*iTaukei* selection process): 11. *Veitabuki*, caution about unique relationships among *iTaukei* people in FGD Talanoa sessions.

Theme 4: The theoretical underpinnings of *iTaukei* research ethics. This theme was analysed and further divided into seven sub-themes: The *iTaukei* ontology is *Vakavanua* – the way of the land: 1. The three-legged stool of the *iTaukei* people: *vanua* (people and land), *lotu* (religion) and *matantu* (government). 2. Within the *iTaukei* ontology of *Vakavanua*, is *Vakarokoroko* or respect, the principle that underpins all research protocols in the *Vanua*. 3. Research is ceremony. The ceremony involves the first *sevusevu* and presentation of gifts to the people of the village as an act of fulfilment of an obligation of asking for entry into the village. The ceremony opens doors for research and contributes to the protection and safekeeping of *iTaukei* traditional knowledge: Intellectual property is important as it is about *iTaukei* ownership of knowledge and other resources in their community: 5. *iTaukei* community participation in research. Researchers are not to rush in with their research agenda. They need to take time and wait for the community representatives as they will dictate the appropriate time for research: 6. Vulnerability of *iTaukei* communities. Participants mentioned that some communities are vulnerable and can be distracted with bribes: 7. A communications approach is based on humility.

The last section of this chapter is a synthesis of the themes that also feature the *Yavu Koula* HRE guideline framework.

Followed by a synthesis of the themes that also feature the *Yavu Koula* HRE guideline framework.

A summary of all the results chapters including this chapter's themes is presented in Table 6.1 at the beginning of Chapter 6.

The next chapter is a presentation of the results concerning HRE in Tonga.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS: HRE IN TONGA

This chapter has two parts, similarly to Chapter 4. In the first part a brief background of Tonga and its society, climate and social structure is presented. The chapter includes a discussion of the *Pouono* Strategy – when the first King of Tonga offered Tonga to the Lord Jesus Christ and promoted Christianity in Tonga. The HRE systems that exist in various government ministries in Tonga are explained, followed by a table describing the documents analysed for this study and the Tongan research participants.

The second part includes the findings of the Tongan HRE case study. Firstly, there is an introduction explaining the emergence of HRE, the responsibilities of Tongans in HRE and the need for HRE regulations in Tonga. Three themes are presented thereafter:

Theme 1: The Western research paradigms are respected over Tongan paradigms.

Theme 2: *Kini ha hala totonu ki he fekumi*: Cutting an ethical research pathway.

Theme 3: The ontology of Tongan life: Theoretical underpinning of research ethics in Tonga

The last section of this chapter is a synthesis of themes of the HRE in Tonga case results and presents a decolonizing Indigenous framework for HRE guidelines for Tonga.

5.1 Background to the Kingdom of Tonga and HRE

5.1.1 Tongan Kings were demigods

The Kingdom of Tonga was first inhabited about 3,000 years ago according to evidence of the Lapita culture (Britannica, (nd)). Tonga had sacred lines of kings and queens who ruled the Kingdom and according to Tongan mythology (oral history), they were demigods. There were three known lines of the *Tu'i* (King), *Tu'i Tonga*, *Tu'i Ha'atakalaua* and the *Tu'i Kanokupolu* (Britannica, History of Tonga). The first King of Tonga, *Tu'i Tonga 'Aho'eitu*, was born of a human mother named *Va'epopua* and his father was a god *Tangaloa 'Eitumatupu'a* (Jones, 2020; Latukefu, 2014). Tongan kings and their descendants are now called '*Eiki*' because they were literally regarded as gods in the old days and have godly blood in them; this has ongoing implications for health research.

Although it began in mythological times, the sacred blood of Tongans continues to have an important significance for human research ethics in contemporary Tonga. A participant

related that when Tonga adopted Christianity and the King of Tonga, Tupou I, re-gifted Tonga back to the Christian God, Tongans became God's children, sons and daughter of the Almighty God and the precious blood of Jesus Christ is also part of Tongans today. Tongans were converted from the blood of the heathen gods to the holy blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This why Tongan people's blood is one of the best indicators of godly children and cannot be given away to be tampered with or contaminated by other things, because Tongans are holy and God's children. This discussion is related to the rejection of Autogen, a Melbourne based biotechnology company, which applied to conduct genetic research in Tonga. For more information on the respect of the "sanctified blood of human beings", see Section 1.1.5 (World Council of Churches, 2002).

5.1.2 Tongan society was well structured, with the King at the top, supported by chiefs

Tonga is the only sovereign Indigenous monarchy in Oceania. The first monarch was George Tupou I and his great-great-grandson, George Tupou VI, is the current King in 2024 (Royal Palace Office, 2016).

The first Europeans to visit Tonga were 16th century Dutch explorers, Willem Schouten, Jacob Le Maire in 1616 and Abel Tasman, who visited Tongatapu and Ha'apai for trade in 1643 (Tonga Visitors Bureau, 2011; Webmedia Fiji Limited, 2023). In 1773, Captain James Cook from the British Royal Navy visited Tonga. He visited both Tongatapu and Eua on his second voyage in October 1773. On these islands, Captain Cook was welcomed by a huge crowd of men and women who were cheering and welcoming him to shore. Not a person in the crowd was armed in any way (Latukefu, 2014). Skills of war were not known to the Tongans, they only quarrelled with the Fijians who would visit Tonga for sandalwood (Mariner & Martin, 1820).

William Mariner's time in Tonga in 1811 is well documented in a book titled *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands, in the South Pacific Ocean* (Mariner & Martin, 1820).

Mariner stated that the Tongan society was well structured, with a King at the top supported by chiefs and people were known by their skills, such as a builders or cooks. Mariner wrote about King Finow (Finau, Tongan spelling in modern days) who conquered the Ha'apai Groups as a brave King (p.63) and was respected by his people (p.61). He was vigilant in protecting them from enemies. Finau and his men commonly used violence to punish those who were disobedient, and they were ready to kill any enemy or anyone who was perceived as a threat to his people.

Women were kind (p.60) and accommodating, they were responsible for food preparations, making bark cloths for clothing and beautiful, scented body oil. Tongans had established agricultural activities in which they produced kava for drinking and root crops like yams, taro and others for daily food. It was interesting to note in Mariner's book the Tongan ways of looking after each other, "you go into a house where eating and drinking is going forward and sit down without invitation and partake with the company" (Finow in Mariner 1820, p.68.). See Figure 4.1 for a Map of the Pacific Islands showing Fiji and Tonga.

Now, in 2024, The Kingdom of Tonga, commonly known as Tonga, is a Polynesian archipelago and an independent island nation in the South Pacific Ocean located at 21.17° S, 175.19° W (WhereIG, 2022) (see Figure 4.1). The main island groups of Tonga are Tongatapu and 'Eua, Ha'apai, Vava'u and Niua Toputapu and Niua Fo'ou. Its capital is Nuku'alofa is on the main island of Tongatapu. Tonga's neighbouring countries are Fiji to the northwest, Samoa to the northeast and Vanuatu further to the west in the Pacific Ocean. Tonga is approximately 1,800 km from New Zealand's north island. The country has a total of 169 islands and only 36 are inhabited (WhereIG, 2022).

Tonga's official language is Tongan, and its second language is English. The Tongan language varies, with a set of special vocabulary for the King and the Royal Family, and another set for the nobles and their families. The common everyday conversational language is spoken by most Tongans. Both the Tongan and English language are used at all levels of education in Tonga and the same applies in research. Official documentation of many formal communications in government and the business sector is written in either Tongan and English or in Tongan and translated into English in the same document.

The population of Tonga is 100,179 as of the 2021 census, where 48.7% are males and 51.3% are females (Tonga Statistics Department, 2021). Table 5.1 outlines Tonga's population distribution.

Table 5. 1: Tongan Population Distribution, 2021

Divisions	Total	Male	Female
Tonga	100,179	48,749	51,430
Tongatapu	74,320	35,959	38,361
Vava'u Group	14,182	7,044	7,138
Ha'apai Group	5,665	2,787	2,878
'Eua Island	4,864	2,386	2,478
Niua Toputapu and Niua Fo'ou Islands	1,148	573	575
Urban	21,185	10,229	10,956
Rural	78,994	38,520	40,474

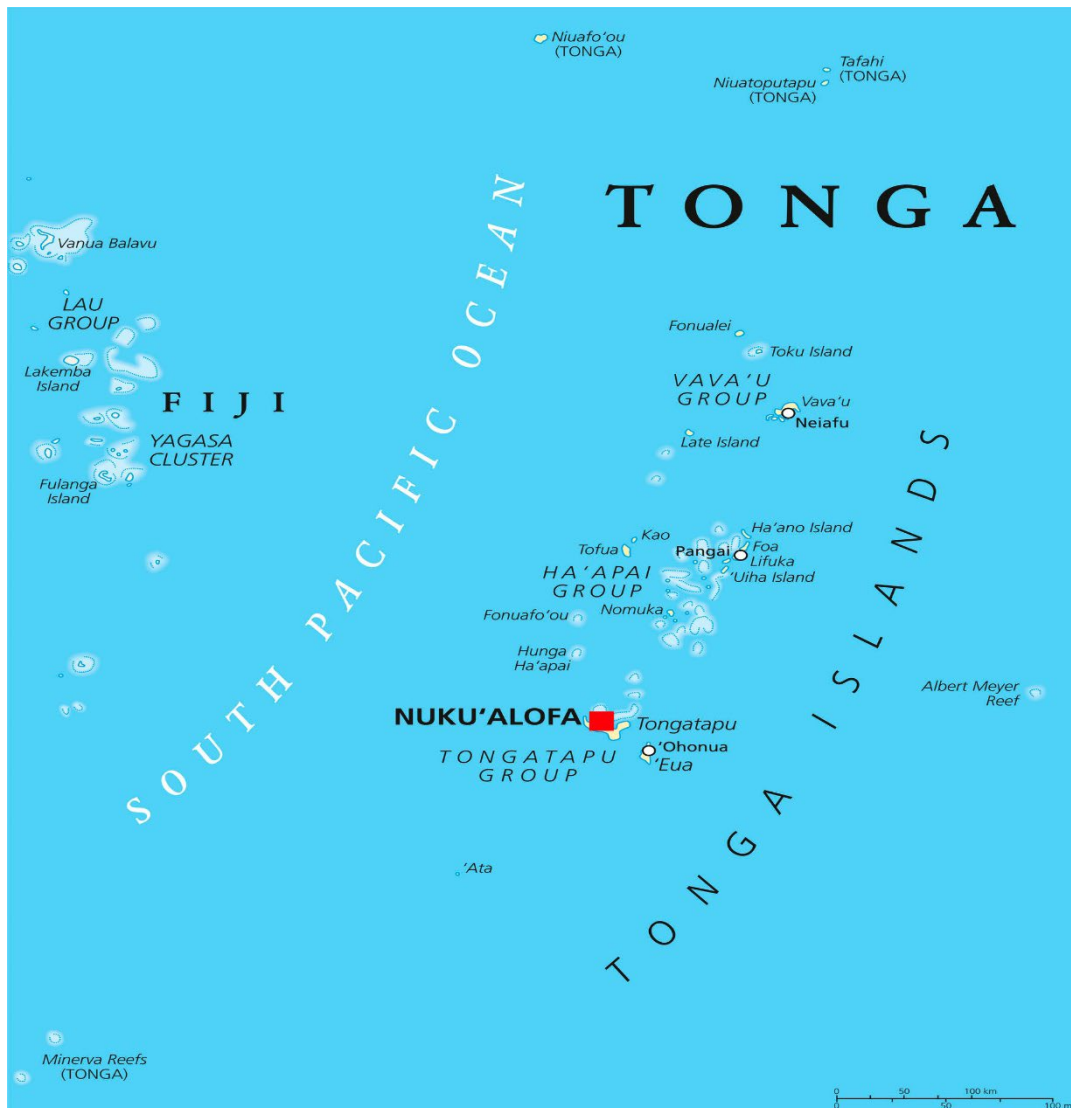
Source: Tonga Statistics Department 2021

5.1.3 Climate

Tonga has a tropical climate with a wet season from November to April and dry season from May to October. The temperature varies from 26°C to 23°C. At times Tonga can experience drought and people suffer from lack of potable water because many households, especially in rural areas, depend on rainwater for their water supply. Tropical cyclones frequently hit Tonga in the wet season and can cause major damage to housing, agricultural food sources and infrastructure (World Bank, 2021).

Tonga recorded one of the highest volcanic eruptions in the world, on 15 January 2022, from the volcanic islands named Hunga-Tonga and Hunga-Ha'apai, located about 60 kilometres northwest of Tongatapu (Wright et al., 2022). The eruption caused an atmospheric disturbance that extended to the stratosphere, observed by international satellites (Wilmouth, Østerstrøm, Smith, Anderson, & Salawitch, 2023). People's experiences of extreme weather conditions become a priority in day-to-day life in Tonga; thus it is crucial to consider the psychosocial-economic and environmental issues related to impacts of climatic conditions in any research plans for Tonga. Tonga is vulnerable to harsh weather conditions and natural disasters (Ministry of Meteorology, 2016).

Figure 5. 1: Map of the Kingdom of the Tongan Archipelago

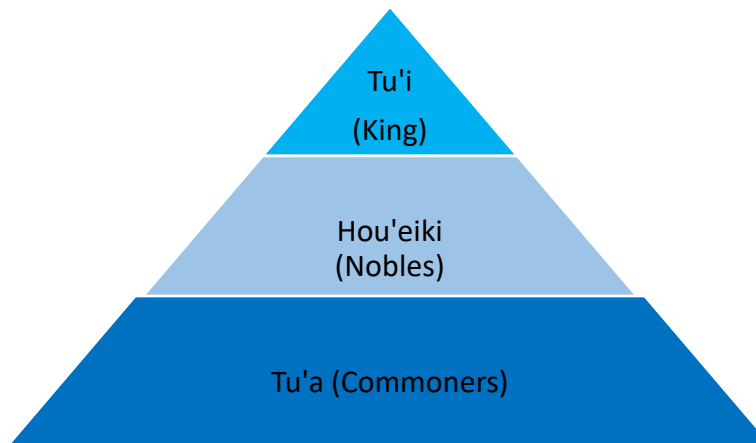


Source: <https://www.earth.com/nature-science-life/2016/06/20/the-kingdom-of-tonga-archipelago/>, Available at: <https://www.earth.com/image/kingdom-tonga-archipelago/>

5.1.4 Social Structure

The Tongan social structure is portrayed as a three-tiered pyramidal (see Figure 5.2). At the top is the *Tu'i* (King) and the Royal family, followed by the *Hou'eiki* (nobles) in the middle of the pyramid and the bottom comprises the *Tu'a* (commoners) the general population of Tonga who are neither in the King's household nor nobles. The *tu'a* (commoners) constitute the majority of the Tongan population (James, 1990, 2003).

Figure 5. 2: Tongan Social Structure



Source: Lovo, E. 2024 (This figure is drawn from my own cultural knowledge).

The significance of this social structure for research involving Tongan people is that the research protocols to employ at each level of the social structure differ. Researchers are to involve Tongan people with the knowledge of these protocols in the research team, in order to be contextually relevant in their research approach and avoid offence.

5.1.5 Pouono Strategy and the Tongan Constitution

The *Pouono* Strategy originated from the occasion of the *Tuku Fonua 'i Pouono* when Tonga was offered by Taufa'ahau Tupou 1st to the Lord Jesus Christ, at *Pouono* in *Vava'u*. Tonga Islands in 1839, to be the protector of country, people, and all things Tongan. Sovereignty of all Tongans was also established at *Pouono*. After the *Tuku Fonua 'i Pouono*, Tonga was known as the *fonua* land given to God (Sekona, 2014b). The Tongan motto, *Koe 'Otua mo Tonga ko hoku Tofi'a*, (God and Tonga are my inheritance) was also created at *Pouono* (Havea et al., 2018; Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2015; Sekona, 2014b). Christianity became an identity of Tongan people (Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2015). In practice, God is the centre of everything that Tongan people do.

Tonga is a constitutional monarchy under the King of Tonga, Tupou VI with succession being hereditary. The King is the head of state whom a Privy Council advises (Country Reports.Org, 1997-2024; Nexus Commonwealth Network, 2020). The Constitution of Tonga 1875 was founded by the first King of Tonga, King George Tupou I and executive power lies in the monarchy. The constitution establishes that all citizens of Tonga have equal rights and freedom under the law of Tonga despite their various statuses as a member of the Royal family, nobles, commoners or of ethnic origins. Sunday is the day of worship; thus, all businesses and commercial activities are closed (Nexus Commonwealth Network, 2020).

The Tongan government is divided into three governing bodies: i) the Cabinet, ii) the Legislative Assembly, and iii) the judiciary. The Cabinet is the executive authority of the Kingdom and is responsible to the Legislative Assembly (Constitute Project.org, 2013; Nexus Commonwealth Network, 2020).

The Legislative Assembly comprises 26 elected members, of whom nine are elected from the nobles, and 17 members from the commoners. General elections take place every four years. The Prime Minister is the head of the government, and he or she is selected by the members of the Legislative Assembly and then appointed by the King. The Prime Minister chooses the Cabinet members and are also then appointed by the King. Four Cabinet members may be appointed by the Prime Minister from outside the Legislative Assembly. The judiciary comprises the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court and the Land Court (Allen, 2007; Nexus Commonwealth Network, 2020).

The Tongan government has 17 ministries. The ministries involved in the governance of health research and ethics are: i) the Ministry of Health; ii) Ministry of Education and Training; iii) Ministry of Internal Affairs; and iv) Ministry of Justice (Government of the Kingdom of Tonga, 2024). The next section comprises a discussion of how the HRE systems in Tonga evolved over the years and their policies, processes, review approaches and other relevant details.

5.2 HRE Systems in Tonga

5.2.1 Chronology of the development of HRE in Tonga

In this section I present a list of policy documents from the Government Ministries that engage in the HRE structure of Tonga. These documents indicate Tongan HRE's historical development.

Table 5. 2: Chronology of the Development of Human Research Ethics Activities in Tonga

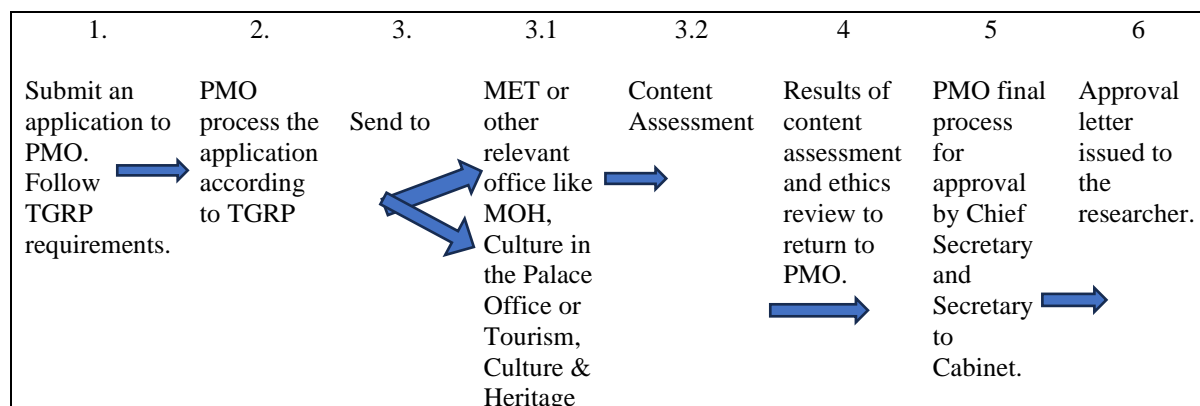
Title	Year	Description of the events
Tonga Cabinet Decision No. 288,	13th February 2002	Approved that the National Health Ethics and Research Committee and its Terms of Reference be established within the Ministry of Health.
Tonga Institute of Education Research Manual for Teachers, 2009	2009	Provided a framework for research ethics which was adopted by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) for the development of the Research Ethics Policy 2014.
Tonga Cabinet Decision on 12th May 2011	2011	Approved as the Government Research Policy. “(a) Research applications must provide a detailed description of the research project proposal endorsed by the Head of Faculty of University or Institution concerned; (b) Evidence of sufficient financial support or funding arrangements for research in Tonga; (c) Proposed starting and finishing dates for the research; (d) Evidence of medical fitness to carry out research work” (Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014, p.2).
Ministry of Education and Training Research and Ethics Policy	Originally approved in 2011, effective from 2014	Provides an ethical framework, including principles and key features of Tongan Research Ethics (Tonga Institute of Education, 2009).
Ministry of Health, National Health Ethics and Research Committee (NHERC), Operational Guidelines for the National Health Ethics and Research Committee.	2014	Developed in 2014 and approved in early 2015 by the National Health Development Committee (NHDC), this provides the structure and operational functions of the NHERC. The WHO guidelines for ethics committees (WHO, 2009) was contextualized to be applicable to the Ministry of Health of Tonga NHERC. The contextualization method is not included in this document (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014).
	2017-2021	NHERC Annual Reports of the years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 include the organizational structure of the Ministry of Health showing

		the Department of Health Research Unit, their purposes, functions and developments. These also include the NHREC membership structure, milestones achieved, and statistical reports of the ethics reviews conducted. The reports express the need for NHERC members to undergo training to build capacity in their ethical review of research proposals.
Tonga Government Research Permit requirements (Tonga Prime Minister's Office, 2019)	2019 and 2021	This Prime Minister's Office research policy is based at the Cabinet decision in 2011 and outlines the criteria for research permit applications in Tonga.
Tonga Christian Education Framework	No date	The Tongan Education Framework is Christian based. It sets the foundation of all research and ethics committees of the Ministry of Education and Training of Tonga. NHERC has membership from the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister's Office, therefore, the Christian foundation for ethics committees' cuts across all sectors involving in HRE.

5.2.2 The Prime Minister's office: National Coordination of Human Research in Tonga

The Tongan government realized the need to develop a research ethics mechanism in the health sector after Autogen proposed a genetic database project on Tongans in November 2000, which was rejected, (Barker, 2003; Burton, 2002) as discussed in Chapter 2 (Lovo et al., 2021, p.8). The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is the central authority responsible for processing and issuing research permits. The permit application process employs a two-pronged review approach (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5. 3: Two-pronged Research Permit Application Process



A research content review and an ethics review process are conducted by the government ministry with the relevant mandate to the research topic and their ethics policy. The results of review of the research content and ethics are returned to the PMO. The final decision is based on the researcher satisfying these two processes and a final approval of the review process from the PMO. The Chief Secretary and Secretary to Cabinet are responsible for this process. The research permit approval letter expresses the support of the government, and names the government ministry or ministries that have supported the application. A reciprocal component of this process is that the government requires a copy of the full research report which is considered a valuable resource for Tonga and the Pacific.

5.2.3 The Ministry of Health and Tonga’s national health ethics and research governance structure

The mission of the Tonga Ministry of Health is to improve health through the provision of quality care and promotion of good health, thereby reducing morbidity, disability, and premature deaths (Ministry of Health, 2020).

Tonga’s health system is divided into five divisions with one consisting of the NHERC, as follows:

- i. Clinical Services, headed by a Chief Medical Officer and a Medical Superintendent.
- ii. Public Health Division, headed by a Chief Medical Officer for Public Health.
- iii. Dental Division, headed by a Chief Dental Officer.
- iv. Nursing Division, headed by a Chief Nursing Officer and

- v. Corporate Services, the sector of the Ministry of Health that includes Human Research Ethics.

The National Health Ethics and Research Committee (NHERC) is a part of the Planning, Research and Reporting section of Corporate Services, led by the Director of Corporate Services. Human health research proposals are sent to the NHERC for ethical review. The review is guided by the Operational Guidelines of the National Health Ethics and Research Committee. These guidelines adopt a biomedical approach to HRE.

The Minister of Health together with the Chief Executive Officer for Health oversee all five divisions. The MOH is mostly funded through the Tonga government budget. Some special infrastructure projects have external donor funding agencies supported by the Japanese, Chinese and New Zealand governments. There is no legislation that governs health research in Tonga as of the end of 2023 (Ministry of Health, 2020).

The main referral hospital is Vaiola Hospital, located just outside of Nuku'alofa. It provides general medical and surgical services for all people of Tonga. It also provides primary health care and emergency services to people of Tonga's main island of Tongatapu. In addition, there are three divisional hospitals that serve the health care needs of people in the outer islands: Prince Ngu Hospital in the Vava'u group, Niu'ui Hospital in the Ha'apai groups, and Niu'eiki Hospital on Eua Island. The Likamonu Community Hospital in the Niuatoputapu Niuia islands. The three divisional hospitals also provide primary health care, outpatients services and emergency services to people of their respective islands (Table 5.3: Tonga's Health Care System). Hospital-based health research is conducted in all these health care facilities. There are a few private doctors and dentists providing private clinical services and a few private pharmaceutical outlets. The private health sector's involvement in research is unknown.

High Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) prevalence is a major concern in Tonga, with substantial research interest in this and related topics among health researchers (Barry et al., 2023; Hyatt et al., 2023; Vaitohi, 2022; Veatupu et al., 2019). The whole population of Tonga is at risk of developing NCDs (Vaitohi, 2022).

Table 5. 3: Tonga’s Health Care System

<p>Summary of all health facilities, divisions and staffing.</p>	<p>Referral hospital: 1 Community hospitals: 3, Health centres:14, Maternal and child health clinics:34 Services: Medical/Clinical Services, Public Health, Dental, Nursing and Corporate Services. Total number of health workers: 2016: 987, 2017: 993. Health Professionals at post in 2017: 61 Medical Officers, 11 Health officers, Nursing and Midwifery: 427. 2023: 360. (UNFPA, 2019; WHO Western Pacific Regional Office, 2015a) (WHO Western Pacific Regional Office, 2015b) (World Bank, 2003)</p>
<p>Main Referral Hospital</p>	<p>Vaiola Hospital, Tongatapu Bed capacity: 202. Services: Medical, Maternal and Child Health services, Adolescence and Adult Health Services, Dental Health Services, Mental Health and Disability Services, Public Health Services, Clinical Support Services, Nursing, Nonclinical Support Services, Health Planning, and Information. Admissions 2020: 8,236 patients Outpatients 2020: 66,189 Nurses: Clinical: 186, Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH): 49, NCD: 49, Nurse Practitioner: 4. Total: 288</p>
<p>Divisional hospitals</p>	<p>Prince Ngu Hospital, Vava’u Group Bed capacity: 61 beds for 16,500 population. Services: Primary health care, outpatients and emergency services. Laboratory and blood transfusion department. Admissions: 2020:1,220 Outpatients: 2020:36,500 Doctors: Chief Medical Officer Nurses: Clinical Nurses: 20, SRH Nurses: 9, NCD Nurses: 2, Total: 31</p> <p>Princess Fusipala Hospital, Ha’apai Group Bed capacity: 28 for 8,000 population. Services: Primary health care, outpatients, and emergency services. Admissions: 2020:360 Outpatients: 2020: 5,962 Doctors: 1 Senior Medical Officer in-charge Nurses: Clinical Nurses: 10, SRH 3, NCD: 1, Total: 14 Other staff: Health Inspector, 1 Microbiologist, 1 Pharmacist</p> <p>Niu’eiki Hospital, Eua Island Bed capacity:16 for a 5,000 population. Services: Primary health care, outpatients, and emergency services Admissions: 2020: 202 Outpatients: 2020: 8,300 Doctors: Medical Officer Nurses: Clinical 10, SRH 3, NCD 1, Total 14</p> <p>Likamonu Community Hospital, Niuaotupapu (NTT) Bed capacity– 10 beds (4 bedded x 2 rooms, Intensive Care Unit x2 beds) Doctor 1, Nurses: RHN 1, Clinical Nurse 2 Departments – General (Medical, Surgical, Pediatrics, Ob–tetric, Intensive Care & Operating Theatre) - The OT has one bed for minor cases operations and one delivery bed. Delivery and operations are performing in OT. Niuafu’ou Health Centre – ‘Esia Niuafu’ou. Doctor: HO – 1, Nurse – SRH 1 They manage minor cases and refer sick and major cases to NTT or to Vai’la depending on the patient’s condition. Tu’akifalelei Hospital at Niuafu’ou Nurses: Clinical 2, SRH 1, Total 3.</p>

Health centres (UNHCR Refworld) in Tongatapu	Services provided by health officer, nurse practitioners, NCD nurses and reproductive health nurses in all health centres in Tonga. Consultations, health talks, counselling, management of clinic, dressings, management of outreach programs, referrals to Vaiola, antenatal and postnatal services, adolescents' clinic, school programs, family planning, immunization programs, district census, home delivery, preparation of the deceased, management of NCD clinics, refill of NCD cases' medication, foot care, dispensing medication and services for hypertension, diabetic, cancer cases, disabilities, geriatrics and defaulters. Doctors mainly visited the health centres once or twice a month for follow up and NCD, cardiac and medical clinics (L. Kaivelata, personal communication, September 20, 2023)
Kolonga HC	1 Health officer (HO) 2 Reproductive health (RH) nurses, 3 NCD nurses
Fua'amotu HC	1 Nurse practitioner, 2 RH nurses, 3 NCD nurses
Mu'a HC	2 HO, 3 RH nurses, 3 NCD nurses,
Vaini HC	2 HO, 4 RH nurses, 4 NCD nurses
Houma HC	1 NP, 3 RH nurses, 4 NCD nurses
Nukunuku HC	1 NP, 3 RH nurses, 4 NCD nurses
Kolovai HC	1 NP, 2 RH nurses, 3 NCD nurses
Health centres in Vava'u	Tefisi HC: Staff: 1 nurse and 1 HO Ta'anea HC: Staff: 1 nurse and 1 HO Hunga HC: Staff: 1 nurse
Health centres in Ha'apai	Nomuka HC: Staff: 1 nurse Haafeva HC: Staff :1 nurse and 1 HO 'Uiha HC: Staff: 1 nurse Kauvai HC: Staff: 1 nurse
Private health care facilities	Nuku'alofa Tongatapu: Women Health Clinic, Fasi, Nuku'alofa Village Mission Clinic, Kolofo'ou Health Herb Medical Center Ltd, Kolomotu'a Friendly Island Health Clinic, Longolongo Oasis Clinic, Nuku'alofa Seini Clinic and Universal Pharmacy, Neiafu Vava'u:
Non-government health organizations	Tonga Health Promotion Foundation (TongaHealth) Tonga Family Health Association.

5.2.4 Ministry of Education and Training

The Ministry of Education and Training (MET) has a Research and Ethics Policy 2014 that guides the review process. The MET employs three approaches to Research Ethics processes:

i) Christian approach; ii) Tongan ethnographic approach; and iii) Western HRE approach.

The Christian approach is consistent with the Christian Education Framework that was developed with the country's motto, *Ko e 'Otua mo Tonga ko Hoku Tofi'a* (God and Tonga are my inheritance) and underpinned by the *Pouono* Strategy and the Tongan Constitution.

Christianity and bible-based teaching are at the core of all educational activities in Tonga.

Tongan students are reminded of their inheritances, identity and their Christian beliefs through this educational framework (see Appendix 4).

The assessment of scientific research methods and the ethics review of most research proposed for Tonga (except for health research) is conducted by the Ministry of Education and Training via the PMO process outlined in Figure 5.3. The MET review of research and

ethics processes acknowledges the *Tonga Institute of Education's Research Manual* as a primary source of information. An important component of the MET review of research and ethics processes are core Tongan values which are the foundation of research ethics in the Tongan context. These five core values comprise: i) *Fe'ofa'aki* (mutual love, caring and generosity), ii) *Faka'apa'apa* (respect), iii) *Feveitokai'aki* (reciprocity, cooperation and consensus), iv) *Mamahi'i me'a* (humility and generosity) and v) *Fetokoni'aki* (sharing, cooperation and fulfilment of mutual obligations). Apart from the English translation of the values, the applications of the core values are not articulated in the MET review of research and ethics processes (Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014). Guidelines for ethical research, which are taken from the International Guidelines of HRE such as the Declaration of Helsinki, are also included. Tongan values and international principles of research ethics are compared in Table 5.4.

Table 5. 4: Matching Tongan core values to international principles in the MET R&EP.

Tongan core values	International principles of research ethics (Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014)
<p><i>Faka'apa'apa</i> - respect <i>Feveitokai'aki</i> – reciprocity, cooperation, consensus</p>	<p>(Respect for autonomy) Self-determination. The freedom of each person to make their own decision about participation in research. Informed consent. Consent is informed if the intended participant has been provided with a clear, easily understood explanation of the research, activities and the expected outcomes. Consent should be in writing, although at times, oral consent may be appropriate. Confidentiality. Information must always be handled in a way that protects the confidentiality of subjects and ensures the safe custody of data. Anonymity. The findings should be conveyed in such a way that the participants(s) cannot be identified, unless a prior agreement has been obtained from the participant(s) to be identified. Truthfulness and integrity. Deception is not acceptable in doing research with humans. Participants must never be misled about the purpose of the study.</p>
<p><i>Mamahi'i me'a</i> humility, generosity <i>Fe'ofa'aki</i> mutual love, caring, generosity.</p>	<p>Justice. There is an ethical obligation on the researcher to treat each person in accordance with what is morally right. Treat humans with dignity and reciprocate benefits.</p>
<p><i>Fetokoni'aki</i> sharing, cooperation, fulfilment of mutual obligation.</p>	<p>Beneficence. In planning specific research procedures and conducting pilot and mainstream research, the researcher must ensure that the risk of physical and psychological harm to participants is kept to an absolute minimum. De-Briefing. Where procedures might result in undesirable consequences, the researcher has the responsibility to detect them and have mechanisms available to remove or correct any consequences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After data has been collected, the researcher must provide the participant with a full clarification of the nature of the study and remove any misconceptions that may have arisen. - Publication and reporting of findings: A responsible researcher should announce his or her findings and implications with great qualification and caution. - Acknowledgement of source of information: The researcher must acknowledge the source of his or her information. It is also good practice to provide a copy of the report to the participants and any other parties that contributed to its contents.

5.2.5. Interdependence of government ministries and capacity building needs in HRE

There is evidence of a strong research governance and oversight structure centralized and coordinated within government ministries in Tonga. The participants from the government discussed each of the research and ethics mechanisms within their government ministry and how they also work across ministries in research ethics committees.

Three government ministries are included in the research and ethics mechanisms in Tonga. Firstly, the Prime Minister's Office is the coordinating body for research, and grants research permits. Secondly, the Ministry of Education and Training has a research and ethics committee that oversees all social science research proposed for Tonga. Finally, the Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee (NHERC) oversees all health research proposed for Tonga. If the research proposed focuses on human health, then it is sent to the NHERC at the MOH for review. They review the proposal based on the operational guidelines of the NHERC which adopt a biomedical approach to HRE.

In 2022, in Fiji, a training programme on research ethics with a specific focus on approaches to the ethical review of health research proposals was conducted for members of research ethics committees in the various Ministries of Health in the Pacific Islands. The trainees were representatives of HRE from seven PICs: the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (Lovo, 2022). The representative from Tonga was a senior medical officer who was a member of the Tonga NHERC.

The training was sponsored by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for the Cook Islands' Support for Strengthening Health Professionals' Training During Covid-19 project. I conducted the training through the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research at the College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences at the Fiji National University. At this training session participants stated that the ethics committee members in their various countries all needed this training, including members of the Tonga NHERC (Lovo, 2022).

There are no processes for research and research ethics in church groups, as discussed by a participant who represented the Methodist Church and Methodist education. *"...we do not yet have any formal process and research ethics process ..."* (PT11/Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-60 years). The connection between church groups and government ministries was considered weak and in need of strengthening.

HRE capacity building activities were to be conducted by the MET. This was suggested by participants as a way forward, to connect church groups and the government in HRE. The participants considered that there to be a wide variation in the degree of awareness about research ethics, both local and international approaches, amongst people involved in research and ethics mechanisms in Tonga.

“... We in the church here need to also look at these things, or the Government Department of Internal Affairs – to offer the training programme for researchers. ... we should be pressuring the Ministry of Education to have something like this in place...” (PT11/Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-60 years).

5.2.6 Research Ethics Review Process

All the participants stated that for all research projects, local or international, intended to be conducted in Tonga, researchers must apply to the Prime Minister’s Office for a research permit. The PMO is the central coordinating government Ministry for research. The PMO assesses applications according to the Tonga Government Research Permit Policy, 201921 (Tonga Prime Minister's Office, 2019). Master’s degree level research is reviewed by the MOE&T, based on the MOET Research Ethics Policy. Doctoral level research is reviewed by the relevant government Ministry. A participant expressed that it is important that a Tongan person with in-depth knowledge of Tongan cultural context is tasked with the review of research proposals, to ensure the application of Tongan cultural principles in the review process. Non-Tongans may not be tasked with this role because of their lack of Tongan cultural knowledge.

“... Ethics is one of the areas that they particularly focus on to make sure that the process is appropriate for Tonga, and that they apply the values that we have in Tonga...” (PT3/Senior Academic 1/Female/60-80 years).

Research proposals and ethics application to be submitted to Tonga for permits are written in English, but the data collection tools are to be written in English with a Tongan translation included. If the research includes professional people in Tonga, then Tongan and English are acceptable languages to be used for interviews, but if the research population are the Tongan people in communities, then the Tongan language must be used in the data collection instruments.

The PMO does not conduct scientific, cultural or ethical review of research proposals. The MOET and the MOH research and ethics committee members are specialists in various fields of research and are tasked with the review of research proposals. This was evident during this research, because participants were selected based on their affiliation with an ethics committee in Tonga, either working or retired. These participants' expertise in research, health or education and culture is well recognized in Tonga, and some were recognized in the Pacific region.

The PMO relies on the knowledge and expertise of staff for the review of research proposals and feedback to the PMO informing them of the scientific soundness and ethical standards of a research proposal. Upon completion of the vetting process the recommendation is communicated to the PMO for a final decision of awarding a permit or not.

When a participant was asked if the PMO conducts an ethics or scientific review of research proposals when researchers apply for research permit, he answered that “...*the research permit process at the PM Office is more logistics and lacks research ethics components*” (PT7/Ex-Senior PM Officer/Male/50-70 years).

The content of the Tongan government research permit requirements of 2019 includes the following: an application letter, a research proposal endorsed by the head of the researcher's institution, evidence of research funds, a time frame, return ticket, medical certificate, declaration to abide by Tonga research permit conditions, and that the results of research are to be submitted to the PMO. It also mentions that the process involves sending the application to relevant government ministries abiding by their own requirements and/or legislations and the MOET Ethics policy.

There is no online link provided for easy access to the form. An officer of the MOET who was a participant later emailed me the MOET ethics policy. The five core values of the MOET research ethics policy (Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014) are discussed in detail in Section 5.6. The PMO's authority is to facilitate the research permit process.

The line Ministries review the ethics approach of research. The research permit allows researchers to conduct research in Tonga, but according to participants, this permit does not include the authority to freely access other sectors in Tonga like businesses, private organizations, groups, NGOs, villages, churches, and others. Therefore, another process is required to gain permission to research in these sectors. The oversight mechanism indicates

an interdependence and strong partnership of government ministries in the operationalization of the research permit and HRE oversight mechanisms.

An NHERC member was asked about the cultural aspects of the review of research proposals at the NHERC. Her response focused on encouraging cross government committee review where Tongan cultural experts are invited to review the proposals:

“...The PMO coordinates the review of the proposal among the ministries’ research and ethics committees like the MOET and in the NHREC at the MOH and they just give it to them to review. But it should be up to our committee if they feel that these things need to have cultural ... Then we can call the PM’s office for someone to come if we need their advice, if we need to review involving Indigenous principles...”
(PT4/MOH/Female/40-60 years).

The skills needed for review of research proposals are pooled between the Ministries for maximum efficiency. This discussion indicates high levels of informal cooperation among research ethics committee members from government ministries.

It is also stated in the NHREC Annual Reports that *“training in research ethics reviews skills is needed for all ethical reviewers of research proposals and members of the NHREC”* (National Health Ethics and Research Committee, 2016; Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014, p.5; Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee, 2015). One of the participants discussed that the current review approach involve the following questions: *“Would this affect our work?” “Would this benefit us?” “Would this be intrusive?”* (PT4/MOH/Female/40-60 years). This review approach suggests a risk and benefit assessment approach to review, but this is not documented. When the NHREC reviewers reach a decision, they then communicate it to the researchers.

5.2.7 International Influence in Tonga for the Development of HRE Systems

Despite an extensive search for information about international influence in HRE in Tonga in the documentary analysis, there was only one record found. The NHERC annual reports of 2014 to 2016 mention a good relationship with educational institutions such as the Fiji National University and the University of Auckland. The 2014 annual report refers to a plan to expand to include the Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asian and Western Pacific Region (FERCAP) (Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee, 2014).

5.2.8 Documents Collected for Analysis of HRE in Tonga

Table 5.5 outlines the documents gathered in order to analyze HRE in Tonga.

Table 5. 5: Documents for analysis of HRE in Tonga

ORGANIZATION	DOCUMENTS	DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENTS
Tonga Government Prime Minister's Office	PMO letter to confirm the Cabinet decision on National Human Research Ethics Committee.	<p>Cabinet Decision No. 288 of 13th February 2002, "<i>The establishment of the National Health Ethics and Research Committee and its Terms of Reference within the Ministry of Health, be approved.</i>"</p> <p>The Cabinet approval authorized the establishment of a National Health Ethics and Research Committee in Tonga recognized by the government.</p>
	Government Research Policy, 2011.	<p>His Majesty's Cabinet decision on 12th May 2011 approved the Government Research Policy.</p> <p>The policy sets out the requirements for applications for a research permit in Tonga. This was later revised as the PMO Tonga Government Research Permit Requirements (TGPR), 2019. While no research ethics component is included, there is an ethics review process involving other ministries such as the Ministry of Education.</p>
Ministry of Education and Training	Ministry of Education and Training, Research and Ethics Policy, 2014	<p>Research and Ethics Policy 2014, provides an ethical framework for undertaking research in association with the Ministry of Education and Training. It re-iterates the Cabinet decision on 12th May 2011 and the TGPR. A significant part of this policy is the inclusion of five Tongan research core values, <i>fe'ofa'aki</i> (mutual love, caring, generosity) <i>faka'apa'apa</i> (respect), <i>feveitokai'aki</i> (reciprocity, cooperation, consensus) <i>mamahi'i me'a</i> (humility) and <i>fetokoni'aki</i> (sharing, cooperation, fulfilment of mutual obligation). The application of these Tongan values in the review process of research proposals is not indicated in this policy.</p>

	Tonga Christian Education Framework	The Christian Education Framework is based on Tongan philosophies portrayed on the shield of the government of Tonga. “ <i>Ko e ‘Otua mo Tonga Ko Hoku Tofi ‘a</i> ” (God and Tonga are my inheritance). The Christian Education Framework is broadly defined as, Christ-centred, bible-based and special for Tongans as it is founded on Tongan history and culture (Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014). Christian based education only applies to students who attend school in Tonga. It is not clear if this framework also applies to Tongan students in other countries.
Ministry of Health	Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Policy and Operational Guidelines, 2014.	Aim: To assist in providing a structure for the functionality of the <i>NHERC</i> . Guidance was sourced from the WHO <i>Operational Guidelines for Ethics Committees that Review Biomedical Research (2000)</i> . A contextualization process was conducted to suit the Ministry of Health systems.
	National Health Ethics and Research Committee Form: R2	Research Application Form for Ethical Approval of Health-Related Research Projects in Tonga.
	TNHERC Annual Reports 2014, 2014-2016.	The TNHERC reports on annual activities, including, ethics reviews, policies and processes, health research and ethics development, meetings convened, memberships and other achievements. It also reports on the committee needs.
Original thinkers in Indigenous knowledge.	Acknowledging Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Higher Education in the Pacific Island Region Konai Helu Thaman.	Konai Helu Thaman makes an argument for the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in higher education in PICTs. “ <i>Pacific people’s “knowledge systems,” including the values that upheld such systems, have been marginalized and silenced...these knowledge systems provided the solid foundations upon which Pacific communities have been sustained, and which guided these peoples in their struggle to survive...However, later in the twentieth century the Pacific Island people themselves realized that their knowledge systems needed to be given world recognition and protection as</i>

	Kakala Research Framework	<p><i>they were of utmost importance for their cultural survival and continuity”</i> (Thaman, 2006).</p> <p>The Kakala Research Framework articulates research from a Tongan perspective. The original thinking was to contextualize research so that Tongan students in higher education level can understand research methods.</p>
--	---------------------------	--

These documents relevant to HRE in Tonga were identified and analysed. These were from the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Health, the Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee and the Prime Minister’s Office. These are the only organizations in Tonga that had an affiliation with HRE.

An article about the original argument to include Indigenous knowledge from PICTs in higher education and a Tongan research framework titled *Kakala* were important to include in the document analysis. This is referred to in Sections 5.4.1 and 5.5.1.1.

The document analysis identified the following themes.

- (i) Government systems in which HRE exist (included in Section 5.2.)
- (ii) Processes of HRE in Tonga.
- (iii) Values and their origins that inform ethical approaches to HRE.
- (iv) Underlying theoretical principles of HRE.

The findings of the document analysis are included in Section 5.3. The section below is a description of the participants who informed the case study for HRE in Tonga.

5.2.9 Participants in Tonga’s HRE Case Study

The participant inclusion criteria required that all participants to be Tongan. Participants eventually selected were Tongans from government ministries, either currently working or retired, and involved or affiliated with HRE mechanisms including membership in an ethics committee. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all interviews were conducted online. Email correspondence was conducted to plan the Zoom interviews. Participants who accepted the invitation were very happy to contribute to the research. There was only one prospective participant that did not respond so his decision was respected.

The participants were all very senior staff such as heads of divisions/sections. From the health sector, a senior member of the National Health Ethics and Research Committee

(NHERC) and a former senior staff of the MOH took part. Former senior staff of the Prime Minister’s Office were interviewed; one was involved in the original stages of setting up a research ethics committee in Tonga in early 2000.

A senior member of the Tonga Parliament was available and interested in participating. He was included because of his background in the Legislative Assembly and Tongan legal environment and culture. A participant represented the Culture and Heritage Division of the Ministry of Tourism Tonga and one from the Ministry of Education and Training. There was a participant from the University of the South Pacific and a participant representing the management of church schools. Some participants had been involved with health research previously and others were from NGOs who are familiar with Tongan research expectations. A general description of participants is presented in Table 5.6.

Table 5. 6: Participants in the HRE case study in Tonga

Type of organization	Description of method, participants and age group	Number and gender of participants
University Staff	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a senior academic and experienced social researcher.	1 female
Ministry of Education and Training	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a senior education officer.	1 female
	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a former senior executive officer in the Ministry of Education and Training.	1 female
Ministry of Health	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a senior member of staff of the Ministry of Health.	1 female
	1 face to face <i>talanoa</i> session with a former senior member of the Ministry of Health now in The Pacific Community.	1 female
Prime Minister’s Office	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a former government official now working in the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.	1 male
	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a retired senior Tonga government official.	1 male
Legislative Assembly	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a member of the Legislative Assembly.	1 male
The Culture and Heritage Division of the Ministry of Tourism	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a senior officer.	1 female
Church based organization	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a senior staff member of a Christian based NGO.	1 female

	1 online <i>talanoa</i> session with a senior clergy and senior Christian education management officer.	1 female
Total number of participants		11 (8 females and 3 males)

As discussed in Chapter 3, the interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic while the borders were closed so Zoom *talanoa* sessions and emails were possible although there were limitations experienced, as I mentioned in Section 7.5. This small number of participants is expected from Tonga because the Tongan population is smaller than Fiji. This is also discussed in section 7.5.2.

5.2.10 Part 1 Conclusion

This section has included:

- A brief background of the Kingdom of Tonga including mythology of the Tongan Kings and the Tongan society. The social structure consists of the King at the top, the chiefs and their families in the middle and the commoners at the bottom. The Tongan constitution is based on Christianity.
- HRE systems in Tonga have been describes, including a chronology of the development of HRE in Tonga and organizations that engage in HRE. There are evidence of strong research governance and an oversight structure centralized and coordinated within and across government ministries such as the Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Training. The Prime Minister’s Office is the central authority responsible for processing and issuing research permits. However, the review of research proposals is conducted by other relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Training.
- International influence in Tonga for the development of HRE systems includes the Fiji National University and the University of Auckland. There has been a plan to include the Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asian and Western Pacific Region (FERCAP).
- A Table 5.5 presents relevant documents collected for analysis in relation to HRE. Cabinet Decision No. 288 of 13th February 2002, from the Prime Minister’s Office, confirmed a government decision to establish a National Health Ethics and Research Committee at the Ministry of Health.

- Table 5.6 presents the description of the participants interviewed for this research. They were from the local university, from various government ministries, the church and Christian education organizations.

The second part of this chapter consists of a presentation of the research findings for the Tongan HRE case study.

5.3 Tonga Human Research Ethics Case Findings

5.3.1 Introduction and outline of themes

This section provides the findings for the Tonga Human Research Ethics Case Study. It begins with a general discussion of Tongan thought leaders who were promoting Indigenous thinking to be embodied in systems such as HRE. Participants described them as champions of HRE in Tonga and the PICTS, which is why it is important to include their names and original thoughts in the findings of this research. This section also includes interview findings concerning the important need for research legislation and a national research policy to formalize HRE processes.

Following this, the three main themes and 18 subthemes that address the aim of the study are described in detail. These also answer the study's three research questions. The three major themes are:

- (i) Theme 1: Western research paradigms are respected over Tongan which describes the dual approach to HRE in Tonga: Western biomedical approach and Tongan traditional cultural approaches. It includes a discussion of influential thought leaders of Tonga research ethics and in the Pacific Islands.
- (ii) Theme 2: *Kini ha hala totonu ki he fekumi*: Cutting an ethical research pathway. Four subthemes are included here which describes an ethical research protocol is informed by cultural rules of engagement, the Kakala Research Framework, traditional research protocols involving identity, respectful communication and power dynamics in village research settings.
- (iii) Theme 3: The ontology of Tongan life: Theoretical underpinning of research ethics. Seven subthemes that describe the ethical principles that form the foundation of ethical research.

A synthesis of themes of the case results for HRE in Tonga which has informed the development of a decolonizing Indigenous framework for a HRE guideline for Tonga is presented at the end of this chapter.

5.4 Theme 1: Western Research Paradigms are Respected over Tongan paradigms

Participants raised the issue of Tongans being adamant about conforming to Western ideas, especially in the education sector which contributes to the devaluation of Tongan cultural paradigms in education. Tongans have tended to respect scientists who conduct research in Tonga instead of thoroughly reviewing the accuracy of their research proposals according to Tongan expectations. Participants expressed the need to reverse this pattern now and not wait for Tongans to be exploited through research before acting.

“... what you are doing, it needs to be done, manatu’i (recall) education and all that – we only take what the palangi (white people) bring, Western ideas, and we think that is the right way to do things. At times, we put our culture behind us and advance palangi things. ... This research is timely, in my opinion and we need someone like you to do it, like you are in research itself, and you recognize that this is something that is not done...” (PT4/MOH Senior Officer/Female/40-60 years).

Prevention of harm to Tongan people through research is a priority and promoting their rights is crucial:

“... I think we should be vigilant because when people come from overseas and they are scientists we bow down and worship them, thinking that they are doing great things, instead of interrogating the processes that they are using and the aims of the research that they are doing...” (PT3/Senior Academic 1/Female/60-80 years).

These senior academics challenge those people involved in the HRE oversight mechanisms to change their practices by strengthening the ethics and scientific review processes of HRE.

A senior government official mentioned that the *Pouono* Strategy prioritizes the sovereignty of Tonga, so it is to be prioritized above any strategic thinking from abroad. Further, Tongan sovereignty is protected, and it is imperative that no country colonizes Tongan minds.

5.4.1 Influential Thought Leaders of Tongan Research Ethics in Tonga and the Pacific Islands

Two strong Tongan women named by participants through the interviews as leaders of Tongan Research Ethics were also confirmed as such through the literature. The first is Professor Konai Helu Thaman, who has held various senior management positions, including the Director of the Institute of Education, former Pro Vice Chancellor, and Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of the South Pacific. In a 2006 research article, Professor Helu Thaman stated that Pacific Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) must be included in official documentation, research and dissemination in higher educational institutions like the University of the South Pacific in Oceania (Thaman, 2006). This documented research article is also included in Section 5.2.8, Table 5.5. Thaman's IKS include specific systems of values, knowledge, understandings, and practices developed and accumulated over millennia, by a group of human beings in a particular region, which may be unique to that group or region. This definition is inclusive of the processes and methods of knowledge creation and transmission, developed over thousands of years by Indigenous peoples. It emphasizes technical insights and wisdom that are the result of careful observation and experimentation with natural as well as social phenomena (Thaman, 2006, p.176).

The second influential Tongan woman is Dr Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki, who was the Pro Vice Chancellor Research and Graduate Affairs at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in 2006 and 2007. At USP, Dr Taufe'ulungaki developed new research processes and initiated the incorporation of elements of Pacific Island cultures into the USP ethics policy framework. She left USP, returned to Tonga and was selected by the government to be the Minister of Education, Women's Affairs and Culture in 2010. Dr Taufe'ulungaki developed and launched the Christian Education Framework for Tonga's education sector, entitled *Ko e 'Otua mo Tonga ko Hoku Tofi'a* (God and Tonga are my inheritance) which is Tonga's national motto of (Ministry of Education and Training, nd). One participant stated that while the work conducted by Professor Konai Helu Thaman and Dr Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki was associated with the education sector of Tonga and the Pacific Region, it is significant for all sectors involving Tongan people. Thaman stated that Europeans invaded the islands of the Pacific in about the 17th century, bringing with them their powerful culture with practices enforced upon the islanders which greatly influenced and transformed their way of life and their freedom (Thaman, 2006). Consequently, the Indigenous people and their IKS were marginalized and devalued. It was not until the 20th century, that the Indigenous people of

Oceania felt that their IKS need to be re-valued and given worldwide recognition for their continuity and survival (Thaman, 2006).

Thought leaders Professor Thaman and Dr Taufe'ulungaki have been influential in highlighting and valuing IKS of the Pacific Islands through their high-level work in Pacific regional education institutions, international conferences and in the education sector in Tonga (Pene, Taufe'ulungaki, & Benson, 2002; Thaman, 1997). Their influence may have impacted the Tonga government initiative to develop a human research ethics committee at the Ministry of Health as an oversight mechanism for all health research in Tonga. The Operational Guidelines for the NHERC were available online from 2014 (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014). However, participants confirmed that there is currently no legislation to govern research at the national level in Tonga. Instead, there is a presumption that research will be governed under individual government ministries.

“... research will be governed under each sector, so if it is about medicine, it will be governed under medical laws, hospital policies. If it is about Tongan culture, will be referred to Tonga's traditional committee, and so I can't think of a specific law, ... because over the last decade, I haven't come across anything, even research ethics. Before we know, there might be a piece of law that was used before...”
(PT8/Senior Government Officer/Male/30-50 years).

There were mixed feelings about the need to develop legislation. One participant stated it was not yet time to issue a law for human research in Tonga. Rather it may be appropriate to begin with establishing a policy. If such policies work well, then that will suffice. He further stated that policies can progress to developing legislation in future to govern human research. The views of other participants were different. They stated that it is timely in this COVID-19 environment to develop and establish legislation:

“... I think it may be appropriate, and I think it is probably needed to have a piece of legislation that will formalize the whole process...., if there is already in existence such a piece of legislation and if not, then to suggest to them that this is an area that we need to look into. Particularly now with the COVID-19 and the production of so many other diseases, come through so many other means, we need to be able to protect our people...” (PT3/Senior Academic/Female/60-80 years old).

“...but it is good to have a legislation which give us more umphs and power...”
(PT2/MET/Female/40-60 years).

“...The CEO of the Ministry and I were in discussion, drafting a piece of legislation for higher education because Tonga is establishing a national university and this piece of legislation in fact will allow it to come into existence. But, if need be, we need to include a research component, none exists to date.” (PT3/Senior Academic/Female/60-80 years)

Findings would suggest that research and ethics legislation need to be established to govern the functions of HRE in Tonga pending further analysis. The protection and security of people was raised by participants as crucial at this time. They stated that legislation would provide the authority in Tonga to control HRE mechanisms and prosecute those that are non-compliant. The same legislation can also provide for the governance of high-level scientific research such as human genetic research and the extraction of human biodata from people of Tonga. Fear of communicable diseases coming through to Tonga, like the COVID-19 pandemic, was expressed in the discussions, thus the need arose for more health research to inform an oversight mechanism that will protect Tongans. In addition to the need for legislation, participants expressed there was a need for training of the researchers in Tongan research ethics approach:

“...there should be a cross-cultural training provided for researchers in Tonga so It they understand the Tonga cultural expectations...” (PT6/Ex Senior PMO/Male/40-60 years)

“So, if researchers are to go do research in conservative societies, like we have in the church, then the training should be offered to the researchers to familiarize them with Tongan society’s expectations...” (PT11/Clergy & Educationist/Female/50-60 years).

5.4.2 Approaches to HRE: Navigating Western Biomedical and Tongan Traditional Cultural Approaches

The two existing HRE committees in Tonga are embedded within the Ministries of Health (MOH) and Education (MOET). The MOH NHREC approaches HRE from a Western biomedical approach (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014) with minimal reference to cultural approaches. The MOET involves a socio-cultural and ethical approach to research (Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014).

One participant highlighted a critically significant view of the difference between the Western biomedical and Tongan cultural approach to HRE. The Western approach is based on the protection of individuals in research, while the Tongan approach is based on forming

life-long relationships between Tongan people and researchers that will make a difference in Tonga:

“... So, the Western approach to research ethics is to protect the human person. The Tongan research ethics is to create a stronger relationship between the person and the researcher so that you can create a relationship that will matter in Tongan life in future...” (PT1/Senior Academic 2/Female/40-60 years).

Participants compared their perceptions of the purpose of Tongan and Western research. Tongan research ethics are built on relationality, and the question was raised “What will we do to help each other?” The Tongan concept that applies to the idea of relationality is “*Nofo ‘a Kainga*” or communal understanding, where family is defined as extended and not a single unit, which is elaborated in Section 5.6.

A participant discussed how Western research purposes are tied to a research methodology. Many times, the interpretation of research findings according to a methodology can divert from the contextual meaning of information resulting in the publication of inaccurate information about research findings in Tonga. This is particularly so when done in the absence of a Tongan collaborator.

Western purposes of research originate from legalistic societies and thus focus on the need for participants to sign a consent form to satisfy a process of accountability which differs to Tonga’s oral culture, where things are not documented but practised.

For these four reasons, participants felt that researchers need to have knowledge of Tongan context for accurate interpretation of research data. In addition to the differences in research approaches, participants identified an area that is neglected by researchers. Their personal agendas in research may include publication, promotion or to achieve a university degree, all of which poses minimal benefit for Tongan communities. Participants emphasized that this is therefore non-compliant with the end stages of the Tongan research cycle, which is inherently about continuing relationships. This final stage calls for the researcher to return to the researched community, present the research findings and correct or confirm the interpretations, based on feedback from the Tongan participants.

This process also provides the opportunity for the researcher and community to plan on utilizing the research results for the benefit of the community and this comprises the foundation for the reciprocal benefits derived from research. With reference to the Tongan research Kakala Framework, this stage of research is referred to as the “*luva*” phase (see Section 5.5.1.1).

“...The “luva” process, in which you go back to the community in which you took the information and give them the results of your research... you are also required to give a public seminar of the outcomes of your research, to let people know what you got out of it and what your research can be used for...” (PT3/Senior Academic 1/Female/60-80 years).

The *luva* process contributes to strengthening the relationship between the researcher and research community where they can discuss how the community can benefit from the research outcomes in future.

5.5 Theme 2: *Kini ha Hala Totonu ki he Fekumi*: Cutting an Ethical

Research Pathway

This section comprises an analysis of participants’ views about the Tongan socio-cultural approach to research. This approach which needs to be understood in conjunction with research protocols and ethical principles. The section includes a brief discussion of the variations of research protocols that involve members of chiefly (noble) families. Then follows an examination of the research protocols that participants discussed in the *talanoa* sessions. I then elaborate on Tongan cultural principles embedded within the protocols discussed, stating the concept in the Tongan language followed by the English translation. Also included is a discussion of concepts that represent good outcomes of ethical research and concepts that represent negative implications of unethical research. A mind map summarizes the participant discussions included in this section.

5.5.1 An ethical research protocol is informed by cultural rules of engagement

5.5.1.1 Kakala Research Framework

Participants discussed the Tongan *Kakala* Research Framework (KRF), cultural ethical research methods that embody Tongan knowledge systems (Fua, 2014; Thaman, 1997). Research is ethical when one follows these research concepts in the Tongan context. *Kakala*

refers to a fragrant garland made for a significant person to wear during an important occasion. The KRF has seven stages:

- i) *Teu* (to prepare) In research conceptualizing, designing, planning, engaging, recognizing and respecting Tongan perspectives stage. The participants emphasized that all external researchers' build their capacity of Tongan culture for the purpose of approaching Tongan research within a Tongan paradigm.
- ii) *Toli* (to pick flowers or fruits or a collection of resources). In research this refers to the data collection stage which requires cooperation and respect among all team members to successfully gather the required data. The Tongan research tool *talanoa* is utilized during the *toli* stage:

*“...talanoa to use as a research tool, we tend to really unpack all our beliefs and our behaviours and values system that surround a conversation. So that is the ethics of Tongans, the foundational belief, that guide talanoa. The ethical principles of respect and humility, one of the neglected principles, underpin and guide the talanoa in research. So, when we use these ethical principles in the fekumi or research, research participants will not heliaki (To speak words with indirect meanings, talking in Tongan metaphorical terms and communicating indirectly or telling tales.) in the talanoa session but the information they will share will come from the heart because they have in depth feeling that the researchers want to listen to them respectfully. Then the obstacles to the talanoa conversation will slowly be disassociated. **So, you have to be right, that is why ethics is so important...**after the talanoa, you both have learnt from each other, and you have formed a *Vā* (relationship) that will last a lifetime...” (PT1/Senior Academic/40-60 years).*

- iii) *Tui* (to string the flowers according to the *kakala* floral design). In research this is the data management and data analysis stage which need to be conducted accurately according to the Tongan context. For example, poverty can be measured according to Western paradigm by using economics tools to measure family income and compare to a set national poverty level. Poverty is measured according to Tongan perspectives by measuring one's behaviour not one's income level (Fua, 2014). Appropriate behaviour in the Tongan context is more important than income. Therefore, research ethics and integrity in the Tongan context is measured by the behaviour of the researcher(s) in their conduct of the research. Tongan features of researcher ethical behaviour include respectful heart to heart *talanoa* that result in forming a *vā* long lasting relationship.

iv) *Luva* (as discussed above, to gift the garland to someone). In research, this is the stage of reporting the findings and dissemination of the research. The *luva* stage of research requires the researcher to return to the research community in Tonga, present the findings and discuss how the findings can form reciprocal benefits to the community. This is the stage that is neglected according to participants:

“...I believe the idea that research is when we go collecting information, then we return with the information and make it useful to our people. Research that will be understood by people and help people in their basic everyday decision making in their everyday life...” (PT11/Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-60 years).

v & vi) *Malie and mafana* (Tongan concepts that feature feelings of happiness and warmth, such as when one watches traditional Tongan dance). *Malie* and *mafana* concepts are applied to research when the research community receive the outcome of the research, have worked with the researchers to reach an understanding of the outcome and are using the new knowledge to develop their lives (Fua, 2014, pp. 53-55). The researcher(s) would require time to reach comprehension and appreciation from the community. This will require the next stage *nofo*.

vii) *Nofo* (to stay longer in the community). The researcher can further conduct *talanoa* with people in the community, to discuss ideas of how the new knowledge from the research can contribute to the wellbeing of the community. A senior academic explained the steps of the Kakala framework as a research methodology...

“... the methodology, the Kakala Framework, we have added on teu, this is the preparatory stage before the toli and then we have added on two other elements, two other stages at the end, and that would be for the assessment, and they are mafana and malie. Malie and mafana will test whether the outcome of your research will be applied effectively when used by people because when the outcomes are useful, meaningful, worthwhile and beneficial, then you will feel this malie, and if you feel the malie then you will feel the mafana will come through and transform the process...” (PT3/Senior Academic 1/Female/60-80 years).

5.5.2 Traditional research protocols involve identity, positionality and relationality to determine insider and outsider researchers

Participants felt that the research permit from the PMO and approvals from the ethics committees are considered meaningless in the village setting, although these can open doors in Government Ministries and professional settings. The traditional approach is relevant in rural settings:

“...Each level has their own gates to open, and those gates can open to you based on relationships, based on positionality and based on your identity.” (PT1/Senior Academic/Female/40-60 years).

Relationality refers to family connections through ancestral extended family heritages. It is a tool to negotiate through difficult local village governance protocols.

“...I think in terms of communication and processes, it is important for the researcher from outside, to respect us Tongans by seeking and approaching the right persons to ask for permission for him or her to present to them his research proposal, in terms of a process...” (PT11/Senior Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-60 years).

“... you still have to go through your protocol with organizations from their heads to their schools and the individuals. And then the villages are the more difficult ones... go through the local governance level, the town officers. The town officer will introduce us to a family. Each level has their own gates to open, and those gates can open to you based on relationships, positionality, and based on your identity. Those gates are not open just because you have a piece of paper from Cabinet...a consent paper does not mean anything. Those are informal protocols, you just need to know the context, so you can know how to navigate these informal processes, and at each point, it is always negotiable...” (PT1/Senior Academic/40-60 years).

In terms of research in village settings, the concepts of relationality, positionality, and identity (as discussed by the participant above) interplay in navigating through difficult village protocols. An academic participant mentioned that a member of the research team should have a family relationship with people in the village to have easy access and form a reciprocal research relationship. Identity and positionality are also defined and interpreted through the relationality sphere.

“Positionality is very important in our protocol because people don’t care if you come from the university, ‘I am from Harvard University’, the response will be, ‘where is Harvard?’ ... when you say, ‘I am a grandchild of so and so’ – then that is understood. So that is a key part that the researcher needs to appreciate and be clear on their positionality and who they are...” (PT1/Senior Academic/Female/40-60 years).

Through relationality, the identity of the person is made known, and they become easily accepted into the village setting. The villagers will reciprocate by recognizing the relationship and thus accept and respect the research team, supporting their activities. These concepts are important for efficient research. This protocol is illustrated in Figure 5.4. Positionality within extended family relations enables insider researcher identity. If the research team are all outsiders and do not have any relationship at all to the village, then there is a need to recruit a person with an identity related to the village to enable successful navigation through the required protocols.

Figure 5. 4: The Navigational Framework of Relationality, Positionality and Identity in Reciprocal Research Environments



As stated by the participants, the relationships, positionality, and identity of the researcher are all very significant in the village setting. Relationships include family blood relationships, relationships with people in church groups and relationships built through schools, youth groups or other culture-based groups. It is important that the researcher positions himself or herself within a relationship in order to facilitate implementing successful research projects in the village.

Existing research protocols for working with rural villages begin with the researcher identifying the research setting, a village, or villages. They need to identify the chief of the village or the chief's representative. It is important at this stage to consider the social status of prospective participants. A participant was asked in a *talanoa* session about permission to enter *Kolonga*, a village in Tonga, for research. The participant advised me to take my research assistant and niece Ms Elizabeth Kite (permission was granted from Elizabeth to use her real name to illustrate the point) who is a close blood relation of *Nuku*, the chief of the village of *Kolonga*.

“... yes, you take Elizabeth with you, ... generally that would be the way it is. And it depends also on the village, cause some villages don't have stakeholder, some villages there are no Lords or Nobles, so you go to the 'Ofisa kolo' (town officer) so the town officer may take you to the noble.... And I am not joking about taking Elizabeth to Kolonga. That comes back to my point about relationships, and your identity. Elizabeth walks into Kolonga, and she is a Kite, and that relationship, they may have never seen Elizabeth before, you know, based on her father and her ancestors, her position and her identity allow her to enter...”

(PT1/Academic/Female/40-60 years).

In most cases, the chief has a spokesperson (*matapule*). Prior to the meeting with the chief, if the researchers are non-Tongans, the spokesperson will also advise of the dress code and other respectful behaviours that are to be strictly observed while meeting the noble. These behaviours are appropriate in most Tongan settings. Gifts are also to be taken to the village.

“...when conducting research, say you are going to the village of Tefisi, you will not just go with nothing ... you will seek out an appointment with the Town Officer or the Noble of Tefisi and they will inform you of things that you are supposed to take to present to the Noble of Tefisi, the village. It is a must to do those things before going to research in Tefisi...” (PT9/Senior Government Officer/Female, 40-60 years).

5.5.3 Respectful communication in the Tongan language is ethical in research

Tongan language is described as a language of gratitude. All greetings, begin with the word “*malo*” (thank you). *Malo e lelei* is the Tongan word for hello which means grateful that you are well, and if you greet someone who is working, you will say *malo e ngaue*, which means, thank you for your hard work (Latumahina, 2013). Respectful communication is conducted within family settings between parents and their children, amongst siblings and outside of the family circle. A special vocabulary is used by Tongans if they are communicating with nobles and leaders of the churches. Another set of vocabulary is used by Tongans for communication with members of the Royal Family (Tongan Working Group, 2012) and one is specific for communicating amongst the commoners. As described by one participant “...*People are to utilize the correct language to address people respectfully according to their social status*” (PT7/Ex Senior PM Officer/Male/60-70 years). The Tongan language will continue to be a sustainable informant of morality as this was spoken in pre-Christian times. Researchers are expected to respect Tongan people’s Christian beliefs and begin and end the research meetings with a prayer:

“...if we look at our moralities, a lot of it is based on Christian principles, but then a lot of it is handed down from our traditional societies, like the relationship between brother and sister, our cultural system...Tongan language and visual arts also inform Tonga morality...” (PT7/Ex Senior PM Officer/ Male/60-70 years).

5.5.4 Power dynamics in village research settings and research implications

Participants raised the point that although village officers or (*ofisa kolo*) are government employees in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, they are not included in the government structure that oversee research in Tonga. One participant mentioned that although these village officers have the authority to allow entry into villages, researchers are to ask the village people about the best person to approach for entry into their village, because there may be unknown power struggles in the village. By finding out the village power dynamics, researchers can then approach the right person who will facilitate the research well.

“...You also need to understand the relationships within the villages, because you might have all your hopes on the town officer ... but it turns out they just had a big row last week. I have been in situations where I was hoping that the town officer will open the door for me but the town officer’s relationship with the village is so bad that the town officer is the wrong person to go to.”
(PT1/Senior Academic/Female/40-60 years).

When entry permission is achieved, the gatekeeper who approved entry will introduce the researcher to the group that fits the research population description. Gifts for presentation to the village can be food items, clothing, or other items as a token of appreciation.

5.6 Theme 3: The Ontology of Tongan Life: Theoretical Underpinning of Research Ethics in Tonga

When participants were asked about the theoretical underpinnings of research ethics in their country, answers were varied, overlapping and related. Some described more than one principle. Overall, seven said that the *Fa Kavei Koula* (FKK) or Four Golden Principles underpinned Tongan morality. Her Majesty the late Queen Salote Tupou III metaphorically gave the name to these principles (Faletau, 2020). The FKK consist of *faka'apa'apa* (respect), *lototō* (humility), *mamahi'i me'a* (loyalty in performing one's duty), and *tauhi vā* (duty to keep relationships with others alive and well). Each of the FKK has in-depth practical meanings, therefore, they can be considered as a pragmatic framework of Tongan morality. Participants connect the FKK to the *Nofo 'a Kainga* communal value theory practised by Tongan people for centuries (Beals, Kidman, & Funaki, 2020). The findings suggest that the FKK be employed in research involving Tongan people. Two participants believed strongly that the theoretical underpinning of research is the *nofo a kainga*.

“... *Tonga is a communal society and that is the bed rock of our society, the Nofo 'a Kainga ...*” (PT11/Senior Clergy/Educationist/50-60 years).

Three participants said the theoretical underpinnings of Tongan research ethics comprise *feveitokai'aki* (reciprocity, cooperation, consensus) which is one of the FKK. Four participants said Christianity underpinned Tongan values, discussed in Section 5.6.6.

In this section, I incorporate all participants' answers into a framework and indicate their inter-relatedness. Each principle and its features are discussed, particularly how they intertwine with relevance to research in the Tongan context (see Figure 5.6). The *Nofo 'a Kainga* concept and the FKK are believed by participants to have existed in the Tongan society in pre-Christian times. The *Nofo 'a Kainga* has been sustained in Tonga over the centuries by the application and practice of the ethical principles of the FKK which uphold the collective wellbeing of Tongan people. The *Nofo 'a Kainga* communal theory is

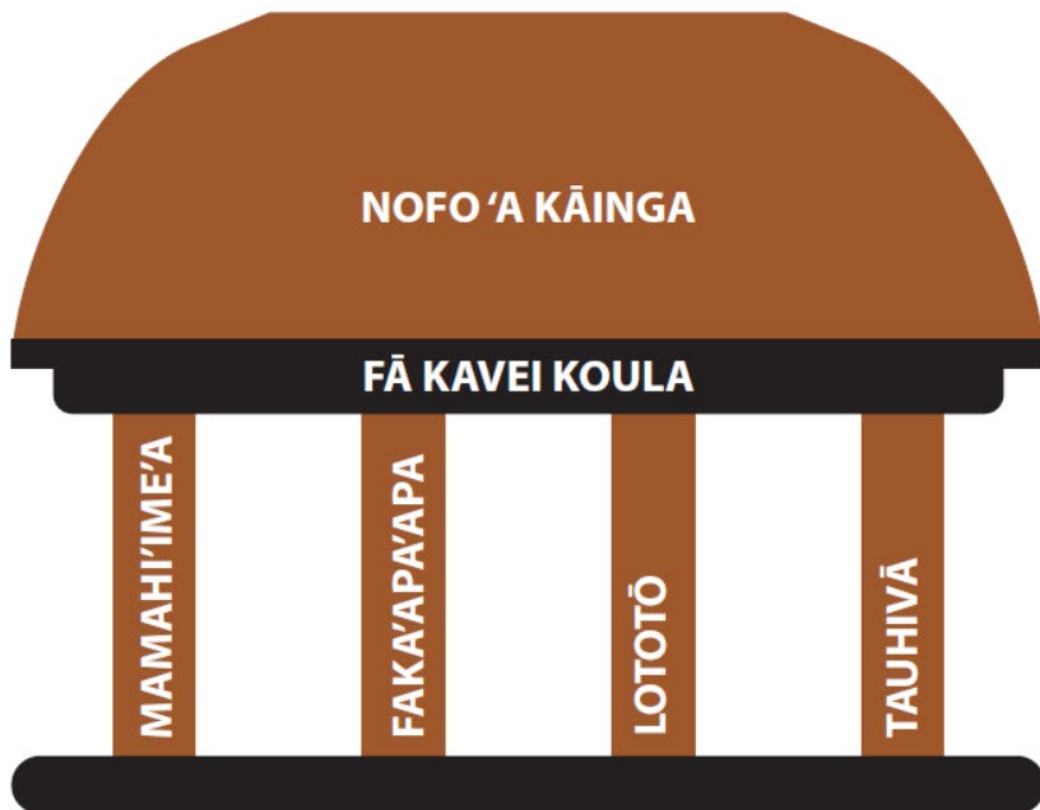
discussed in relation to the *FKK* pragmatics framework of Tongan morality as reported by the participants of this research.

“... *Traditional Tongan living, remember, was Nofo ‘a Kainga. In villages it is Nofo ‘a Kainga...*” (PT4/MOH/Female/40-60 years)

The Tongan *fale* (Maykut & Morehouse) (see Figure 5.5) illustrates the relationship between *Nofo ‘a Kainga* and the *FKK*. The *Nofo ‘a Kainga* is the overarching value theory which portrays the communal nature of Tongan society.

Briefly stated, the *FKK* is a sum of four individual components of Tongan ethical principles: *faka’apa’apa* (respect), *mamahi’ime’a* (loyal duty), *lototō* (humility) and *tauhivā* (maintaining relationships).

Figure 5. 5: *Nofo ‘a Kainga* Value Theory Encompassing the *Fa Kavei Koula* Pragmatics Framework that Underpins Tongan Research Ethics



One participant thought that the *FKK* and its significance for research should be explored further.

“... *The four golden pillars of Tonga, need to be unpacked further – so that we can establish some practical processes around it to guide the research practice...*”

PT11/Senior Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-60 years).

Participants note the *Nofo 'a Kainga* underpins the relationship building, identity, and positionality required of researchers. Thus, the researcher can employ the '*Nofo 'a Kainga*' value system to pave a pathway to access participants for research. If a researcher is an insider to the *kainga* (kinsfolk) he or she can perform the protocols required more easily than if an outsider. The insider researcher has easy access to people and information because everyone in the *kainga* knows the identity of this person and his or her line in the family genealogy. If a researcher is an outsider to the *kainga*, then he or she needs to try and associate with a member of the *kainga* as a cultural advisor or co-researcher to provide guidance and be accepted into the *kainga* or research population group (see Section 5.5.2).

The Tongan concept that applies to this process is *kini ha hala totonu ki he fekumi* (cutting an ethical pathway for research). The outcome of being accepted into the *kainga* is that people will share relevant information sought in research. People will not share relevant information with researchers if they are not happy with the process of “*kini ha hala totonu ki he fekumi*”. So, if the researcher is not knowledgeable about Tongan culture, he or she will not understand the *heliaki* (to speak words with indirect meanings, talking in Tongan metaphorical terms and communicating indirectly or telling tales) and thus may not gain rich insights into the research topic.

“... *So that is why we need to be clearer about our positionality. If we think that the research is about finding the most accurate information, then the tools that we get for the most accurate picture, are tools that are fit for that context, the purpose, that make sense to people, that connect to people's minds and connect to people's way of seeing the world...*” (*PT1/Senior Academic 2/ Female/40-60 years).*

Virtuous behaviour is expected in the *Nofo 'a Kainga*. *Ofa* (kindness), *faitotonu* (honesty), *to'a* (courage) and *manava 'ofa* (compassion) are some features of virtue. The story below portrays the virtuous behaviour of some boys as told by one of the participants.

A story of virtuous behaviour of Tongan boys shared by PT7/Ex Senior PM Officer/Male/60-70 years during the *talanoa* sessions

Ron Simpson, Volunteer Farm Advisor from Australia in 2015, shared this story:

I had the absolute privilege of witnessing first-hand the selfless characters of the young men from Tupou College. The occasion was a field trip to observe vegetable and mushroom growing at the Vaini Agricultural Research Station. The truck that transported the 20 students and my-self needed to do a delivery, so I said that I would walk the boys back to the main road (4kms) and meet the truck there for the return journey. It was very late in the day, and I was unsure if the students would have been too late for dinner at the college. These boys had worked hard all afternoon and walked a long way so when we arrived at the main road, I sighted a small bakery where we were to meet the truck.

I checked my pocket for money, found that I had enough to go into the bakery and purchased four large bottles of cool drink, a tub of butter and 10 loaves of bread (this is a real treat for the boys – they fill up half a loaf of bread with a huge dollop of butter – tasty but a potential cholesterol risk!). However, appreciating their bounty and as normal practice they sat down in a circle and started to give thanks before sharing bread. But prior to eating, one student from the circle stood up and took a loaf of bread over to an extremely emaciated elderly man sitting on the other side of the bakery (that I had omitted to see). There was no conversation, he just placed the loaf gently into the old gentleman's hands and then returned to the circle where the 20 boys then proceeded to share the food equally prior to bowing their heads to give thanks. I immediately checked my cash and found that I had just enough to go back into the bakery to purchase another loaf for them.

I felt so blessed that I had the privilege of witnessing the hearts of these fine young men. Remembering these students were 14-16 years old who would have been extremely hungry and probably due to their late return would miss out on a boiled cassava tea, they thought beyond the self. I was so overcome that I had to walk around the side of the bakery and shed a tear because I was witnessing Christ in action through these boys. – 'I was hungry, and you fed me.' Matthew 25:35.

Source: Tupou College: Sesquicentenary History 1866-2016, Tupou College, 2016. Pp. 399-400.

This story illustrates the values that underpin Tongan behaviour. Even in situations with the lack of basic human needs, love and compassion dominate the thoughts and actions of Tongans. Virtues of Tongan behaviour involve love and compassion which should also be included as a feature of Tongan research ethics principles. A researcher in Tonga, with a specific focus on research involving vulnerable populations, needs to have love and compassion as a researcher trait, to achieve the status of research integrity in Tonga.

“... We had a case of one Tongan student who is doing her PhD on disability groups and information had to be released from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, from the disability unit, and they are very careful to make sure that they are using all our Tongan values, and our Tongan processes, before she is given the information...” (PT3/Senior Academic/Female/60-80 years).

5.6.1 Fa Kavei Koula (FKK) ethics, the Four Golden Ethical Principles of Tonga

This section comprises a discussion on how the FKK ethics uphold the *Nofo 'a Kainga* value theory which is important for researchers to understand and apply in their research in Tonga. One participant described the FKK eloquently:

“The FKK is more formalized, and I think they can provide a good framework for ethics regarding our work in Tonga at the moment. Faka’apa’apa (respect), mamahi’i me’a (loyalty and passion in carrying out duties to one and all), ‘a e lototō (humility), tauhi vā (maintaining good relationships with family and others in the community). I believe that these four golden pillars of Tonga are intertwined and not separate, in my opinion, they are tied. Elements of faka’apa’apa (respect) – elements of tauhi vā (maintaining relationships) and mamahi’ime’a (loyalty and passion in carrying out duties), likewise, within lototō (humility), there is respect, tauhi vā (maintaining relationships) and loyalty and passion in carrying out duties.” (PT11/Senior Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-70 years).

Participants further described *Nofo 'a Kainga* as a thought that originated from communal living... “we are a community; these thoughts originate from the fact that we are all related in the community ...” (PT11/Senior Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-70 years). Tongan people have known their ancestral bloodlines for many generations therefore the *Nofo 'a Kainga* community members are obliged to carry out duties that add value to each other’s lives and strengthen their *vā* (relationship).

“...In a communal society, we need to maintain good reciprocal relationships with others...so in this case, the collective benefit for the Tongan community takes precedence over individual benefits” (PT11/Senior Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-70 years).

5.6.1.1 Vā (Relationship) Built through Research is a Reciprocal Learning Platform

Through respect in research, both the researcher and research participant form a *vā*, (special relationship) and a special bond is created. This relationship means that the researcher and participant have developed a close relationship which will grow in strength in future. The expected outcomes of the *vā* will be reciprocal benefits which are immeasurable. This is the essence of the ethics of research in Tonga, building a *vā* relationship that lasts forever.

Building a *vā* relationship in Tongan research ethics is an entirely different paradigm from

the Western paradigm of research. Consider the process of informed consent: the researcher asks the participant's consent, then the consent form is signed for accountability, and an interview is conducted, after the interview, they bid each other farewell and do not see each other again. In the Western model, the independence of researchers and research participants are considered a virtue:

“...The traditional Western ethical protocol, you clear the ethics forms, so it is your accountability and to protect you. It is the relationship between you and the FNU that you filled in the ethical protocol. The ethical protocol requirements of tauhi vā, faka'apa'apa and feveitokai'aki, with the research participant does not mean that we protect each other. It means that we are building a relationship where we know each other better, draw closer to each other, and together weave a vā (relationship) to last in time to come. It is a different intention. When the talanoa is over and you both depart, there is a new vā woven and if you meet in the market, you know each other and the vā created. The established vā created a learning platform where researcher and participant learn from each other.” (PT1/Senior Academic/Female/40-60 years)

In the next four sub-sections, each of the FKK principles, *faka'apa'apa*, *lototō*, *mamahi'ime'a* and *tauhi vā*, is discussed in detail, with some explanations about their application in research.

5.6.2. Faka'apa'apa (respect)

Participants were passionate in discussing the significance of respect in research. Respecting human participants in research in the Tongan context is of supreme importance. Researchers must understand the concept of *faka'apa'apa* applied in research. The participants must have a genuine and deep feeling that they are being respected by the researcher, and the respect will be reciprocated.

“...That the researcher shows that he or she values the knowledge Tongans share in research and this in depth feeling allows the participant to untangle all psychological obstacles and talk heart to heart with the researcher sharing the truth of the subject of enquiry...the researcher and the research participant have formed a social contract...So you have to be right, that is why

the ethics of research is so important...” (PT1/SeniorAcademic2/Female/40-60 years).

Faka’apa’apa (respect) as applied in research is manifested in various forms of behaviour through the following processes and features, as mentioned by participants:

- (i) Human relations and behaviour: Christianity and the spiritual life, respect for royalty and traditional leadership structure, family relationships and the traditional knowledge systems:

“... I think in terms of communication and processes, it is important for the researcher from outside, to respect us Tongans by seeking and approaching the right persons. If a scientist come to Tonga for research, faka’apa’apa the main thing to understand is the Tongan behaviour of respect.... I emphasize the fact that the researcher should request an appointment with the leaders [in this instance – the leaders of the church] so that the researcher can present an outline of the research project ... to an audience that consists of relevant people invited to attend, based on their knowledge and awareness of the topic of research. In this sense, the researcher respects the church...” (PT11/Clergy & Educationist/Female/50-60 years).

- (ii) Respectful communication by using the Tongan language

Communication should use the appropriate version of Tongan language that best fits the research participant or group, according to the social structure of Tonga (see Section 5.1.4). There is a respectful language for formal occasions and informal language for everyday verbal and written communications. A Tongan author stated a similar point where she said that a language and one’s way of talking aligns the speaker with his or her own culture (Taumoefolau, 2012):

“...So, the Tongan language is a language spoken with respect and humility, and if we think in another language, from another country, it will clash with the verbal Tongan expressions and thoughts (paradigms)...” (PT8/Senior Government Officer/Male/30-50 years).

The language of communication in Tonga requires the use of respectful languages. If the research population involves the King, members of the Royal household, or nobles, then the appropriate language is used to address them. If there are commoners, then the commoner’s language is used very respectfully:

“... We have the King at the apex, nobles in the middle, and the commoners at the bottom... ... There is respectful language to be used, this used to clash with the researchers... Especially, in cases where there are sensitive words to use in the dialogue. I believe that there should be some cross-cultural training for researchers to understand Tongan culture, that will help a lot...” (PT6/Ex-Senior PM Office/Male/40-60 years).

Figure 5.6 illustrates the discussions about the value of respect in the Tongan culture. The many ways in which respect can be manifested include behaviour, language, family relations, religious process and dress code. These forms of respect set the standard for research ethics guidance and how researchers should conduct respectful research that involve Tongan people, in Tonga or in other countries.

Figure 5. 6: Manifestation of Respect in Tongan Context



5.6.2.1 Respectful Human Relations relevant in Ethical Research in Tongan Context, as Discussed by Participants

Participants included concepts that hold meanings of respect for research participants, some of which are discussed below.

- (i) *Ngeia* (dignity)

Human dignity is expressed by a participant as a priceless treasure that cannot be commodified. Therefore, *ngeia*, the dignity of people, is to be respected:

“... Human dignity is something that does not have monetary worth. We have dignity because we are God’s creation, cannot commodify...is something that you can treasure ...” (PT7/Ex-senior PM officer/Male/60-70 years).

(ii) ***Veitapui*** (taboo relationships)

There is a taboo relationship between brothers and sisters, and also male and female cousins. They cannot both be present in the audience, including during research via *talanoa* (focus group discussions), more so if the research topic is about sensitive issues such as reproductive health. The concept of *veitapui* is important to consider during the recruitment process of research participants.

“...Tongan principles of respect between brothers and sisters. There are issues that we do not talk about in front of brothers and sisters...” (PT11/Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-70 years).

Another participant elaborated this issue of *veitapui*:

“...they cannot have brother and sister in the same room to talk about sexual health for example, anything mentioning, for example, cancer of the uterus, will not be discussed while there are a mix of males and females in the same room. You have to separate men and women while researching these kinds of topic...” (PT4/MOH/Female/40-60 years).

Veitapui is an important value that is practised in Tongan kinship that researchers need to observe. One participant expressed that *veitapui* is an intrinsic value that holds the strength of the Tongan kinship. However, she said that the bond is eroding through the influence of dominant foreign cultures:

“...I believe that our Tongan strength is our contextual living within our kinship... it is an intrinsic value for us, and if we are not careful, practices that come from dominant cultures can erode the intrinsic values that make us Tongan.” (PT11/Clergy and Educationalist/Female/50-70 years).

(iii) ***Toka’i*** (honour or respect)

Toka’i is virtuous behaviour. It means to show respect to a person or group. For vulnerable people, including people with disabilities, children especially sick children and senior

citizens, love and compassion must be shown. *Toka'i* also applies to the respect of institutional protocols. For example, the leaders of research institutions at all levels of the organization are respected through the processes of requesting approvals and abiding by their protocols. The presentation of research proposals and translation of research results to research participants in the community or institutions such as the church are all form of *toka'i*. This is because the researcher is honouring these research participants by informing and involving them in all phases of the research.

*“...Firstly, if a scientist come to Tonga for research, the main thing to understand is the Tongan behaviour of respect, (ke mahino oku te **toka'i** a e kulupu ko ia) to ensure that the researcher respect the person or group of people involved in the research ...”*
(PT11/Senior Clergy & Educationalist/Female/50-60 years).

(iv) ***Fakaafe'i*** (invitation)

Applied to the research context, this means the process of inviting potential participants during the recruitment process. It begins with an oral invitation to targeted community members during a community meeting or church function. This oral invitation is followed by a written invitation. The written invitation stage may involve a member of the community tasked with the distribution of the invitation letter.

(v) ***Lotu*** (prayer)

Christian prayers must be offered in the beginning and end of any research gathering.

(vi) ***Fakataputapu*** (speech)

This is a speech delivered in the beginning of a formal meeting. The *fakataputapu* may be delivered to address the research population.

“...The other thing that they need to remember is the fakataputapu, even if they do it the palangi (European) way, but they need to acknowledge with respect, the few important people present, who are needed to be acknowledged...”
(PT4/MOH/Female/40-60 years).

The *fakataputapu* process includes an acknowledgement of God's presence, people of high ranks such as the Royal Family, nobles, chiefly people, and other leaders, men, women and children. It underlines the importance of nurturing relationships.

(vii) ***'Ilo (knowledge) mo e poto (and intelligence)***.

Researchers are to acknowledge the merit of traditional knowledge and the intellectual property belonging to Tongans.

“... Many times, you might think that the scientific approach is superior but now there is a lot of reversion to cultural traditional approaches. There are values of the traditional approaches...” (PT8/Senior Government Officer/Male/30-50 years).

5.6.2.1.2 Respect: A discussion to illustrate that the interpretation of Tongan ethics is difficult

In the Tongan context, respect in research is measured through the presentation of a researcher, such as in the dress code. This assessment of a researcher is conducted before any oral communication. Tongans expect researchers to look professional and dress appropriately to respect Tongans participating in research. For example, the dress code for Tongan men is to wear the *ta’ovala* (mat around the waist) and is standard all over the world:

“... So, if researchers are to go do research in conservative societies, like we have in the church, then the training should be offered to the researchers to familiarize them with Tongan society’s expectations. The processes to be confirmed – dress code, no miniskirts, do not approach the church leaders or church office with long trousers, it will be fine if the researcher is a European person, but because in the eyes of Tongans ...” (PT11/Senior Church Minister and Educationist/Female/50-60 years).

However, culture is changing, for example, the applications and expectations of the mannerism of *faka’apa’apa* may vary depending on which country the Tongan research participant lives in. For Tongans in Los Angeles in the Tongan context, the signs of respect may vary from those for a Tongan person who lives in Tonga itself. It is possible that applications of respect change depending on the context of Tongan life:

“... One level it is the clarity from us on what is acceptable and what is not. Because knowledge is also evolutionary, that knowledge changes. I have been doing research in Tonga for a long time, I have seen shifts in our culture, as we define it... So, this challenges our whole thinking about our ethics.” (PT1/Senior Academic/Female/40-60 years).

5.6.3 Lototō humility

Being humble and listening to Tongan participants speak and share their knowledge is a practice of *lototō* (humility). When Tongan people accept an invitation for research, they are

acting with *lototō*, because they forgo their busy schedule and dutifully attend the research session. They know this is an opportunity to building a *vā* and an anticipated beneficial outcome for the *kainga*.

Lototō is a feature of *faka'apa'apa* (respect). *Lototō* drives Tongan people to act with modesty and a wholehearted approach to actions. In relation to *vā* it is expected that both parties practice *lototō*, by treating each other with equality. For example, if a researcher is from a prestigious university and visits a village in Tonga to speak to a traditional healer, he or she will practice *lototō* by valuing the traditional healer as equal in all aspects of life. The university researcher will wear the Tongan dress code and approach the traditional healer in his or her home with respect. The *vā* relationship between these two people will be formed on the strong foundation of FKK. Participants described the need for researchers to respect owners of Tongan traditional knowledge by humbling themselves so that there can be empathy between them:

“...Often some researchers come over and conduct interviews, and they lead the conversation and never allow the Tongan person to speak... so I don't know who was being interviewed...” (PT1/Senior Academic 2/Female/40-60 years).

5.6.4 Mamahi'i me'a (performance of duty towards others with loyalty, passion and commitment)

To define *mamahi'i me'a*, there are two words, *mamahi'i* and *me'a*. *Mamahi'i* literally means that someone is committed to conducting a duty with success in mind, despite enduring pain (metaphorically speaking). Pain means various human experiences, for example, hard labour, loss of property or wealth, physical exhaustion in sports, burnout or time loss. *Me'a* means a thing or 'for a cause', for example, duties to family, church, village, school or country. This means that the duty, for example, to church or family is to be painstakingly performed with loyalty, passion, and commitment to achieve good results despite painful experiences. The underpinning of such good results is the sustenance of the *vā* relationality in Tongan life.

“...Loyalty and passion in carrying out duties...” (PT3/Senior Academic/Female/60-80 years).

Mamahi'i me'a is the underlying value that drives the fulfilment of duties towards the *kainga* (large extended family) to maintain the relationship. The nuclear family is a Western concept,

while the *kainga* (a community of related people) is the Tongan concept of family. Each person that belongs in the *Nofo 'a Kainga* has *totonu* (Office of the UN High Commission of Human Rights in Human Experimentation), *fatongia* duties and *tauhi va* (responsibilities to keep up relationships).

“... if someone dies in our village, we drop everything and go to the funeral to pay our respects. Even though, you are not a direct blood relative, that is what happens, that is how we value human life. Once we cut those bonds, the village bond will be broken...” (PT7/Ex Senior PM Officer/Male/40-60 years).

Mamahi'i me'a is applied within families related by blood:

“...I have duties to perform to my father's sister, mehikitanga, and my father's sister towards me as her niece, I have my duties to perform towards my brother and brother towards me as a sister. This is how I see mamahi'ime'a. Doing one's duties towards kainga to the utmost that you can... so you know that you have to sacrifice your own interests in order to maintain collective interest...” (PT11/Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-70 years).

To apply the concept of *mamahi'i me'a* (loyalty and passion in carrying out duties in research), it is relevant to consider the discussion above in this section concerning oral informed consent. It is appropriate in Tonga for researchers to ask the community that involves the whole extended family for such consent. Once the community members give their consent, participation in the research is now a community obligation. They will tap into their Tongan value of *mamahi'i me'a* to ensure that they give their time to support the research to the utmost. They will facilitate the conduct of the research, such as allocating a place within their community for the research meetings and committing themselves to data collection activities. Once consent at the community level is granted, the community members will promote the research so that participation from community members is maximized:

“... In research, we need to align research with Nofo 'a Kainga. Researchers are to collect data that strengthen social cohesion, the Tongan va relationality... We still do it from the premise of 'what will we do to help each other'. I think that is just my little tip ...” (PT11/Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-70 years).

5.6.5 Tauhi vā (duty to maintain good relationships with others)

Tauhi vā is another concept that derives from Tonga's *Nofo 'a Kainga* communal society, where respect is expected of one and all. The concept consists of two words, *tauhi*, meaning to keep and upkeep, and *vā*, a relationship between person or persons. The concept means that one has a person-to-person relationship to keep in one's possession. The value of *tauhi vā* urges people to maintain good relationships with others, peace and harmony:

"... and tauhi vā as well within the FKK of the Tongan way of living..."
(PT4/MOH/Female/40-60 years).

"... Nofo 'a Kainga, because when you have a family problem, like a funeral, I will come to your aid..." (PT11/Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-70 years).

In the Tongan context, *tauhi vā* is a strong motivating factor in a communal society. Tongan communities also gather in multitudes for ceremonies such church functions, weddings or when a loved one dies. Each family feels obliged to contribute valuable cultural artifacts including money to ease the burden of the other in fulfilling their duties. The duty to maintain good relationships with others is underlined by the ethical values encompassed in *Nofo 'a Kainga*. These include solidarity, respect, love, compassion, responsibility, reciprocity, accountability and selflessness. Using these values, relationships are well kept. One participant emphasized the importance of using these values to keep relationships healthy as an essential way to conduct accurate research:

"... So that is why we need to be clearer about our positionality. If we think that the research is about finding the most accurate information, then the tools that we get the most accurate picture, are tools that are fit for that context, the purpose, that make sense to people, that connect to people's minds and connect to people's way of seeing the world..." (PT1/Senior Academic 2/ Female/40-60 years).

Positionality is a key component of a Tongan research protocol. The appointment of a cultural advisor is important in the seeking a pathway to enter the Tongan community concept. If researchers are non-Tongans, the cultural adviser's role is valuable.

"... based on her father and her ancestors, her position and her identity allow her to enter... the researcher needs to appreciate and be clear on their identity and positionality, because insider/outsider determines your positionality" (PT1/Senior Academic 2/Female/40-60 years).

The outcome is recognition by members of the community; this enables the creation of the $v\bar{a}$ relationship. When the $v\bar{a}$ is established, then the research will be very effective and successful. This has implications beyond what may be immediately appreciated. For example, one participant discussed how a scientific technology like a paternity DNA test, can harm the *Nofo 'a Kainga*.

“... research involving a DNA paternity test, it is very sensitive research, because the finding proves a son or daughter’s real father, which may be different from what is already known. This finding has a significant impact on Nofo 'a Kainga because of the sensitivity of this finding. The scientist researcher leaves with the new knowledge, but the Nofo 'a Kainga stays with the knowledge – the knowledge causes major disintegration of the family and the Nofo 'a Kainga. That is a real extreme example, and that is something that can happen...” (PT11/Clergy and Educationist/Female/50-70 years).

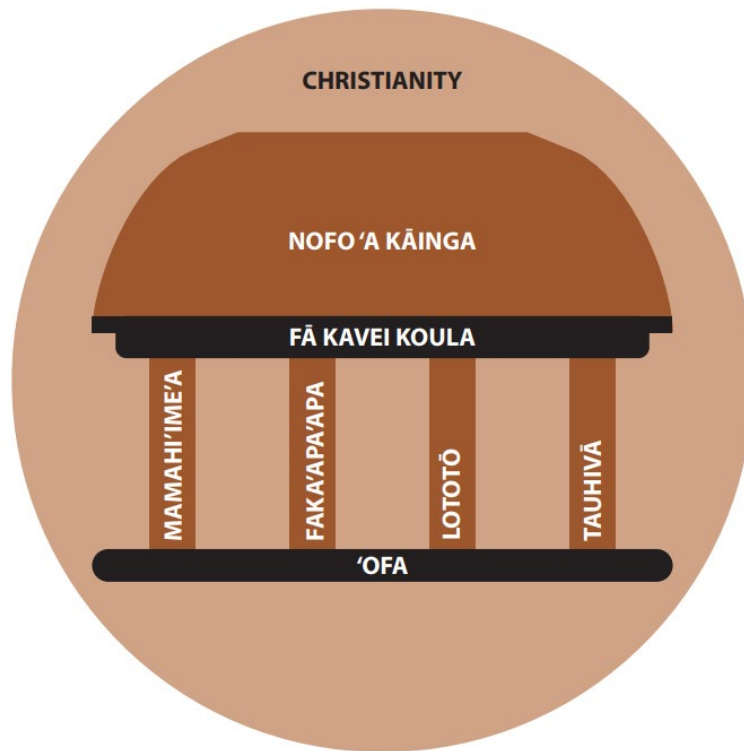
Despite the negative impact of modern technology on *Nofo 'a Kainga*, participants recommended that research involving Tongans is safe if they engage with the FKK ethical framework.

All sub-themes presented above reveal traditional Tongan values, underpinned by centuries of cultural traditions. The next sub-theme is concerning the integration of Christianity into the Tongan society. As would be expected, this integration is in accordance with the values described so far.

5.6.6 Christianity and Tongan culture intertwined since Pouono

Christian values and Tongan cultural values have evolved as an entity over time since *Pouono* (Refer to the *Pouono* Strategy in Section 5.1.5). The Christian Church is a significant part of Tongan society, in that it encompasses every aspect of Tongan life (see Figure 5.7). Thus, research is underpinned by this combined entity of Christian and Tongan cultural values and practices.

Figure 5. 7: Christianity and Tongan Culture are Intertwined.



A participant discussed how Christian values were incorporated into Tongan government structures which is in turn based on the *Pouono* Strategy:

“...Since Tupou ‘Uluaki, (King Tupou I) we have had Christian values in our constitution since then, and apart from that, we have the Fa Kavei Koula, so I think, that is all encompassed in our national emblem – Ko e ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku Tofi’a (God and Tonga are my Inheritance). Our inheritance and that, in parallel, the law and good governance and I think in some areas, all steps from Pouono when Tupou ‘Uluaki gave Tonga to God, like who we are as a people and what our core values are...” (PT8/Senior Government Officer/male/30-50 years.)

“...Large parts of these values are featured in the Constitution of Tonga and next is in the law, it is also in the advertisements for vacancies in the government of Tonga, and the cover of the national budget of Tonga of this year, it says that God is my refuge and my fortress, that is evidence that the government work is based on the Pouono Strategy...” (PT8/Senior Government Officer/Male/30-50 years).

The Christian-based *Pouono* Strategy was promoted by participants to be prioritized in HRE thinking. Furthermore, participants discussed Christianity as a source of Tongan morality

which informs Tongan research ethics. Most Tongans are Christians and Christian values are practiced in Tongan people's daily lives. The bible informs Christian morality.

5.6.7 Informed consent: an oral form of consent is appropriate in Tonga because it is predominantly an oral culture

The process of voluntary informed consent recommended for research in villages involves the whole extended family. It begins with the researcher applying to heads of organizations, such as the head of the church, for permission to conduct research. This is a top-down form of permission. For example, the President of the Methodist Church granted permission for the researcher to conduct research among the church members. On the other hand, Western biomedical research ethical practices encourage an informed consent form to be signed by individual research participants prior to their participation. Participants in this research expressed that this creates tensions among nonprofessional people, for example, members of the Methodist church and village people. Tonga has an oral culture which has implications for the informed consent process.

“...These people are not used to the consent form process. An oral consent is appropriate in Tonga because Tonga is predominantly an oral culture. ...Most times people say, ‘why do we have to sign this again’? They seem to fear this process as a legal process.” (PT11/Senior Clergy & Educationalist/ Female /40-60 years).

Participants described how Tongan people in village settings will abide by a top-down permission granted for research and will do not wish to sign a written consent form. A consent may be given in a face-to-face conversation or via telephone conversation or oral communications.

“... The Western understanding is that the research is to be implemented. But [in] our Tongan way of living, we must ask for permission from the President or the Assistant Secretary of the church, or the leaders of the educational institution. But the researchers come with a piece of paper (an informed consent form). I always feel that there is tension when you already ask the President, but you go with the consent form again. They are not used to the consent form. We should think of how to capture the oral consent of that group... my interpretation is that they may be afraid...” (PT11/Senior Clergy & Educationist/Female/50-60 years).

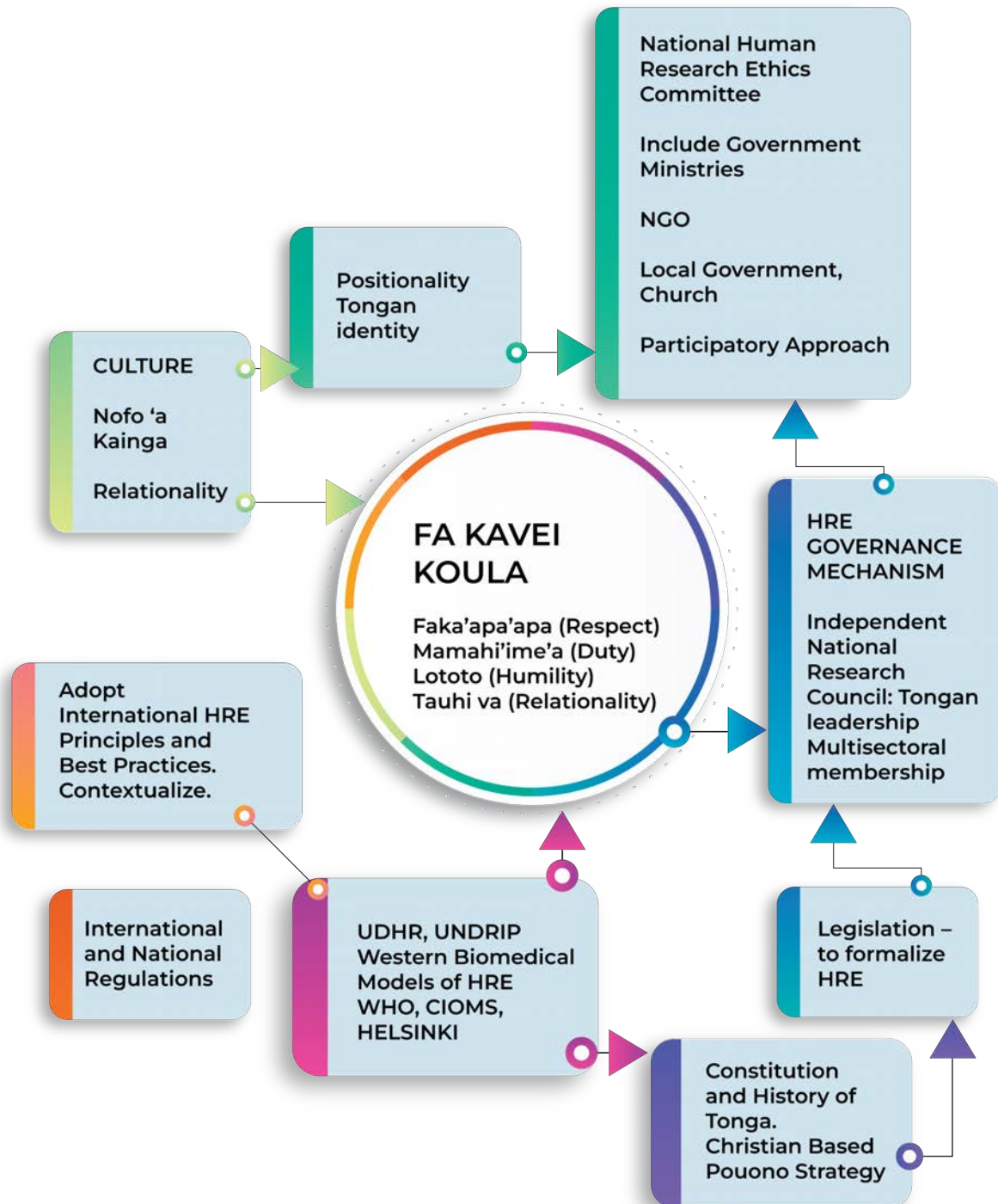
5.7 A synthesis of themes of the ‘Tongan Human Research Ethics Case findings’

5.7.1 The Decolonizing Tongan HRE Framework, The *Fa Kavei Koula*, Four Golden Principles of Tonga

All the participants in the Tongan case study agreed that Tonga needs to develop HRE guidelines that engage Tongan cultural principles. Based on participants input and the documentary analysis, a diagram was designed to illustrate the Tongan Decolonizing HRE Framework (see Figure 5.8).

5.7.1.2 Tongan HRE Guideline Framework

Figure 5. 8: The Fa Kavei Koula (Four Golden Principles of Tonga) Research Ethics Framework. A Decolonizing Approach to Tongan HRE Guidelines



The significance of the components of the *Fa Kavei Koula* research ethics framework is discussed below.

5.7.1.3 International and National Regulations

International best practices and technical aspects of HRE can be adopted from the international HRE guidelines such as the WHO Operational Guidelines for Ethics Committees that review biomedical research (World Health Organization, 2000). This is because they represent the same underlying concerns, especially human rights (United Nations, 2007; United Nations General Assembly, 1948), and have the same embedded values appropriate in Tongan cultural standards. A further step is to contextualize by integrating historical foundations, cultural values and processes into the same mechanisms. Pacific people are tied closely to their context. This plays a major role in their societies. This approach should also have the same underlying principles as those international guidelines (World Medical Association, 2001), including respect for human dignity and respect for the autonomy of the Tongan research participants.

5.7.1.4 Overarching Legislations of HRE

The overarching legislation of HRE is the **Constitution of Tonga** founded by King **Tupou I**, on the Christian-based *Pouono* Strategy (Tecun & Ata Siu'ulua, 2023). Tongans commit and are dedicated to Christianity (Sekona, 2014a). Tecun and Ata Siu'ulua (2023) further discussed that Christianity brought a set of values to everyday social life based on the Bible (Tecun & Ata Siu'ulua, 2023).

There is no specific legislation for HRE in Tonga, however, individual sectors can operationalize an HRE governance mechanism by developing their own internal protocols that align with the Tongan Constitution.

- (i) **Legislation to formalize HRE.** In general, the findings suggests that research and ethics legislation need to be developed to formalize HRE activities with the power to penalize researchers involved in research misconduct, pending further analysis.
- (ii) **National Research Council.** Findings also suggested the development of an independent National Research Council body with membership representing all sectors currently involved in research in Tonga. Coordination of HRE at national level was also an important concept discussed. The PMO and MOET were nominated to take the lead in driving this initiative, with a National Research Ethics Committee that combines the MOH ethics committee, the MOET and any other organization that has some functions of research and ethics. According to participants, Tongan local

government mechanisms including the *ofisa kolo* (town officer), NGOs and religious bodies which function as organizational processes in research are to be included in the membership of the National Research Council.

(iii) **Participatory approach.**

Findings of this research suggests that A participatory approach to the formation of the Tonga National Research Ethics Committee (TNREC) supports relational ethics as it encourages people to take part in the TNREC's establishment and its endorsement (Charters, 2010; Rietbergen-McCracken, 2017). Indigenous people's participation in national policy formulation will contribute to their own empowerment as active citizens and the enhancement of their accountability and transparency in the governance of research (Black & McBean, 2016). The lack of participation of Tongan people in the formation of NREC may result in the local people's rejection of research, such as happened with Autogen (Burton, 2002; Senituli, 2007).

(iv) **Tongan leaders.**

The findings of this research suggest that the National Research Council activities need to be driven by Tongan leaders themselves. Participants stressed the importance of including Tongan leaders in HRE because they have, among other skills, an in-depth knowledge of Tongan cultural values and practices.

5.7.1.5 Foundational Principles of the Fa Kavei Koula in the Tongan HRE Guidelines

The *Fa Kavei Koula*, the Four Golden Principles of Tonga, comprise the foundational principles of a decolonizing Tongan HRE guideline framework. These are *faka'apa'apa* (respect, discussed in Section 5.6.2), *lototō* (humility, discussed in Section 5.6.3) *mamahi'ime'a* (duty, discussed in Section 5.6.4), and *tauhi vā* (relationality, discussed in Section 5.6.5).

The Tongan HRE guidelines will contribute to the maintenance of the uniqueness of Tongan culture, Christian belief, the *Nofo 'a Kainga*, relationality and lastly, the overarching Tongan communal value theoretical system (Fa'avae, 2021; Kalavite, 2019; Luyten, 2022; Muimuiheata, 2022).

In summary, there are three important ideas for the development of Tongan national research ethics guidelines. Firstly, these are to be based on the (Christian) *Pouono* Strategy as Tonga is predominantly a Christian country, the Tongan constitution and its relational culture, which involve the FKK and Tongan identity. Secondly, international best practices should be

adopted and contextualized accordingly. Thirdly, involving multiple stakeholders is important for the membership of National Human Research Ethics Committee.

5.8 Summary of Chapter

The first part of this chapter consisted of background information which contextualised the research area, its history, governance, the research method and participants. Present-day Tonga is a monarchy with an established Royal Family and class of nobles. The majority of its population are referred to as commoners. The institutionalization of the ruling classes is formalized in many ways, including their own forms of language.

The second part of this chapter comprised the results of the HRE case study in Tonga. HRE is a rare topic of research in Tonga and participants' awareness level of research ethics was low. Legislation for the governance of research was also unknown; therefore, the participants highlighted the need to develop such legislation to formalize research ethics mechanisms.

All participants agreed that a set of national research ethics guidelines needs to be developed. Participants accepted the inclusion of international instruments of research ethics in the development of a national HRE guideline, but this needs to incorporate Tongan values and protocols.

The FKK is the foundation of Tongan culture. In modern Tonga, Christianity is at the core of Tonga life. An important foundation of Tongan research ethics is the creation of strong relationships between researcher and research population. The relationship is an important feature for community developmental efforts of Tongan communities in future, and this relationality is at the core of research ethics in Tonga. Members of research ethics committees were urged to be very vigilant in the review procedure of research proposal, to ensure the protection of the rights and dignity of Tongan people in research.

Participants also identified topics for further research, firstly, to operationalize research protocols based on the *Fa Kavei Koula*, secondly, to establish practical processes around FKK to guide research practices, thirdly, to identify how the FKK core values are interconnected and the significance of this interconnectedness to research in Tonga.

Table 5. 7: Summary of Chapter 5; Results: HRE Tonga Case Results in themes and a synthesis of the themes.

Section and number	This table presents a summary of the results of the Tonga HRE Case study.
Part 1 Section 5.1	The background of the Kingdom of Tonga and the HRE systems in-country is included in this chapter. The discussion begins with a mythology of Tonga’s sacred lines of kings and queens where the structure of the Kingdom of Tonga originated. The section ends with the <i>Pouono</i> strategy the foundation of the Tongan Constitution.
Section 5.2	This section maps the HRE systems in Tonga and are presented in nine (9) sub-sections plus the conclusion. The subsections include a chronological presentation of the development of HRE in Tonga and its coordination and interconnectedness at Government ministerial and departmental levels and narrows into the research ethics review process. The international influence in the development of HRE in Tonga is outlined. Details of documents used for documentary analysis is listed and a list of research participants is presented as the last two sub-sections.
Section 5.3	This section is an introduction to the result of the thematic analysis of the Tonga Human Research Ethics Case Study. The themes are organized into 3 main themes and subthemes.
Section 5.4	Theme 1 begins with a general discussion of Tongan thought leaders who were promoting Indigenous thinking to be embodied in systems such as HRE. The next sub-theme presents the Tongan participants comparison of their perceptions of the approaches to HRE in Tonga, the Western approach that are often linked to a research methodology and the other is the Tongan cultural approach to HRE which is built on <i>nofo ‘a kainga</i> the relational foundation of Tongan society.
Section 5.5	Theme 2 elaborates the Tongan ethical research pathways divided into four sub-themes. Included are, the Tongan research protocols informed by cultural rules of engagement, a synopsis of the Tongan Research Framework ‘ <i>Kakala</i> ’ a cultural ethical research methods that embody Tongan knowledge systems. Furthermore, relationality refers to family connections through ancestral extended family heritages in Tonga and comprise one’s identity, positionality, insider and outsider researcher status. These characters of relationality are recommended by participants as research tool for negotiation through difficult local village governance protocols and village power dynamics. Respectful communication in Tongan is an ethical requirement in research discussed in the last sub-theme.
Section 5.6	Theme 3 elaborates the ontology of Tongan life and the theoretical underpinning of Tongan research ethics. This section is organized into seven sub-themes. The <i>Fa Kavei Koula</i> (FKK) ethics’ uphold the <i>Nofo ‘a Kainga</i> value theory. The FKK set of principles are discussed in sub-sections 5.6.1-5.6.5. They are <i>faka’apa’apa</i> respect, <i>lototō</i> humility,

	<p><i>mamahi'ime'a</i> loyalty and passion, <i>tauhi vā</i> maintaining good relationships. The next subtheme elaborates the meaning of a respectful human relation relevant in ethical research in Tonga. 5.6.6 Christianity and Tongan culture intertwined since <i>Pouono</i>. This is a summary of Christianity encompasses every aspect of Tongan life. Thus, research is underpinned by this combined entity of Christian and Tongan cultural values and practices. The last sub-section argues that an oral informed consent process is appropriate in Tonga because Tonga is predominantly an oral culture.</p>
<p>Section 5.7</p>	<p>The last section of Chapter 5 is a synthesis of the themes from the Tonga HRE case findings. A research ethics guideline framework was developed based on major components of the HRE Tonga case study. The framework is titled “The <i>Fa Kavei Koula</i> (Four Golden Principles of Tonga) Research Ethics Framework, a Decolonizing Approach to Tongan HRE Guidelines”. The components of the <i>Fa Kavei Koula</i> framework are defined in four sub-sections, starting with a diagram to visually present all the components of the <i>Fa Kavei Koula</i> framework. Discussions of the international and national regulations and overarching legislations of HRE are featured in the sub-sections. In summary, there are three important ideas for the development of Tongan national research ethics guidelines: Christianity, the Tongan constitution and the FKK and Tongan culture. Lastly, the international best practices to be contextualized accordingly and a National Human Research Ethics committee with multiple stakeholders’ membership.</p>

A summary of this chapter’s themes is presented in Table 6.1 in the beginning of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: CROSSCASE ANALYSIS OF THE FIJI AND TONGA HRE CASES

6.1 Introduction

At the beginning of this chapter, Table 6.1 presents a summary of the themes from the Fiji HRE case, the themes from the Tonga HRE case and the themes in this cross-case analysis chapter. Thereafter, the findings from the cross-case analysis of the two HRE case studies in Fiji and Tonga is developed, informed by a critical ethnographic lens, the methodology guiding this research. Related themes with similar contextual meanings that impacted the engagement of Indigenous principles of HRE in both countries are explored. These concepts include colonialism, decolonization and relationality. The implications of the classification of researchers as either insider or outsider researchers according to their Indigenous identities are also described. Contextual factors such as Indigenous principles that uphold ethical research, urban and rural differences and gaps in HRE in both countries are also analysed in this chapter, also summarized in Table 6.1.

Table 6. 1: A summary of the Fiji and Tonga HRE cases and themes in the cross-case analysis

<p>A further cross-case analysis of the Fiji and Tonga HRE cases was conducted to identify common elements, differences, similarities and themes that emerged from the two cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I referred to the research questions to guide this comparative analysis. Page 98. The themes in this cross-case analysis were developed through a process of identification of related themes (from each of the case studies), with similar contextual meanings that impacted the engagement of Indigenous principles of HRE in both countries are explored.</p>		
<p>Themes from the Fiji HRE Case Study</p>	<p>Themes from the Tonga HRE Case Study</p>	<p>Themes in Cross Case Analysis Related themes with similar contextual meanings that impacted the engagement of Indigenous principles of HRE in both countries are explored.</p>
<p>Dual approach to HRE in Fiji: Exemplifying biomedical and <i>iTaukei</i> Indigenous involvement.</p> <p>Fijian sectors engaging HRE follow a Western biomedical approach to HRE. <i>iTaukei</i> reviewers of proposals submitted to an ethics committee have followed the Western approach without any questions. However, prior to the existence of research ethics committees in Fiji, research was conducted with minimal government control. There was a strong adherence to the <i>iTaukei Vanua</i> approach where the <i>sevusevu</i> protocols permitted research.</p> <p>Participants felt that the <i>iTaukei</i> paradigm is being ignored and devalued. The political environment, the international education standards and</p>	<p>Western research paradigms are respected over Tongan.</p> <p>Thought leaders of Tongan research ethics and in PICTs emphasized that Pacific Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) must be included in official documentation and the conduct and dissemination of research in higher educational institutions. However, Tongans were found to be adamant about including Western ideas in HRE, especially in the education sector, which contributes to the devaluation of Tongan cultural paradigms in education. HRECs in government ministries make minimal reference to cultural approaches. Additionally, there is a distinction between the Western approach to HRE and the Tongan approach. The Western approach is to protect individuals in</p>	<p>Colonialism is evident in both countries' HRE.</p> <p>Decolonization efforts are needed to restore and reassert Indigenous values in HRE. <i>iTaukei</i> and Tongans have dual knowledge systems, both Indigenous and Western. They have a desire to embrace their different knowledge systems as valid and significant. Revaluing of Indigenous knowledge in HRE is important.</p> <p>The need for training of HREC committee members and researchers.</p> <p>Training is required of prospective researchers to engage Indigenous principles in research. HREC members and reviewers also need training in ethics and in HRE in general and in <i>iTaukei</i> research ethics and Tongan approaches to the ethical and technical review of research proposals, particularly in how they can be combined to keep the best elements of both.</p>

<p>beliefs in Christianity are strong social forces that have added more weight to the devaluing of Indigenous paradigms.</p> <p>Fiji HRE mechanisms need strengthening.</p> <p>Capacity building of researchers and HRE Committees in the <i>iTaukei</i> approach to HRE is needed. Highlight and engage <i>iTaukei</i> values in capacity building exercises on in HRE.</p>	<p>research, while the Tongan approach is based on forming life-long relationships between Tongan people and researchers and such relationships will make a difference in Tonga.</p>	<p>Changes in HRE need strong consolidated effort from all stakeholders.</p> <p>Fiji and Tonga need strong leadership and the consolidated support of all stakeholders to drive the activities necessary to make changes to broaden HRE to incorporate traditional ethical principles. In addition, gaps were identified that need to be addressed including coordination and community rights versus individual rights.</p> <p>Principles that uphold the indigeneity of HRE include, solidarity, inclusivity, reciprocity of benefits, protection of resources including intellectual property, compliance with protocols and coordination and promotion of HRE.</p>
<p>Axiology of research in <i>iTaukei</i> context.</p> <p>The <i>iTaukei</i> culture is a culture of protocols. Activities performed are judged by the correctness of conducting the appropriate protocol required by the activity in the <i>Vanua</i>. <i>iTaukei</i> entry, engage and exit protocols are required in research. Protocols are informed by the straight paths of <i>iTaukei</i> research, including traditional and religious pathways. The <i>iTaukei</i> setting is relational and includes principles of the reciprocity of benefits, top-down voluntary informed consent and the</p>	<p>Cutting an ethical research pathway.</p> <p>Research is ethical when one follows these research concepts in the Tongan context. The <i>talanoa</i> as a research tool and Tongan cultural research Kakala Framework are appropriate for use in research in Tonga. The concepts of relationality, positionality and identity interplay in navigating through difficult traditional protocols.</p> <p>Respectful communication in the Tongan language is ethical in research, more so because these language forms were spoken in pre-Christian times.</p>	<p><i>Vanua, fonua</i> and kava in research.</p> <p>The upkeep of the <i>Vanua and Fonua</i> is manifested in traditional protocols relevant in research. <i>Kava</i> is the object of communication. <i>Kava</i> is of the land and the drinking of it symbolizes a covenant with the land, the <i>Vanua</i> (<i>iTaukei</i> identity and mother land) and <i>Fonua</i> (<i>Tongan for Vanua</i>). Their common meanings involve land and heritages, people, values, solidarity, relationships and people’s connections with each other, be it geographically or geneological.</p> <p>An ethical research protocol is informed by cultural rules of engagement.</p>

<p>research selection process being informed by the traditional selection methods.</p>		<p>The intimate connection of people to land and heritages is strong implying one entity that uphold Indigenous identities and practices.</p>
<p>Theoretical underpinnings of iTaukei research ethics.</p> <p>The three-legged stool (the three pillars of the Fijian society are the <i>Vanua</i> (people and land), church and government. These pillars are ingrained in <i>iTaukei</i> people’s lives and communities. The <i>iTaukei</i> ontology is <i>vakavanua</i>, the way of the land. Theoretical underpinnings of <i>iTaukei</i> HRE are linked to practical guidance in research because <i>iTaukei</i> culture is a culture of protocols. The <i>iTaukei</i> ontology includes ancestral <i>spirituality</i> and a communal approach to <i>iTaukei</i> life. Respect underpins all research protocols in the <i>Vanua</i> and research is considered as a ceremony and should follow ceremonial protocols such as the performance of the <i>sevusevu</i> protocol, the <i>solesolevaki</i> engagement protocol, the <i>nai vakatale</i> exit point protocol that involve the <i>itatau</i> exist protocol. When the <i>iTaukei</i> protocols are done well, the community welcome the researchers and facilitate effective research, through allowing the data collection, giving them protection while researching in</p>	<p>The ontology of Tongan life: Theoretical underpinnings of research ethics in Tonga.</p> <p>The <i>Fa Kavei Koula</i> (Four Golden Principles - FKK) that underpin Tongan morality comprise the foundation of Tongan culture. FKK features include <i>faka’apa’apa</i> (respect), <i>lototō</i> (humility) and <i>mamahi’i me’a</i> (loyalty in performing one’s duty) which is the underlying value that drives the fulfilment of duties towards the <i>kainga</i> (large extended family) to maintain the <i>Va</i> relationship. <i>Tauhi Vā</i> means being duty bound to keep relationships with others alive and well. These principles underpin ethical research in Tonga.</p> <p>Research ethics principles are informed by virtues of Tongan behaviour. These include relationship building (<i>Nofo ‘a Kainga</i>) (relationality) which itself consists of respect, love, compassion and humility.</p> <p>An oral voluntary informed consent process is appropriate in Tonga because it is predominantly an oral culture.</p>	<p>Relationality informs an Indigenous ethical approach to research. (Indigenous Fijian <i>Vakavanua</i> and Tongan <i>Fa Kavei Koula</i>)</p> <p>The <i>Vanua</i> framework and <i>Nofo ‘a Kainga</i> framework are relational. Relational ethics constitute the collective ontology of Pacific people that forms the basis for untangling colonial mindsets relevant to strengthen the re-valuation of Indigenous knowledge in HRE.</p> <p>Insider or outsider researchers, positive and negative impact on Indigenous communities.</p> <p>Being an insider or an outsider researcher in Fiji and Tonga is based on the researcher’s identity and positionality of the self in relation to the research community and the knowledge sought. The insider researcher only needs to formalize the research in the community while the outsider researcher will do a lot more work, such as identifying a guide and following the correct research protocols in order to be accepted into the research community.</p> <p>Urban and rural differences relevant to HRE.</p> <p>Research conducted involving Indigenous persons in urban settings may not require strict traditional and cultural protocols compared to rural Indigenous</p>

<p>their land and blessing the researchers with the gift of traditional knowledge.</p> <p>Community participation is required but protection of vulnerable communities is needed. Communication is underpinned by humility. Intellectual property is the <i>iTaukei</i> ownership of knowledge.</p>		<p>settings. One of the reasons for this is the impact of colonialism on paradigms and policies in urban settings. The land in rural areas is considered sacred thus all activities in rural areas are to follow the cultural protocols in respect of the mother land.</p>
<p>A synthesis of the themes was conducted to develop a decolonizing HRE guideline framework to harmonize international and Indigenous principles of HRE in Fiji. <i>Yavu Koula ni iTaukei, The Golden Foundation of iTaukei, a Decolonizing Indigenous Framework for HRE Guidelines</i> was developed. Its features include international HRE principles that require contextualization and the coordination of HRE stakeholders and functions. The engagement of the <i>iTaukei</i> people, cultural protocols and principles are central.</p>	<p>A synthesis of the themes was conducted to develop the <i>Fa Kavei Koula, Four Golden Principles of Tonga, a Decolonizing Principles Approach for Tongan Human Research Ethics Guidelines</i>. Features include technical aspects of HRE from international guidelines can be adopted, with an additional contextualization with Tongan values and processes. Research and ethics legislation needs to be developed, and a National Research Council is required to coordinate HRE functions. The Tongan participatory approach applies in the formation and promotion of these regulations.</p>	<p>Pacific Indigenous HRE guideline framework</p> <p>Similarities in <i>iTaukei</i> and Tongan HRE guideline frameworks informed the development of a PIC Indigenous HRE guideline framework.</p> <p>A Pacific Indigenous HRE guideline framework includes aspects of international HRE guidelines that need to align to national regulations and legislation and be contextualized for relevance. A national coordinating body is needed with authority to govern Indigenous mechanisms with full capacity in Indigenous HRE.</p>

6.2 The legacy of colonialism

A definition of colonialism is “an instance of a more general phenomenon of domination. Events that happened in the past, such as those in the period of colonial conquest and control, can provide insights into processes of domination and resistance in the present” (Merry, 1991, p.890). Fiji became a British colony in 1874 while Tonga has always been a kingdom and was never colonized. Despite this, Tonga has been impacted by colonialism through the Western education systems established in the nation. As per Merry’s (1991) definition, “colonialism typically involved the large-scale transfer of laws and legal institutions from one society to another and sought to impose a new culture” (Merry, 1991, p.890). Colonizers imposed their education system on Tonga and Tongan minds were colonized through education. It is believed that the education system of Tonga was adopted from New Zealand and Australia, both colonized countries. Members of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA) in their conference held in Fiji in 2016, explored what it means to decolonize education. This is an urgent issue in Australia, Aotearoa-New Zealand, Hawaii and the South Pacific islands (Martin et al., 2020).

Despite the difference in the colonization status of Fiji and Tonga, the legacy of colonialism is evident in HRE in both countries. As discussed in Section 4.4.3, participants in this research, specifically from the health sector, explained that they followed the Western biomedical approaches to HRE without question. They employ this approach to the review of research proposals, while the application of an Indigenous and cultural approach to review is minimal. Many of the HRE committee members and ethics reviewers in both countries’ Ministries of Health are Indigenous and have high levels of knowledge of their culture. Nevertheless, utilizing this cultural knowledge in HRE oversight mechanisms, specifically for the review of health research proposals, is minimal. This indicates the devaluing of Indigenous knowledge to the point where it is invisible.

As demonstrated through the Fijian and Tongan case studies, HREC members have two kinds of knowledge, the Western knowledge gained through their international educational experiences and Indigenous knowledges inherited from their ancestors. Leenen-Young (2021) and Thomsen (2021) acknowledged that Pacific early career academics have dual knowledge systems and are trying to embrace the different understandings that embody them as Pacific academics to redefine education through prioritizing Pacific knowledges as valid and

significant epistemologies (Leenen-Young et al., 2021; Thomsen et al., 2021).

Decolonization efforts are needed, to restore and reassert their own Indigenous value in policy making for HRE (Chan-Tiberghien, 2004).

As discussed in Section 4.4.3.4, Section 7.3 and Section 7.4, this research project is underpinned by a decolonization paradigm where the Indigenous approaches are valued and added to strengthen the dominant Western biomedical approaches. The decolonization of research ethics regulations embodies details of the social, economic and political context of the country in which the HRE operate, honouring the knowledge of Indigenous peoples and asserting their sovereignty (Gan, 2020; Held, 2020). Indigenous approaches to HRE in Fiji and Tonga are understood through the interpretation of value systems common to both countries. These value systems are known as the *Vanua (iTaukei)* in Fiji and the *Fonua* in Tonga, underpinned by the concept of relationality which is important to HRE oversight, governance and the development of ethical research methods.

6.3 The Need for Training of HREC Committee Members and Researchers

It was evident from both countries that there is a need for training in HRE for researchers and HRE committee members. Firstly, training is required of prospective researchers in order that they engage Indigenous principles in research and Indigenous research protocols. In Fiji, the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs' Provincial Council has a role in the introduction of researchers to *iTaukei* research protocols. In Tonga, it is not clear whether this training is conducted by any institution. Secondly, HREC members and reviewers need training in ethics and in HRE in general and in *iTaukei* research ethics and Tongan approaches to ethical and technical review of research proposals. Training in HRE skills with a special focus on the research proposal ethics review skills of members of ethics committees is required in both countries.

There is no clear evidence of the review approaches employed by Fiji's MEHA research and ethics committee, Fiji's NHRERC and Tonga NHREC, although they have developed their standard operating procedures. Participants mentioned certain exceptions to this general situation: for some research proposals, Fiji Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs Research Committee and Tongan MET research ethics committee are employing Indigenous and Tongan research ethics principles in their review activities.

There is no evidence of religious influence in Fiji HRE mechanisms, although Tonga's MET Research and Ethics policy is Christian based in accordance with the country's Christian Education Framework. There may be a need for Tongan HRE to establish a link to this Christian-based education management and strengthen the Christian approach to HRE in Tonga. Participants stated that although the FKK principles were founded in the pre-Christian era, the meaning of each principle of the FKK is the same as Christian principles.

The Tonga MET research and ethics policy include the FKK research ethics principles. Tongan HRECs have cross Government Ministries' membership and review processes. Two Tongan Government Ministries are mandated with Tongan culture: the Palace Office - Tongan traditions and Culture section and Tonga Ministry of Tourism, Division of Culture and Heritage. The research permit process at the PMO is linked with these two departments in consultative process about matters involving Tongan culture in research. The PMO makes official requests to either one of these Government Ministries for the Tonga research ethics review of research proposals.

6.4 Changes in HRE Need Strong Consolidated Effort from all

Stakeholders.

In both countries, systems that incorporate HRE exist, however, there are areas that need to be strengthened. Fiji and Tonga need strong leadership and consolidated support of all stakeholders to drive the activities necessary to make changes to broaden HRE to incorporate traditional ethical principles. The results of this study identified the gaps in the HRE mechanisms in Fiji and Tonga:

- (i) **Coordination:** both countries lack a national body to coordinate HRE activities. However, there are links between government ministries in HRE, but these need to be formalized and strengthened. A national body can develop national HRE policies that will guide all existing HRE committees in country. This national HRE committee's roles may include i) training of ethics committees in managing their individual HREC, ii) building capacity of reviewers to effectively conduct ethics and technical review of research proposals, iii) provide a platform for Indigenous people to initiate an Indigenous HREC, introduce a guideline for Indigenous HREC, iv) to facilitate processes where data ownership agreements and IP agreements are made to maximise national benefits from research. v) provide accreditation of ethics committees in-country and vi) apply for fund from government to support HRE activities.

There was no known involvement or connection of NGOs and religious organizations in HRE oversight mechanisms in both Fiji and Tonga. Participants were enthusiastic about being involved. The inclusion of NGOs and religious organizations in HRE mechanism will add value to HRE in both countries.

Fiji has a strong research and ethics mechanism at the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs. The strength of the cultural mandate of the Tonga Palace Office and the Tonga Ministry of Tourism should be reflected in the HRE mechanism to strengthen the Indigenous approach to research ethics.

(ii) Community rights versus individual rights

There are important differences between community rights and individual rights in both countries. The *iTaukei* participants mentioned that informed consent in the *iTaukei* context is achieved through the process of *sevusevu* and not through a process of individual voluntary informed consent. When the community leaders accept the *sevusevu* and grant permission for the research to take place in their community, this constitutes informed consent according to *iTaukei* traditional regulations. Communal rights feature in the *sevusevu* process. Individual rights are not visibly exercised. Similar practices are accepted in Tonga. When a traditional village chief grants permission to a researcher, this is accepted by the community and people freely oblige. Relationality in *iTaukei* in Fiji and *Nofo 'a Kainga* in Tonga underpins any rights-based considerations.

At the international level, there are noted variations between the understanding of informed consent according to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and those according to *Vanua* protocols. The UNDRIP provides an international platform that recognizes the rights of Indigenous persons and includes the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) rights of Indigenous persons. The right of *iTaukei* persons, confirmed in these research findings, is a collective right of a community as opposed to the right of individuals. Thus, the FPIC process may be appropriately implemented in the *iTaukei Vanua* as a communal unit and the decision to provide FPIC in research is a collective decision.

(iii) Strong leadership in HRE: Higher education institutions, including universities, will provide strong HRE governance mechanisms. However, educational institutions

need strong leaders who have the passion to promote research integrity through ethical research so as to drive research and ethics.

6.4.1 Principles with similar meanings in ethical Indigenous research.

Certain principles of *iTaukei* and Tongan cultures have similar meanings that uphold indigeneity of HRE. These have emerged from the findings. The applications of these principles have sustained the *Vanua/Fonua* concept as presented in Table 6.2.

I now articulate principles of *iTaukei* and Tongan culture that have similar meanings which have emerged from the findings that uphold indigeneity of HRE. Through the cross-case comparative analysis, I identified Indigenous principles with similar meanings from both case studies and describe how they contribute to ethical Indigenous research. The applications of these principles have sustained the *Vanua/Fonua* concept in Table 6.2.

Table 6. 2: Research ethics principles that uphold the Vanua/Fonua

Research ethics principles	Contribution to ethical research in the Vanua/Fonua
Solidarity	Based on the solidarity of communal living and relationality in the <i>iTaukei Vanua/Tongan Fonua</i> communities, people have survived and have thrived for centuries despite colonialism, epidemics, extreme weather such as cyclones, environmental events and natural disasters such as drought, volcanic eruptions and floods. Features of solidarity from each country include the principle of <i>mamahi'ime'a</i> (loyalty and passion in performing duties) in the Four Golden Principles of Tonga which relate to the <i>talairawarawa</i> (compliance, obedience) in <i>iTaukei</i> culture. These principles emphasize the performance of duties by people to uphold <i>Vanua/Fonua</i> . Practices in Indigenous research include the use of the local language, <i>sevusevu</i> , <i>talanoa</i> , <i>kava</i> ceremonies, dress code and other practices that indicate the solidarity of people for the survival of the <i>Vanua/Fonua</i> . Dress code was discussed in the Tongan case study: men wearing the <i>ta'ovala</i> (mat) around the waist in Tonga is a manifestation of respect for the <i>Fonua</i> (<i>pukepuke Fonua</i>). It symbolises upholding the <i>Fonua</i> and the principle of solidarity, which is very important to Tongans.
Inclusivity and reciprocity of benefits	It is important that Indigenous persons are included in HRE and research projects that are about them or topics important to them. Also vital is to include their contributions in all phases of the research and to offer reciprocal benefits to both researcher and Indigenous communities. Inclusivity of Indigenous persons in research ethics committees is also important for governance and oversight.

	<p><i>iTaukei</i> and Tongan inclusiveness and reciprocal benefits of research are appropriate in <i>iTaukei</i> and Tonga. Translation of research results was emphasized by participants as a neglected part of research in both <i>iTaukei</i> and Tongan communities. To uphold the benefit principle in research, researchers are to return to their research populations and inform them of the results of research, translating it for community development and for government stakeholders for the purpose of policy development.</p>
<p>Protection of resources, including intellectual property</p>	<p>The Autogen project was rejected by the people of Tonga because people’s representatives thought that they did not want their blood to be used for such research purposes. These were acts of protection. It was demonstrated that <i>iTaukei</i> and Tongan people want researchers to seek top-down consent because their chiefs and leaders have the role of protecting the people. If they endorse the research, then people will feel safe to participate in it.</p> <p>Protection of <i>iTaukei</i> and Tongan resources through research was emphasized as they are the owners their intellectual property.</p>
<p>Compliance with protocols</p>	<p>Compliance with <i>iTaukei</i> and Tongan cultural protocols in research contributes to achieving research integrity and sustaining the <i>Vanua/Fonua</i> concepts of the <i>iTaukei</i> people of Fiji and Tongans.</p>
<p>Coordination and promotion</p>	<p>The lack of coordination of HRE activities was noted in both cases. Fiji and Tonga both need a national coordination body for the accountability and transparency of HRE activities.</p> <p>Leaders are required to drive the work of HRE at national levels, in policy development, the operationalization of ethics committees and to maintain relationships amongst HRE stakeholders.</p>

These principles indicate the pathways researchers are to respect and practice to achieve research integrity in a relational Indigenous community such as the *Vanua or Fonua*. However, research integrity in Indigenous communities requires a leader to guide and promote HRE, with a specific focus on the engagement of Indigenous principles.

6.5 Vanua (*iTaukei* Identity and Mother land), *Fonua* and *Kava* in research

The love of *Vanua/Fonua* provides foundational and motivational factors to *iTaukei* people and Tongan people. The *Vanua/Fonua* is manifested in their behaviour, which makes them an *iTaukei* person or Tongan in their identity. This has importance for research. In both cases, participants discussed pathways and traditional protocols (see Sections 4.4.5, 5.6 and 5.6.1)

and appropriately defined ethical research protocols in *iTaukei* and Tongan cultures, underpinned by the relational nature of the *Vanua/Fonua* concept (see Section 6.6).

Vanua has similar meanings to *Fonua*, and both have powerful connotations in Fiji and Tonga. Their common meanings involve land and heritage, people, values, solidarity, relationships, and their connections, be it geographical or geneological. In Fiji, it is well defined that people are the flesh of the *Vanua* land, implying land and people as one entity. In Tongan this is referred to as '*ofa fonua* (love for mother land) which binds people together by the *Fa Kavei Koula* principles (Tongan Working Group, 2012). The connections of people to their *Vanua/Fonua* are so intimate in nature that people never depart from the *Vanua/Fonua*. The upkeep of the *Vanua* is manifested in the process of the *sevusevu* protocol required for entry and exit points in research pathways.

Kava is the object of communication used to perform the *sevusevu* (see Section 4.4.5.1). It is also a practice in other significant high-level ceremonies in *iTaukei* settings such as in the instalment of a high chief, weddings, funerals or welcoming of a high government dignitary. *Kava* is of the land and the drinking of it symbolizes a covenant with the land. Likewise, *kava* ceremonies in Tonga require those who attend to drink a bowl which signifies their covenant with *Fonua*, thus, upholding their King and country. Research that takes place in traditional *iTaukei* and Tongan settings, such as *talanoa* (FGDs) normally involves *kava* in the protocols (Aporosa et al., 2021; Tecun, 2017).

Data collection through *Talanoa* is very commonly conducted in *iTaukei* settings and Tonga around the kava bowl. It is believed that people are relaxed and willing to share their knowledge about the subject matter around the kava bowl. This is an ethical method of data collection in both Fiji and Tonga.

6.6 Relationality Informs an Indigenous Ethical Approach to Research

The findings indicate that in both countries, the Indigenous ethical principles that inform HRE have a theoretical underpinning of relationality based on the *Vanua* in Fijian *iTaukei* and the *Nofo 'a Kainga* in Tonga. According to relational ethics views humans exist within a web of relationships of living things on earth and in order to be ethical, we are to accept and appreciate that we are interrelated as people connected to their environment (Anae, 2016; Donald, 2012; Kerr & Adamov Ferguson, 2020).

Relational work requires the development of research relationships with an emphasis on commitment and ongoing engagement within the relationships (Held, 2020). People were

placed in these relationships through a history of interdependence, connections and love, resulting in the performance of duties to one another (Birhane, 2021; Kerr & Adamov Ferguson, 2020). A brief discussion of relationality as an ecological ethical framework is needed, because ethics is about morality and the values that inform good behaviour (Hultsman, 1995).

Relationality is the foundation of both Fiji's and Tonga's Indigenous morality. Relational ethics is the foundational framework for the decolonization of research that involves Indigenous people. The findings of this research illuminate two crucial but connected aspects of an ethical research process: i) the importance of relationality and ii) the importance of following cultural research protocols (Sauni, 2011). This argument supports the *Vanua* framework of the *iTaukei* people and similarly the *Nofo 'a Kainga* framework of the Tongan people, where it is important that warm and trusting relationships are developed among research stakeholders (Flavell & Cunningham, 2023). The Western biomedical model, research ethics promotes individual autonomy and rights. In contrast relational ethics, which is the collective ontology of Pacific people, forms the basis for untangling colonial mindsets and logic. To apply relational ethics in HREC, it should be a key criterion of the ethics review process. The HREC should also be able to recommend not approving a proposal if the researchers are not prepared to commit.

The principle of respect is central in the pragmatics of *iTaukei Vakavanua* (the way of the land) and the *Nofo 'a Kainga* component of the Four Golden Principles of Tongan life. As described in Chapter 4, respect in the *iTaukei Vakavanua* concept is central: respect for persons, respect the *Vanua* and for the relationships within the *Vanua*. Respect encompasses research ethics pathways of *sala dodonu* (straight paths) and *veimataki* (ancient district relations). Likewise, respect underpins the *Nofo 'a Kainga* relational theory of Tonga. Respect is one of the four golden principles of Tongan life (*faka'apa'apa* - respect, *mamahi'i me'a* - duty, *lototo* - humility, and *tauhi va* - upkeep of relationships). Respect is always at the top of these four principles to show its importance, as a reminder that one is to respect the nation and its people and their environment, use respectful language and mannerisms and respect the Christian beliefs of Tongans. Therefore, respect is placed high on the list of HRE principles for both countries.

Relationality theory embodies Indigenous concepts that facilitates ethical research processes in both countries. Relationality authorizes the employment of an influential research cultural guide who is familiar with the research setting and population. The guide enables easy entry

and access to villages, people and resources, to gain a right to be in the village, protection of researchers from harm and the formation of a relationship amongst research stakeholders now and in the future. The guide in *iTaukei* settings identifies with the *veimataki* systems and employs this system in the research methods to facilitate ethical research. *Veimataki*, discussed in the Fijian case study, is a unique *iTaukei* cultural relationship that facilitates ethical *iTaukei* research. Similarly, in the Tongan setting, a cultural guide knows how to navigate through hierarchical power structures in the village and facilitates the process of gaining permissions from village chiefs or church leaders as appropriate for the research project.

An oral top-down consent is appropriate in both cases. The *iTaukei* cultural ritual, *sevusevu*, provides the researchers with an entry pathway to the research community and an oral consent granted by authorized persons. The cultural guide in the Tongan setting employs positionality and identity to facilitate entry and process the oral consent from people in the higher echelons of the hierarchy.

Participants in both case studies felt that it is disrespectful to ask for individuals to sign a consent form while there was approval granted through the Indigenous pathways of both countries, such as the *sevusevu* process in the *iTaukei* context and the top-down hierarchical approval in the Tongan setting.

6.7 Insider or Outsider Researchers, Positive and Negative Impact on Indigenous Communities

The classification of a researcher as either an insider or outsider in Fiji and Tonga is based on their identity and the positionality in relation to the research community and the knowledge sought. Identity in both countries is defined generally through family genealogy and the physical location of the village where one grew up (Manu'atu, 2018; Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2016). An insider or outsider researcher in Australian Aboriginal research is defined through the lived experiences of the researcher in relation to the research community (Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2016). In Fiji, identity is further identified by the role his or her *mataqali* social unit is tasked with in the community, such as a *bete* (traditional priest), *bati* (worrier), *mataisau* (carpenter or boat builder). Therefore, if the researcher's positionality is identified through family genealogy, and the research population includes his or her own extended family, then

he or she is an insider researcher due to belonging to the community being researched. If not, then the researcher is an outsider.

The other classification is through the roles people inherit through family generations and their knowledge, such as fishermen or boat builders. If the researcher is a fisherman and is researching traditional methods of fishing, then he or she is an insider researcher due to owning the traditional fishing knowledge required in the research. An outsider researcher in this case, who neither owns fisherman's knowledge nor belongs to the community of research, can employ an insider researcher from the community to facilitate collaboration in the research.

Researchers in Indigenous communities need to be clear on their identity and positionality as this is important in determining insider or outsider researcher status. An insider researcher belongs to the community of research therefore he or she only needs to formalize the research in the community. The outsider researcher needs to undertake much more work, such as identifying a person to guide him or her. In addition, he or she must follow the correct research protocols in order to be accepted into the research community (Beals et al., 2020; Taylor, 2011).

Both Fiji and Tonga have local authority pathways, derived from ancient history, that allow research to take place through traditional protocols. These pathways are considered by people of both countries as formal. These authorities are known to Indigenous people but are not documented anywhere in the context of research and not connected to the respective governments.

Participants stated that some researchers bypass government/governance systems and go directly to villages and request permission to conduct research from the chief, which they are granted. The authority to give permission is held by the chief or his/her representative on behalf of the *Vanua* to permit research to take place. In both countries, for research projects for which permission from the chief was received but no application was made through national HRE oversight mechanisms, face-to-face *talanoa* over the *kava* bowl are usually conducted. These researchers consider themselves as “insider researchers” who are Indigenous members of the country.

Participants reported that such researchers have inside knowledge of all the gatekeepers and because they feel that they belong to the *Nofo 'a Kainga* (extended family relationships in Tonga) and to the *vanua* in Fiji, they do not follow the HRE mechanism of the government.

They simply just follow the traditional processes and consider themselves privileged that they do not need government permission nor approval by an HRE oversight mechanism to conduct research in their own village. There are no records of these research projects held anywhere in both Fiji and Tonga. This process has existed throughout Tonga's and Fiji's history to the present day. Participants raised the negative impacts of these traditional authorities that permit research in both countries as presented in Table 6.3:

Table 6. 3: Negative impacts of traditional authorities that permit research (without the HRE governance mechanism) in Fiji and Tonga.

Number	Negative impacts
i.	A lack of documentation exists of such research projects conducted in the country. Inadequate benefit of knowledge generated from research for local communities and for national development.
ii.	The benefits or impacts of research for community development are unknown.
iii.	The risk assessed by participants associated with the <i>iTaukei</i> traditional approval of research is that the <i>iTaukei</i> people will not ask for any reciprocal benefits as it is not appropriate in their culture to ask. The Western biomedical and principled approach oversight mechanisms of HRE promotes a reciprocal benefit of research so it is the role of the ethics committees to ensure there actually are reciprocal benefits of research for <i>iTaukei</i> communities. Furthermore, research projects may be very technical, and local communities may need translation and interpretation of the research undertaken for them from an authorized body before the research takes place. Another risk is that the government HRE system remains unaware of this research happening in <i>iTaukei</i> communities and has no way of providing support, security or risk mitigation.
iv.	There is an indetermined ownership of the data, Indigenous culture knowledge and intellectual property (ICIP), knowledge of plants and other environmental resources. There is also the risk of exploitation of Indigenous properties for future financial benefits.
v.	Government authorities are not able to provide security for research participants when these traditional processes are followed. If issues emerge, such as data ownership, traditional knowledge ownership and intellectual property, research participants may not have the capacity to protect their rights without the formal government mechanisms which includes HRE oversight mechanisms.

Some form of formal HRE governance mechanism is necessary to control these potential negative impacts and to protect Indigenous people. However, it is important that this is combined with traditional approaches, rather than simply overriding them.

6.8 Urban and Rural Differences Relevant to HRE

As previously discussed, the education system that most professional people in Fiji and Tonga have engaged with would be influenced by colonialism. With that in mind, if the research involves urban participants, there is an assumption that they will identify with the Western approach to research and will be more accepting of Western protocols and practices,

such as the voluntary informed consent process. Their acceptance of Western research ethical protocols is based on the heritage of colonization in their educational background.

The setting of data collection is also important to consider in terms of urban and rural differences. If the professional person wants the interview (or other form of data collection) to be conducted in urban setting, then the appropriate cultural protocols can be applied depending on this context. For example, in Tonga, if the professional person wants the interview to take place at his or her office, then the Tongan dress code is still appropriately required and required, but other traditional protocols that might be suitable for villages are not necessary in an urban office setting. If the professional person is in a rural setting, for example, a traditional village, then the Indigenous research protocols are most appropriate in that setting.

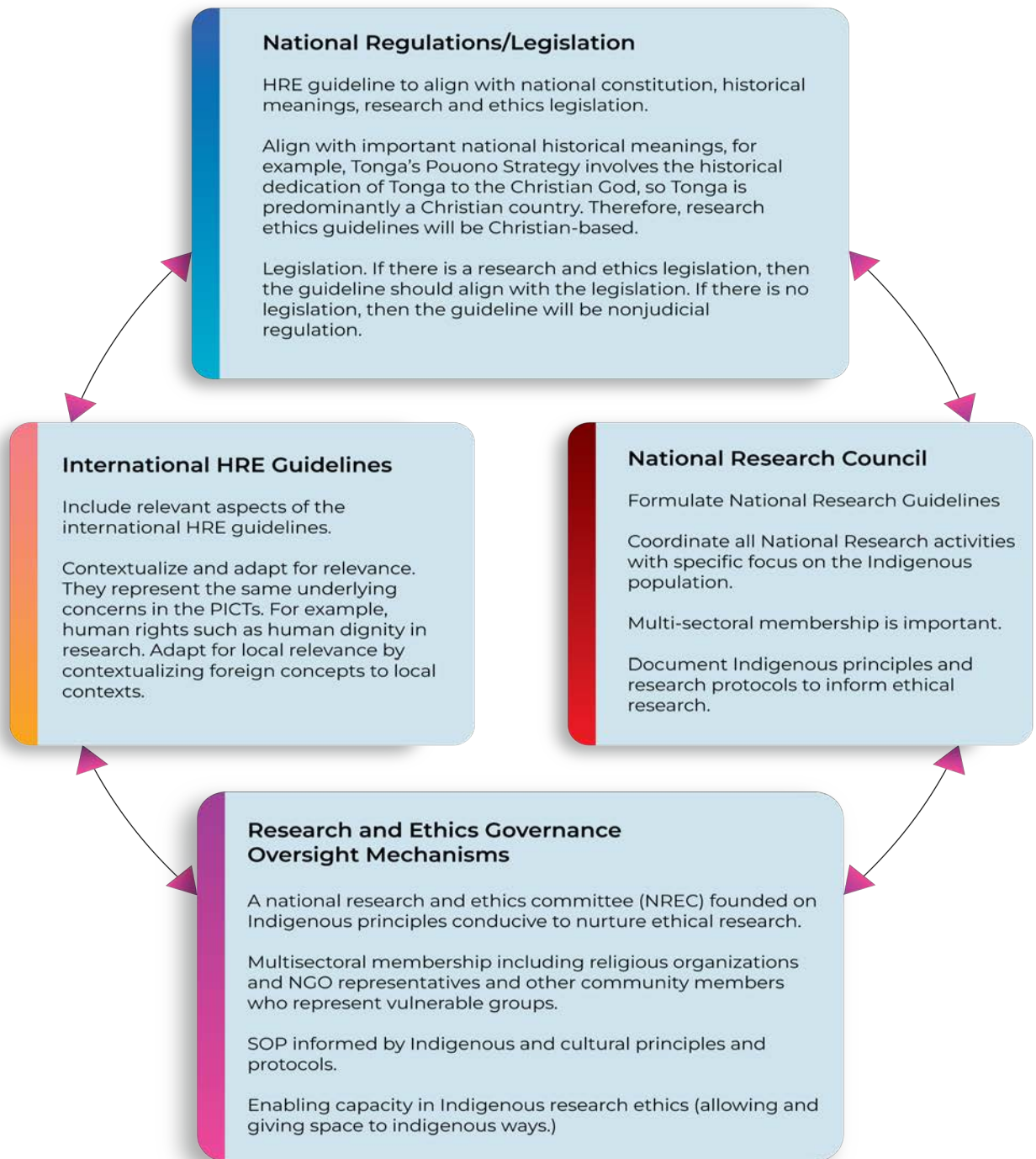
For research conducted in urban settings, other principles still need to be respected, for example, respect for the participant, reciprocal benefits and so on. An example from the *iTaukei* setting is that if a professional person wants the interview to take place in his or her office or in a health facility such as a hospital, then the *sevusevu* is not required. The *sevusevu* is only needed if the research setting is in a traditional *iTaukei* village. Rural traditional villagers have high expectations that cultural protocols are conducted correctly (see Section 4.4.5.2).

Indeed, the correct implementation of the protocols of the *Vanua* is highly regarded much more than the sharing of information about the topic of research. Tonga has the same culture of protocols applicable to research ethics, where adherence to the correct research protocols was valued by a participant as more important than the outcome of research.

6.9 Pacific Indigenous HRE Guideline Framework

In the process of developing the Fiji and Tonga HRE guideline frameworks, many similarities were identified. An Indigenous HRE guideline framework based on these similarities was developed and can be adapted in other PICTs. It is presented here as Figure 6.1.

Figure 6. 1: Pacific Islands HRE Guideline Framework.



6.10 Summary of the Chapter

This cross-case analysis has taken into account the legacy of colonialism and included an analysis of how it has devalued Indigenous knowledge and disempowered Indigenous people from using their own Indigenous knowledge in HRE and other decision-making activities. Decolonization efforts are needed to restore and reassert Indigenous values in policy making for HRE and engage principles of Indigenous values systems in HRE policies. Love for the *Vanua* or *Fonua* is the basis of indigeneity, which informs the ethics of research. The *Vanua/Fonua* is relational in nature thus relationality applies in HRE. Therefore, a researcher's positionality in relation to the *Vanua/Fonua* determines his or her status as an insider or outsider researcher. Coordination and capacity building in HRE is needed in both countries through the development of guidelines and a framework to determine the optimal ways in which traditional Western biomedical research ethics can be operationalized in the Pacific.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this research has been to explore the ethically principled approaches that inform HRE from both traditional and international perspectives in Fiji and Tonga. This research was guided by the following research questions.

- i. What are the existing underlying theoretical principles that inform ethical approaches of HRE?
- ii. How are international and Indigenous HRE principles applied in HRE?
- iii. How relevant is the application of international HRE guidelines in the context of small and developing Pacific Island nations like Fiji and Tonga?
- iv. How can Indigenous and international principles of research ethics best be combined for an effective HRE framework for the Pacific?

In this chapter, the major findings that address the research questions are interpreted and in addition, discussions of how the findings are supported, differ or being challenged by other authors' work in literature. The following themes from the findings are discussed.

- Pacific Indigenous HRE to have combined strength of biomedical and Indigenous approaches.
- Decolonizing thinking in HRE.
- The need to incorporate relationality because relationality underpins HRE in both countries.
- An Indigenous approach to HRE is the axiology and ethics of research in *iTaukei* Fiji and Tonga.

A brief revisit and conceptual interpretation of the findings of this research are needed to re-set the scene in order to begin this Discussion chapter. The Pacific region has multiple and distinct cultures, thus epistemologies and ontologies are diverse (Sanga et al., 2023). Despite the existence of the *Vakavanua*, the *Fa Kavei Koula*, the Kakala Research Framework and the Vanua Research Framework, lack of involvement was identified of these traditional knowledge and research frameworks in the regulations and practices of HRE in the HRECs in the Ministries of Health, the Ministries of Education and the universities of both countries.

The Indigenous research environment conformed to a Western biomedical approach through a Westernized education system. This produced Pacific people with a Western paradigm and was accompanied by the development of a biomedical approach to HRE in the health sector of both countries. There has also been a reliance on foreign leadership for medical education and research in Fiji and the Pacific, which indicates the continued power of colonialism over PICs (Smith, L. T., 2005; Thaman, 1997, 2003, 2006).

This lack of recognition and engagement of Indigenous approaches in research and HRE is considered a crisis and a disregard of the sacred *va* (relational space) of researchers and the *Vanua/Fonua* of Fiji and Tonga. Anae (2019) supports the idea that the PICs are in a state of crisis. To address this crisis, participants of this current study highlighted the need for Indigenous approaches to research ethics be engaged with biomedical approach in the formation of regulations for HRE.

7.2 Pacific Indigenous HRE needs the combined strength of biomedical and Indigenous approaches.

The Western biomedical model colonized the approach to HRE in the PIC of Fiji and Tonga, while Indigenous knowledges are neglected and unrecognized as being applicable in health research and HRE. This research study findings include that a Pacific Indigenous HRE would incorporate the strength of both biomedical and Indigenous approaches. This finding is supported by Cammock et al., 2021, who emphasized the need for valuing Indigenous innovation and methodology and Gibson (2022) added that Western research methodologies should be adapted to reflect Pacific Islands Indigenous contexts and cultures to be socially integrated for effective research involving Pacific peoples (Cammock, Conn, & Nayar, 2021; Gibson, 2022). Data (2018) and Wilson (2020) reinforce the finding of this research as they express that they are not rejecting all Western thinking in research involving Indigenous people but encourages an exploration of a bridge between Western and Indigenous thinking in research that is valuable and fits the ontology, epistemology and advantageous for the Indigenous community (Datta, 2018; S. Wilson, 2020).

The *iTaukei* ontology *Vakavanua* and the Tongan *Fa Kavei Koula* principles have been known for centuries, while the Kakala Research Framework was founded in 1997 (see Section 5.5.1.1) and the *Vanua* Research Framework was founded more recently in 2008 (see

Sections 1.2 and 2.2.1). These were instituted and founded on Indigenous Pacific Islands worldviews, knowledge and traditional practices prior to the era of HRE (Johansson-Fua, 2023; Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Despite the existence of the *Vakavanua*, the *Fa Kavei Koula*, the Kakala Research Framework and the Vanua Research Framework, lack of involvement was identified of these traditional knowledge and research frameworks in the regulations and practices of HRE in the HRECs in the Ministries of Health, the Ministries of Education and the universities of both countries.

The Indigenous research environment conformed to a Western biomedical approach through a Westernized education system. This produced Pacific people with a Western paradigm and was accompanied by the development of a biomedical approach to HRE in the health sector of both countries. There has also been a reliance on foreign leadership for medical education and research in Fiji and the Pacific, which indicates the continued power of colonialism over PICs (Smith L. T., 2005; Thaman, 1997, 2003, 2006).

This lack of recognition and engagement of Indigenous approaches in research and HRE is considered a crisis and a disregard of the sacred *va* of researchers and the *Vanua/Fonua* of Fiji and Tonga. This state of crisis in Pacific Islands research is also discussed by Anae (2019). To address this crisis participants of the current study highlighted the need for Indigenous principles of research to be engaged in the formation of regulations for HRE.

Colonialism has dominated how Indigenous knowledges have been represented and still does (Gibson, 2022; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). Indigenous members of ethics committees in Fiji and Tonga were found in the current study not to take advantage of their Indigenous knowledge to inform their review of research proposals, however they live and practice their Indigenous knowledge in their personal lives such as parenting, family ceremonies like weddings, implementing community projects. Thambinathan and Kinsella, (2021) who studied theories of decolonization and stated that Indigenous people affiliated with HRE did not acknowledge their own wealth of Indigenous knowledge in HRE related work (Raisele, 2021; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021; Tuimavana, 2020). This current research was originated based on the strong belief that Indigenous paradigms underpin HRE in PICTs. Thus, Cammock et. al., (2021) and Gibson, (2022) made contributions of the need for valuing Indigenous innovation and methodology. To strengthen HRE in the Pacific Islands, biomedical and Indigenous approaches to HRE need to be strengthened. Efforts in the HRE strengthening process need to begin by engaging Indigenous ontologies, such as *Vakavanua* of *iTaukei* Fiji and *Fa Kavei Koula* of Tonga in HRE thinking and practices.

Other countries outside of PICT region are experiencing similar shifts in research paradigm from Western biomedical paradigm only promoting the engagement of Indigenous ethics with biomedical ethics in HRE, health care and scientific environmental research. A case from the Indigenous community of Canada highlights the enactment of research ethics framework, '*DO IT IN A GOOD WAY*' for the ethical conduct of research involving Indigenous peoples of Canada. This '*DO IT IN A GOOD WAY*' framework is founded on the principles of community relevance, community participation, mutual capacity building, and benefit to Indigenous community (Ball & Janyst, 2008. p.35). These Indigenous Canadian principles carry similar connotations as the *Vakavanua* and *Fa Kavei Koula* overarching principles of *iTaukei* Fiji and Tonga which are the fundamental theoretical frameworks of an Indigenous HRE framework in Fiji and Tonga respectively. Carrie et al, (2015) discusses a Nicaraguan case that also promotes the idea of conjoint biomedical and Indigenous research paradigms approaches. Carrie explores how the Nicaraguan constitution promoted the engagement of Indigenous approach to medicine and biomedicine in their health systems for the promotion of equality in health for all Nicaraguans (Carrie, Mackey, & Laird, 2015). Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) is promoted as a key construct that informs Western scientific research to produce evidence that addresses the inequities in the health and the environmental problems of Indigenous people of tribal nations of America (Finn, Herne, & Castille, 2017).

The internationally accepted principles approach to HRE and Indigenous principles of the *Vakavanua* of the *iTaukei* Fijians, and the Tongan *Nofo 'a Kainga*, such as relationality, respect, humility, solidarity, respect for cultural protocols, are constructed in this research to form a consolidated systematic approach for a stronger HRE governance and oversight mechanism in Indigenous PICTs (Tom L. Beauchamp & Childress, 2001; 2013 Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, 2017). This idea is supported by Pacific academics in Koya, (2017) and Sanga et al, (2023) where they state that common values across the global and local levels can combine to form a framework for HRE for the Pacific Islands (Koya, 2017; Sanga et al., 2023). However, much work is still needed to facilitate the combination of local and global paradigms in HRE for PICTs.

More reasons for the need for a combined Western biomedical and Indigenous HRE approach are identified within the ethics review processes of HRE mechanisms in Fiji and Tonga. These reasons include the practical process of ethics review undertaken first, by professional members of ethics committees who have the capacity to assess the research project for ethics,

risks and technical issues (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, 2017). After the ethics committee review, the research project progresses to fulfilling the traditional Indigenous protocols. In Fiji, the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs facilitate this process. In the *iTaukei* setting, the correctness of the implementation of the *iTaukei* research protocols is most important because *iTaukei* is a culture of protocols that allows research to take place, allows researchers into villages and other physical locations of research and protects researchers from any bad *mana*. *iTaukei* values are manifested in research protocols and include the values of respect of persons and relationality. The Fiji and Tonga HRE review process of the traditional cultural protocols in research is believed to strongly apply an analysis of traditional cultural expectations and criteria relevant in Indigenous research but may fall short of a strong analysis of research risks beyond their traditional scope. Thus, there is a need for HRE committees to have members who hold both Indigenous knowledge as well as biomedical HRE knowledge needed for reviews. This is a holistic approach to HRE reviews. The same idea has been constructed in the Maori Guidelines for HRE in New Zealand, *Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Māori research ethics: A Framework for Researchers and Ethics Committee Members since 2010*, which states that “the main principles are drawn from *tikanga Māori* and its philosophical base of *mātauranga Māori* (traditional knowledge), but also integrate understandings from the Treaty of Waitangi, Indigenous values and Western ethical principles” (Hudson et al, 2010, p.3). Similarly, First Nations, Metis and Inuit Indigenous communities in Canada have also developed guidelines to guide research ethics activities that involve themselves. Research and academic institutions have operationalized these guidelines. One is the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* which includes key principles of research involving Indigenous people (Panel on Research Ethics Canada, 2022). HRE in Fiji, Tonga and other Pacific Islands should also be influenced by culturally sensitive guidelines that uphold Indigenous research ethics, now and in the future.

7.3 Decolonizing thinking in HRE

Colonialism has dominated how Indigenous knowledges have been represented (Gibson, 2022; Hereniko, 2000; Smith, L. T. 2021; Tegama & Fox, 2023; Thaman, 2003, 2006; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). Indigenous members of ethics committees in Fiji and Tonga were found in the current study not to take advantage of their wealth of Indigenous knowledge to inform their review of research proposals, however they live and practice their

Indigenous knowledge in their personal lives such as parenting, family ceremonies like weddings, implementing community projects. Several studies include two authors from Fiji, support this research finding as they discussed their studies that involved theories of decolonization. They stated that Indigenous people affiliated with HRE did not acknowledge their own wealth of Indigenous knowledge in HRE related work (Raisele, 2021; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021; Tuimavana, 2020).

This research found various methods of decolonizing paradigms in HRE and are discussed in the following sub-sections.

7.3.1 The Need to Incorporate Relationality

This research study found that relationality underpinned by Indigenous principles and epistemologies is vital for truly ethical research involving Fijians and Tongans. This finding is supported by Chilisa et al., (2017) who confirms that Indigenous research is highly relational and are grounded in relationality (Chilisa, Major, & Khudu-Petersen, 2017). Relationality is an essential underlying principle in Indigenous research (Cooper, 2019; Mbah, Bailey, & Shingruf, 2024). Thus, the findings of this research highlighted that relationship building is necessary in research that involve *iTaukei* people of Fiji and Tonga. Pacific Islands academics also emphasize relationship building by adding that two ethical principles of respect and mutual trust to be included in the efforts of respectful relationship building among stakeholders in Indigenous Pacific research (Sanga, Maebuta, Johansson-Fua, & Reynolds, 2020). Relationality links people to one another and is interdependent, in the Tonga case as in the concept of *vā* (A Tongan word that means relational space). The *vā* is elaborated by various Pacific Islands authors to convey that through Pacific Indigenous people interdependence via *vā*, they are connected to their physical environment, their ancestral spirituality and hierarchical social structure (Faleolo, 2023; Havea, Alefaio-Tugia, & Hodgetts, 2023; Talei, 2023; Teariki & Leau, 2023). Participants in this current research recommended that relevant principles from the Western biomedical model combined with Indigenous approaches to form a robust Indigenous approach to HRE in Fiji and Tonga is needed. How this should be done is considered in the next sections.

7.3.2 The use of international or Indigenous HRE principles varies by sector in Fiji and Tonga

A finding in this current research identified that, in Fiji and Tonga, the use of international or Indigenous HRE principles changes according to the sector. Documentary evidence and participants in the health sectors of both countries reported utilizing international principles of HRE more than Indigenous principles. This finding is challenged by the status of engagement of Indigenous knowledge by medical professionals in New Zealand. The medical profession in the New Zealand health sector is reported by Smith (2014), to be engaging more with Māori cultural and ethical approaches and build relationships of trust (Gray, 2014; Smith, 2014).

Australia, Canada and New Zealand have all developed research ethics guidelines that include Indigenous principles and values that inform the review of research proposals and the development of an ethical relationship in Indigenous research (Hayward, Sjoblom, Sinclair, & Cidro, 2021; National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018; NHMRC and Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, 2023). In the current research, it was found that Fiji and Tonga are still in the process of developing Indigenous HRE guidelines. At the time of writing this thesis (July 2024), the Indigenous guideline framework developed in this research will be useful to inform these processes in Fiji's and Tonga's HRE and may also guide other Indigenous HRE in PICTs.

The **education sectors** of each country differ in whether they use international or Indigenous principles in HRE. In Fiji's education sector, international principles of HRE are strongly applied, which suggests the impact of colonialism since Fiji was a British colony from 1874-1970 (Kwaymullina, 2016). In the Tongan education sector, both international and Indigenous principles are utilized for HRE. The Tongan education sector highlights the Four Golden Principles of Tongan life in its research and ethics policy (Ministry of Education Heritage and Art, 2019).

The impact of colonialism is more visible in the Fiji HRE context than in the Tongan HRE context. The effect of colonialism on research is also visible in the Global North as discussed in an auto-ethnography research paper aimed at bringing visibility to coloniality because of its hold on research (Hernandez-Carranza, Carranza, & Grigg, 2021). Hernandez-Carranza and Grigg (2021) also state that coloniality continues to entangle research and researchers into maintaining the rigidity of its regulations and its intended ideas. Despite sharing control of the research process in auto-ethnographical research, tensions related to coloniality

emerged. Funding agencies with a colonial managerial style enforce research tools upon the research project, for example, the logic model that focuses on outputs as opposed to processes and “specific” (p.1527) research outcomes driven by the agendas of funding agencies (Hernandez-Carranza et al., 2021).

Findings from this PhD research indicate that the influence of the previous colonial administration is observed in the research and ethics systems of the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs (see Chapter 4). Although Fiji became independent in 1970, and began to express self-determination, the country maintains its bond to England, the former colonial power (Overton, Murray, Prinsen, Ulu, & Wrighton, 2018). Colonial policies are reflected in the current research protocols employed in HRECs in government ministries and universities.

The findings of this research also indicate that the Western concept of self-determination has a collective connotation when applied to the *iTaukei Vanua* ontology, which means a community of people make the decision. Academics are promoting a decolonized research practice in the Pacific Islands (Farbotko, Watson, Kitara, & Stratford, 2023; Hernandez-Carranza et al., 2021; Leenen-Young, 2021; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Nadarajah, Martinez, Su, & Grydehøj, 2022; Smith, L. T., 2021; Thaman, 2003). Indigenous rights are also being promoted in research ethics review processes (Bull et al., 2020; Ermine, Sinclair, & Jeffery, 2004). More work is needed to embed the findings of the current research into practical guidelines and processes for HRE in PICTs. These practical guidelines will help researchers understand the Indigenous ethics and the protocols involved.

Tonga has always been an independent sovereign state (Bade, 2021). The Ministry of Education includes the FKK in their research and ethics policy but has not made any progress in defining its core principles in the context of research. The Ministry of Health adopts a Western biomedical approach to HRE and has not yet taken practical steps to incorporate Tongan ethics. Researchers’ respect for Indigenous research participants will be enhanced, when they are guided by HRE guidelines with Indigenous principles. Cross country researchers consider the applications for research ethics review process in New Zealand and Fiji easier because they are guided by HRE guidelines that include some Indigenous ethical principles (Cossham, Bidwell, & Pai, 2024).

7.3.3 Discrepancies between the Free and Prior Informed Consent individual approach with relational ontologies.

The Fiji Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs (MITA) highlights the use of Indigenous principles and protocols in many of its HRE processes. However, it also emphasizes the use of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' (UNDRIP) Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) principle which means that the *iTaukei* people should respect individual agency in all areas of their lives (Hayward et al., 2021; United Nations, 2007). The UNDRIP's FPIC individual agency approach differ from the relational ontologies of *iTaukei* Fijians and Tonga. The Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs' FPIC principle promotes the autonomy of *iTaukei*. The FPIC in the MITA is discussed here because there seems to be some contradictions to the findings of this PhD research. Participants in this research expressed that the chief's top-down approval in the *iTaukei* hierarchy within a communal context is appropriate for research involving *iTaukei* people, because the chief always places the best interest of his or her people at heart when making decisions. Further, participants discussed that signing an individual FPIC form after approval was granted via the *sevusevu* process is disrespectful to *iTaukei* research participants and the *iTaukei* ethical research protocol. The individual agency principle of the UNDRIP is assumed to be universal, but evidence from this research does not resonate with this claim. An explanation of the *iTaukei* meaning of the self as individual agency will help clarify this point. Tuimavana (Fiji MOHMS Strategic Plan 2020-2025) described the *iTaukei* translation of the self as individual agency of “*au* (I) or *noqu* as boastful and rude” (Tuimavana, 2020, p.81). To contextualize the notion of the self as individual agency in the *iTaukei* context, this means a collective body of many parts. Bakalevu (1997) described this form of the self as collective body of many parts as *keitou/keimami* (we), *neitou/neimami* (ours) (Bakalevu, 1997). The collective connotation of the individual agency is respectful and resonate well with the concept of the Vanua (Fonua in Tonga) a communal hierarchical structural institution that includes people (past, present, and future), land and natural resources, that holds the power to make collective decisions (Tuimavana, 2020; Vaioleti, 2011). Therefore, in PICT settings the FPIC can be appropriately applied in research involving *iTaukei* people at the Vanua level (collective). However, Hassan (Fiji MOHMS Strategic Plan 2020-2025) conducted a study of FPIC in Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia and found that the recognition of FPIC is low and it remains as systems of unfulfilled promises (Hassan, Nordin, Wook, & Ab Rahman, 2025). Another explanation of FPIC process in the *Keeping research on track II: A companion document to Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and*

communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders, explains self-determination in the FPIC process as both collective and individuals: “a community, organisation or person has the right to say yes and be involved in research” (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018, p.9).

Despite the findings that an individual agency is viewed as a unit of many parts in the *iTaukei* settings, some Indigenous people may be more individualistic than others through their education and absence from their Indigenous communities. Thus, the FPIC allows for an individual agency approach to self-determination of Indigenous persons who are living in non-traditional communities.

7.3.4 Human rights in Western HRE paradigms co-exist with human relationships in Indigenous paradigms

The Western approach to HRE emphasizes the protection of participants in research (Friesen, Gelinias, Kirby, Strauss, & Bierer, 2023; Greer et al., 2023; Royska, 2015; Silaigwana & Wassenaar, 2015), while participants in this current research perceived a greater risk of potential for harms by research approaches that are non-relational. They expressed trust of the protection afforded by traditional protocols processes which would generally work in the best interests of most people. That is, that most traditional ‘authorities’ would be acting in the best interests of the majority. Indigenous approaches expand human rights understanding to include relationship building that are life-long among all research parties and to ensure that research contributes to the prosperity of lives of Indigenous people. This finding is supported by other authors, including Fa’avae, Smith and Thaman, who are promoting the engagement of Indigenous thinking in research (Fa’avae, 2021; Smith, 2013; Thaman, 2003). Protection of participants in research is crucial because of the economically vulnerable status of most of the populations in PICTs such as in Fiji (Fiji Bureau of statistics, 2020; Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, 2023). The principles of protection and relationality applied in Indigenous HRE framework in PICTS co-exist to enhance the rights of Indigenous people.

Health research was first undertaken in Tonga in the 1930s by native medical practitioners (NMP) who were medical trainees in the original phases of the Fiji School of Medicine (Widmer, 2010). Widmer (2010) reported that NMPs collected data and wrote reports that documented their work. The NMPs contributed to the creation of an Indigenous modernity (Leslie, 2005b). There are no records of any health research in Fiji or Tonga that harmed Indigenous people. However, this does not mean that harm did not occur as it may have not been documented nor passed down through oral history. Some researchers did attempt to

adhere to HRE. For example, in a research article from Tonga about the epidemiology of blindness, it was noted that the study reportedly abided by the Declaration of Helsinki and the free and informed consent process was implemented (Newland, Woodward, Taumoepeau, Karunaratne, & Duguid, 1994). The health research experiences of people of Fiji and Tonga involved the devaluation and non-recognition of their knowledge and approaches, which are forms of harm. Smith, 2021 also highlighted this point when she discussed research and technological advances as failing to acknowledge Indigenous philosophies and knowledge (Smith, L. T., 2021). Protection of Indigenous knowledge complements relationship building in Indigenous HRE framework. Integrated Western and Indigenous approaches can result in the minimal duplication of work and in turn, form stronger governance and oversight mechanisms in Tonga and for *iTaukei* people in Fiji.

The results of this research underscore the call for respect of the *Vanua* and *Nofo 'a Kainga*, the ontology of Indigenous approaches, in research involving *iTaukei* people and Tongan people respectively. *iTaukei Vanua* and Tongan worldviews are based on performing our duties to sustain our *Vanua* and *Nofo 'a Kainga* and the common good of all people (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Features of the *Vanua* and *Nofo 'a Kainga* are to be embedded in research governance and oversight mechanisms. Features of respect for the *Vanua* and *Nofo 'a Kainga* are outlined below.

Respect is central and overarching in both *iTaukei vakavanua* and Tongan *Nofo 'a Kainga*. Respect is required for effective research and researcher integrity in Indigenous thinking (Lovo et al., 2021). This is consistent with cultural respect which is an indigenist research paradigm in Australian Aboriginal ontology and research ethics (Martin, 2006). Participants in climate change research involving Indigenous people in the Northern Pacific, re-iterated the need for strong, respectful relationships in research (Dent et al., 2023). Features of respect in *iTaukei* culture include respect for one's Indigenous identity, respect for spirituality, respect for community and relationality, being honest and trustworthy and respect of culture, traditions and the use of language.

The Tongan Four Golden Principles (FKK) comprise respect, the performance of duties with passion, being humble and the upkeep of relationships with others. These are viewed by participants as intertwining. Each of the FKK principles overlaps with the others, for example, characteristics of respect are found in humility, duty and the upkeep of relationships and characteristics of duty are found in humility and respect.

The features of the *Yavu Koula* Model first outlined in Section 4.5.1 are discussed below. International instruments of HRE have established principles that address similar concerns to those of *iTaukei* people, such as respect for human dignity and the protection of research participants (CIOMS and WHO, 2016; World Medical Association, 2001). For this reason, participants thought it important to adopt international perspectives of HRE from the international guidelines in Indigenous approaches to HRE in the *Yavu Koula* Model.

One international regulation included in the *Yavu Koula* Model is United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) but contextualization is needed to maximize its relevancy to *iTaukei* perspectives. An example of a contextualization exercise is the discussion earlier in this chapter of the differences in perspectives about the “individual agency” in FPIC in the UNDRIP and the MITA research and ethics policy. When individual agency is contextualized to *iTaukei* understandings, the individual is the *Vanua* which is collective, thus the individual in *iTaukei* knowledge is collective. The FPIC process is to be conducted by the *Vanua*, as a collective unit with the authority to make decisions for members of the *Vanua*, and this is contextually appropriate.

The *Yavu Koula* model exists within a legal environment in Fiji consisting of national health research regulations by which researchers are expected to abide. An ethics committee is a regulatory body as it plays a very important role in the regulation of various kinds of research projects (Hedgecoe, 2021). Likewise, Cregan (2012) specified that the legal and regulatory responses to ethics in healthcare in Australia are at the federal level and the state level (Cregan, 2012; Hedgecoe, 2021). Health research regulations clearly define the roles of stakeholders and guide all human health research activities (Laurie, 2021). Human health research ethics committees (HRECs) operate under this environment of regulations which provides them with authority to approve proposed research or not (Dove, 2020). Research projects that are implemented without approval from an HREC can have a negative impact on the career of researchers (Hedgecoe, 2021).

Therefore, the *Yavu Koula* decolonizing model for *iTaukei* HRE incorporates a legal and regulatory frame that includes the Fiji Constitution 2013, which states in the Preamble, “*Recognising the Indigenous people or the iTaukei, their ownership of iTaukei lands, their unique culture, customs, traditions and language*” (Fiji Government, 2013) and the Fiji National Research Council Act 2017 as a law that over arches the research governance and oversight mechanisms in Fiji (Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, 2017).

7.3.5 Indigenous data sovereignty.

In this research, *iTaukei* and Tongan people have made clear their desire for data sovereignty over research that involves themselves and their communities. Data includes information (digital and non-digital) qualitative, quantitative, biological or environmental samples, audio recordings, videos, photographs and artwork that were collected in research (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018). *iTaukei* and Tongan research ethics involve intellectual property (IP) issues. In applying the bioethics principle of beneficence, ownership of data and IP are benefits of Indigenous research to Indigenous people in research. The findings of this research (see Section 4.6.4) indicate that Indigenous IP needs recognition and protection. These principles are underpinned by respect for self-determination and Indigenous rights of data ownership. The Fiji Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs highly recognizes FPIC as it operates on an FPIC framework that recognize the rights of all *iTaukei* people to either freely consent or not in matters that affect their people, lands and livelihoods (Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs Fiji, 2017). Findings from this research emphasize respect for the self-determination of *iTaukei* people and Tongans (see Sections 7.3.3). To expand on the respect for self-determination in the Pacific context, it is important to discuss Indigenous data sovereignty (IDS).

IDS is the “management of information in a way that aligns with the laws, practices and customs of a nation-state in which it is located. In the Indigenous context, this may manifest at the group (iwi(tribe)/mob/Maor) level.” (Lovett et al., 2019, p.27). IDS is founded on the rights of Indigenous people to decide on data development practices, and have authority over the collection, governance and ownership of data about themselves. Indigenous communities of Australia, Canada and New Zealand have developed IDS concepts featuring integrated principles including many principles that PICTs can adapt. These integrated principles include “ownership, control, accessibility, custodianship, accountability to Indigenous communities, amplify the voice of the community, relevant and reciprocal, sustainably self-determining” (Trudgett, Griffiths, Farnbach, & Shakeshaft, 2022, p.5). Fiji, Tonga and other Pacific Islands need to promote IDS. Contextualizing of principles founded by Indigenous communities in countries like Australia and New Zealand may be a good start. However, most importantly the applications and practical means of how Indigenous groups can take control over their data in Pacific settings are to be defined collaboratively (Poor, 2022).

7.3.6 The *iTaukei* Research Method is Recommended for the Re-creation of an Indigenous Epistemology.

Talanoa research methods (face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions, sometimes online) were used in the current research to collect qualitative data. Participants in both case studies recommended *talanoa* as an ethical research tool for qualitative research in *iTaukei* Fiji and Tonga. This recommendation confirms that *talanoa* is most appropriate for research in Pacific Islands settings. *Talanoa* as a primary research method has also been utilized widely by Pacific students in many universities to research and promote Pacific knowledge systems, to measure Pacific students' success or failure in universities, to tell stories of Indigenous Pacific educators' lived experiences, and to promote collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities (Fa'avae, Hemi, & Aporosa, 2021; Feetham et al., 2023; Hindley, November, Sturm, & Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2020). *Talanoa* may be equivalent to yarning in the Indigenous Australian context and *tok stori* in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands and other Melanesian countries (Bessarab & Ng'Andu, 2010; Bolinga, 2023; Sanga & Reynolds, 2018).

Participants re-iterated that the purpose of research is to identify the most accurate information to answer research questions. Thus, an Indigenous research tool such as *talanoa* should be employed to gauge the most accurate and authentic information in Pacific contexts. *Talanoa* appeals to Pacific people and connects to their world views and the re-creation of their epistemology (Faletau, 2020; Nolan, 2022; Oldehaver, 2021; Petelo, 2022).

This research found that relationality is the foundation of an ethical research based on the *Vanua/Fonua* or *Nofo 'a Kainga* relational concepts. The re-creation of the epistemology is channelled through this relational space or *Va* and guided by ethical protocols of the *Vanua* and *Nofo 'a Kainga*. Researchers require ethical protocols, including *talanoa* research method, in a relational space to be able to create that relationship between the researcher and Indigenous research participants. Within this relationship, the researcher and participants are drawn closer to identifying and achieving the accurate information sought in research.

Talanoa, embedded in the Tongan *Kakala* Research Framework and the *iTaukei Vanua* research framework, facilitates the discussion of Indigenous belief systems relevant to answer the research questions (Johansson-Fua, 2023). Indigenous behaviours, practices and belief systems underpinned by ethical principles such as mutual respect and humility guide the *talanoa* to achieve a heart-to-heart level of *talanoa* sharing of information (Halapua, 2000). Within the *Vā* relationship, there is no space for pretence or false representations. The

warmth of trust and respect within the *Vā* relationship and *talanoa* facilitates the re-creation of epistemology.

7.4 An Indigenous approach to HRE is the axiology and ethics of research.

The axiology and ethics of research involves cultural rules of engagements in *iTaukei* Fiji and Tonga, provide the foundation for the development of the HRE guidelines. In *iTaukei* context the cultural rules of engagements are based on *iTaukei* culture of protocols, comprising of three main protocols of *vakatadumata* (the entry protocol), *solesolevaki* (the engagement protocol) and the *nai vakatale* (the exit protocol). The principles of the *iTaukei* cultural rules of engagements include respect the *Vanua*, mutual protection, Christian values, benefits and ownership (includes relationality and others, see Figure 4.14). These cultural protocols are referred to by participants in this current research as straight paths. Research projects that involve *iTaukei* people should pursue the straight paths to guide thoughts, design and practices of research including HRE mechanisms. Similarly, in Tonga, the Fa Kavei Koula (Four Golden Pillers) of Tonga comprise four core principles, *faka'apa'apa* (respect), *lototō* (humility), *mamahi'i me'a* (loyalty passion and commitment), *tauhi vā* (maintaining good relationship), (see Figure 5.8) are to guide the approaches, design and the ethical implementation of research that involve Tongan people. Pacific academics, Baba, Mahina, Williams and Nabobo-Baba, (2004), urge Pacific researchers to continue what they have been doing best, which is using their very own wisdom, vision, values of empowerment and relationship building in research to document Pacific knowledges. Their advice for Pacific researchers is to connect with themselves first and then connect with others outside who have the same worldview and connect with other Indigenous people who are in pursuit of the same interests (Baba, Mahina, Williams, & Nabobo-Baba, 2004). Maiono et al., (Fiji MOHMS Strategic Plan 2020-2025) confirms the importance of establishing a trusting relationship with *iTaukei* communities in research (Maiono, Ruwhiu, & Kalavite, 2025). Cammock & Andrews (2023) confirms the need to use the *iTaukei* values of *veiwekani* (relationship building), *vakarokoroko* (respect), *veitokoni* (reciprocity, sharing) and *veiqaravi* (service). Pulu et al., (2021) support the use of Indigenous values in research, with reference to Tongan values of family, spirituality or Christian beliefs and connection with their environment employed in research involving Tongans (Cammock & Andrews, 2023) (Pulu, Tiatia-Seath, Borman, & Firestone, 2021). Vakalahi & Ihara (2011) re-iterated the importance of including an Indigenous person or people in research teams to contribute their contextual analytical knowledge of culture of protocols of the research context (Vakalahi & Ihara, 2011).

The advice from Baba et. al., (2004) is significant in developing Indigenous research that contributes to decolonizing research in PICTs. In this current research, this advice is also important in HRE in PICTs. As discussed in the findings of the case studies detailed in Chapters 4 and 5, the Indigenous approach to HRE is the axiology and ethics of research, which involves Indigenous cultures of protocols, principles and values in PICTs. The engagement of these Indigenous thinking and practices in research and HREs mechanisms ensures that the research is ethical, meaningful, effective and contributes well to developing lives of people in PICTs.

7.4.1 Christianity's impact on Indigenous *iTaukei* and Tongan research ethics.

This section reflects on the results of Fiji and Tonga HRE cases as it explores the impact of Christianity on indigenous research ethics. The findings of this research highlight that the Indigenous approach to HRE is the axiology and ethics of research in *iTaukei* Fiji and Tonga (see Sections 4.4.5 and 5.5, 5.5.1). However, Christianity is discussed in the results of this research as an influential power in both Fiji and Tongan societies, Ryle, 2005 also discussed this point (Ryle, 2005). Christianity is one of three pillars in the three-legged stool of Fiji, (see Section 4.4.6.1). *Lotu* Christianity has an equal standing to *matanitu* government and *Vanua* *iTaukei* people, land and their relationships. Christian values have strong influence on Indigenous research ethics. In terms of the spirituality of *iTaukei* and Tongan people in pre-Christian era, Tongans and *iTaukei* Fijians believed in their ancient traditional beliefs. Christianity was introduced to traditional *iTaukei* societies that believed in cultural spirituality. The *iTaukei* society adopted Christianity as an additional source of spirituality. To date, the *iTaukei* Christian practices in modern Fiji took ownership of both traditional culture and Christian values. Christianity has become a significant part of their culture, identity, education systems and politics. Christian values informed the current practices of spiritual life of *iTaukei* in Fiji and the pillar that informs indigenous research ethics. Christianity did not displace all *iTaukei* ancestors' spirituality, rather it is interwoven with *iTaukei* indigenous values, (Ryle, 2016).

Ancient indigenous approaches are recognized and valued in this research as the axiology and ethics of research in Fiji. However, participants in this research discussed that Christianity together with the colonial power were responsible for the devaluing of indigenous knowledge in the governance and oversight of research in PICs. *iTaukei* paradigms were colonized, mostly through the colonial education systems in Fiji and the political power structures.

iTaukei members of RECs did not use their indigenous knowledge in the activities of REC (Raisele, 2021; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021; Tuimavana, 2020). Thus, this research highlighted that decolonization efforts are needed to revalue indigenous principles in research governance and oversight and practices (Smith, 2021; Thaman, 2003, 2006).

The Tonga HRE case findings, sections 5.1.5 *Pouono* strategy and section 5.6.6 Christianity and Tongan culture intertwined since *Pouono*, seems to have produced similar results as in the Fiji HRE case in terms of the impact of Christianity on the Tongan society. Tongan population is predominantly Tongan, and most Tongans are Christian since the *Tukufonua I Pouono* where King Tupou I, dedicated Tonga and its people to the Christian God in 1839 (Havea et al., 2018). Mariner described the Tongan society as a well-structured society in the year 1811. The Tongan motto, *Koe 'Otua mo Tonga ko hoku Tofi'a*, (God and Tonga are my inheritance) was also created at *Pouono* (Havea et al., 2018). The Tongan society was well structured before Christianity was introduced to Tonga (see Section 5.1.2) (Mariner & Martin, 1820). The *Tukufonua* then embedded Christianity in the Tongan spiritual and cultural beliefs. More findings of this research indicated that the Tongan education framework and values are based on Christianity and everyday life is Christian based. Thus, the *Fa Kavei Koula* principles (see Section 5.6.1) seem to be aligned to Christian values that include respect, honour, humility, love and duty. Therefore, given that Christianity is interwoven in the Tongan culture, HRE in Tonga is guided by Christian principles embedded in the *Fa Kavei Koula* and Tongan culture. This research accepts that Tongan ethics align with Christian values, as adopted by the *Pouono* strategy.

7.5. Strengths and Limitations and Research Translations

Having drawn together findings from both case studies, with reference to the current literature, there is a need to appraise the strengths that enabled me to conduct this research project. Limitations are explored in Section 7.5.2.

7.5.1 Strengths

This is the first study undertaken in Tonga and Fiji exploring Indigenous approaches to HRE. The research was made possible initially through self-reflection and voicing my own critical views of HRE systems as I realized that Indigenous knowledge is a missing paradigm in HRE. I was also fortunate that I was worthy to be accepted by Indigenous people, specifically by *iTaukei* participants, as the recipient of *iTaukei* Indigenous knowledge. Tongans accepted me being an insider Tongan researcher. I managed to attract a diversity of research

participants despite COVID-19 during the data collection phase. They shared their valuable experiences and expert thoughts that enabled the framing of Indigenous principles and protocols into a set of HRE guidelines with decolonizing motivations.

The support received from leaders of the College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences, and the higher levels of the Fiji National University rendered substantial encouragement for this research project. I was also very fortunate to work with a diverse supervisory team with insider and outsider (PICT and Australian) knowledge and cross-disciplinary knowledge (medicine, bioethics, public health and anthropology). These supervisory helped confirm themes and question some tacit or insider knowledge that I may not have fully explored. Without their professional guidance and contributions, I would not have been able to do all this work.

As a researcher, I also possessed the right combination of knowledge: firstly, an understanding of Tonga, being my country of birth and an understanding of Fiji, my new home country through marriage. Secondly, I understood the Western approaches to HRE from my education and work experiences. This combination of knowledge enabled me to engage with this study and develop decolonizing HRE frameworks for each HRE system in Fiji and Tonga, with the basis for extension to other PICTs.

During the PhD journey, I presented my work to staff at two Fiji government ministries. I delivered an oral presentation at a research ethics workshop conducted by the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services. This presentation focused on my own experiences of conducting research ethics review. I developed and shared a review framework with workshop participants with three main features: research and ethics regulations, research ethics principles and scientific research designs. The presentation was very well received, and I grew in confidence about my skills building in conceptualizing and developing the framework. These skills informed the data analysis and conceptualizing processes for the development of the Indigenous HRE guideline framework in the current PhD research.

I was also invited by staff of the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs firstly, to present the interpretations of my published literature review article and secondly, to present the findings of my research. These two presentations were very well received, and discussions ensued on issues of interest to the ministry: *iTaukei* research training, documentation of *iTaukei* research ethics principles, guidelines and processes. It was clear that my research was making an impact in this government ministry.

A group of Pacific Island researchers from Auckland University invited me to deliver a presentation via Zoom talk about Indigenous research, specifically my PhD research. An *iTaukei* health professional who was a student at Auckland University thanked me for highlighting Indigenous principles and protocols in research, stating this was the first time she was learning this *iTaukei* cultural knowledge. She mentioned that despite graduating from medical school in Fiji, she never learnt about her own Indigenous culture. I was thankful for the opportunity to share *iTaukei* knowledge and be accepted by *iTaukei* people. This indicates that I am making progress towards being an insider *iTaukei* researcher. These experiences all contributed to the confidence to develop the Indigenous HRE frameworks involving Indigenous protocols and principles.

I was able to travel to Tonga to conduct presentations of the results of my research, firstly to an academic team at the University of the South Pacific, Tonga campus, with some research participants present. Secondly, I delivered a public seminar of the same in a Tonga National University seminar series. Researchers of Pacific ethnicity were thrilled to be able to discuss and learn about Indigenous research in this seminar series. During these presentations to all these various audiences I also received constructive feedback, which was useful to inform the development of my research.

7.5.2 Limitations

The views of Indigenous people residing in *iTaukei* villages were not heard. Thus, the decolonizing HRE frameworks developed were based on the data shared by Indigenous people affiliated with HRE in government ministries, academia and NGOs in both Fiji and Tonga.

Another limitation was that during the data collection phase, the COVID-19 pandemic happened, and international borders were closed (see Appendix 2, book chapter on Research Crisis Management for a HRE Research Project in Fiji and Tonga). I decided that the best way forward was to change data collection methods from face-to-face interviews to virtual methods. Time was taken to inform the ethics committees of the change. Then the last few *talanoa* sessions in Fiji were done virtually. Simultaneously, I wrote letters to the Prime Minister's Office in Tonga and National Health Ethics & Research Committee, to inform them of the change from face to face to virtual data collection.

All data collected for the Tonga HRE case study was done online. This was a disadvantage because virtual methods depended on technology, and I faced other difficulties in obtaining

virtual interviews with people in Tonga. It was also impossible to find relevant documents from Tonga because I was not there to physically search and locate them. I asked people that I knew on Tonga ethics committees for some documents. They were able to send me Ministry of Health Annual Reports, but other documents that I would have loved to include were not available because of the lockdown.

Researcher position during data analysis. There may have been some thoughts that were preconceived ideas during the writing of the results section because of my experience and position. However, this was countered through the grounded theory approach where the results were grounded in the data and not on any biasness of the researcher. Additionally, the advisory team and I made sure that the analysis and conclusions were grounded within the data.

The HRE guideline frameworks developed through this research are theoretical and need further testing via practical applications and amendments at a later date after this research. The practical application of the HRE guideline frameworks may face some challenges in the PICTs because of lack of resources available for a practical application test exercise. The consideration for uptake of the HRE guidelines framework also depends on individual PICT political will along with their international collaborators to share scarce resources in order to enact the HRE framework guideline for HHREC at national levels.

7.5.3 Research translation

Research translation is a process in research that is defined by the inclusion of actions such as synthesis, dissemination, exchange and application of knowledge for the improvement of health care systems and services to improve health (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2016; Leggat, Wadey, Day, Winter, & Sanders, 2023). The definitions also refer to systems and stakeholders that interact with each other at various levels of intensity and complexity. This process occurs within a complex system of interactions between researchers and research evidence users which may vary in scope and is based on the needs of the research evidence users (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2016).

A reflection on research translation in this study concerns the interactions between me as a researcher from the Fiji National University and the various stakeholders who were the recipients of the research translation. Features of research translation mentioned in the definition were involved during the research translation exercises. A list of the countries, stakeholders and the topics of research translation exercises is included in Table 7.1.

Table 7. 1: Knowledge translation achievements

Country	Stakeholder	Topic for knowledge translation
Fiji	Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS & WHO), Human Research Ethics Review Committee members and other stakeholders invited by the MOHMS. (see Appendix 6, i)	Human Health Research Ethics and Review skills.
	Ministry of <i>iTaukei</i> Affairs	Published Literature Review Article titled “ <i>Indigenous knowledge around the ethics of human research from the Oceania region: A scoping literature review.</i> ”
	i. Ministry of <i>iTaukei</i> Affairs ii. College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences (see Appendix 5, vi) iii. All Fiji participants in this research were invited to attend these presentations.	Presentation of the whole research project including background, methodology, results of Fiji HRE case study, cross case analysis, discussion, recommendations and conclusion.
New Zealand	Auckland University Pasifika Students Indigenous Research Methodology Series (online)	Selected topics were presented including the methodology and selected pre-liminary results from this PhD research
Tonga	i. Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee (see Appendix 6, iii).	Human Research Ethics: Western and Indigenous knowledge approaches in HRE.
	i. Tongan key informants in this PhD research who are all academics at the University of the South Pacific Complex at ‘Atele in Tonga. ii. Tonga National University (See Appendix 5).	Presentation of the whole research project including background, methodology, results of Tonga HRE case study, cross case analysis, discussion and conclusion.
Vanuatu	Vanuatu Human Health Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix 5. iv).	Capacity Building in Human Health Research Ethics.
Pacific Island countries	“Cook Island Support for Strengthening Health Professionals’ Training during COVID” Participants were from 7 Pacific Island countries of Fiji, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.	Human Health Research Ethics Training including Indigenous Pacific Islands knowledge.

7.6 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has been an exploration of the conclusion that, despite the Pacific Islands' diverse cultures, epistemologies, ontologies and Indigenous research frameworks, the current research found that Indigenous Pacific knowledge is not engaged in most HRE regulations and mechanisms. Rather, since its establishment, the Pacific HRE environment has conformed significantly to the Western biomedical approach.

This researcher also identified how Western or Indigenous principles are employed in HRE systems in Fiji and Tonga, then a comparison was made with models of HRE in other countries. A distinction was made between a Western human rights approach and the PIC Indigenous human relationships approach. Issues raised were collective consent, relationality and the notion of Indigenous data sovereignty. This analysis was compared to other authors' work from a Pacific perspective and to Australian Aboriginal research ethics, with considerable similarities unearthed. Following this were reports of the strengths and limitations of this research.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the impacts of this research on HRE governance mechanisms are discussed and recommendations are made for their future development in *iTaukei* Fiji, Tonga and other PICTs.

This study has been an exploration of the ethically principled approaches that inform HRE from both traditional and international perspectives. These approaches are based on theoretical underpinnings that consider origins, relevance, context and application for Fiji and Tonga. The approaches to HRE employed in both Fiji and Tonga were analyzed through a critical ethnographic lens. Features of Indigenous research were explored, such as the contextual factors that inform ethical research, the principles and practices involved in research pathways and protocols and the importance of involving *iTaukei* people and Tongans.

The results of this investigation have informed the development of three Indigenous decolonizing HRE guideline frameworks. These are:

- (i) The *Pacific Indigenous HRE guideline framework*. Similarities identified from the *Vanua* and *Nofo 'a Kainga* frameworks informed an HRE framework that other PICTs can adapt.
- (ii) The *Yavu koula ni iTaukei, the Golden Foundation of iTaukei, a Decolonizing Indigenous Framework for HRE guidelines*.
- (iii) The *Fa Kavei Koula, a Decolonizing Tongan-Principled Approach for HRE Guidelines*.

These frameworks harmonize Indigenous and international principles in the HRE context in Fiji and Tonga and may have relevance for other PICTs.

The findings of this study are that:

- The Western biomedical approach to HRE was more visible than a governance mechanism based on Indigenous principles.
- The Indigenous ontologies of *iTaukei* and Tongan peoples have been either missing or devalued in HRE governance mechanisms in Fiji and Tonga. *iTaukei* and Tongan Indigenous ontologies are founded on principles of building respectful relationships. These mandates complying with the Indigenous cultural protocols that feature humans past and present and their environment as a unit, understanding and recognizing their spirituality as a dichotomy of ancestral beliefs and Christian-based beliefs, along with the principle of the reciprocity of benefits.
- HREC members followed the international guidelines provided to them without considering that their own Indigenous ethics were ignored. Colonization has impacted HRE. Fiji was a British colony, and Tongans were colonized through their education systems. The decolonization of thoughts and actions and the strengthened use of Indigenous philosophies and resources to inform HRE regulations are needed.
- Contextualization of Western biomedical HRE principles that address the same concerns in Indigenous communities is needed for relevance and effective HRE in PICTs. A contextualization exercise recognizes, values and elevate existing Indigenous research frameworks and Indigenous principles and practices in HRE to inform the development of HRE guidelines for Indigenous populations in PICTs.

8.1 Implications and Recommendations for the Development of Indigenous HRE Policies and Practices and for Future Health Research

A major implication of the findings of this study is the re-creation of the epistemology that informs a true HRE that engages Indigenous knowledge in the Pacific context. This re-created epistemology emerged through the creation of relationality that connects minds and viewpoints through Indigenous research practices. Relationality features family connections through ancestral extended family heritages. Researchers' comprehension of the definitions of ethical theories and practices enables them to employ research instruments that are contextually relevant in the relational Indigenous context for effective research. An example of being contextually relevant involves the inclusion of relatives from the community of research in the whole research process of planning, entry and engaging the Indigenous community in the research.

8.1.1 Recommendations from this research, arranged by stakeholders. Links to research findings, by sections, are included.

There are fourteen recommendations, divided into four sections based on the stakeholder group that could implement the recommendations. Furthermore, the actions that have already been undertaken or facilitated by the researcher (myself) or stakeholders are highlighted.

8.1.1.1 Recommendations for Research Institutions

i) Research institutions, such as universities and government ministries are to align their roles with research approaches appreciated by Indigenous communities.

Strong leadership in HRE: Higher Educational institutions, including universities, have the capacity to provide strong leaders who have the passion to drive HRE governance mechanisms.

Fiji HRE Case Results: See Sections 4.2 & 4.4.4: Tonga HRE Case Results: See Section 5.2,

Action taken: Since undertaking this study, I have been promoting the engagement of Indigenous principles in the review of research proposals submitted to the College Human Health Research Ethics Committee. I have also included Indigenous principles in HRE in the capacity building workshops that I have conducted in Pacific

Island countries (see Appendix 6: Workshop and training activities). See Section 7.3.3 and Table 7.1.

- ii) **Policy makers in research institutions can use the decolonized HRE guideline frameworks** developed in this PhD research to guide the development of policies for HRECs. Indigenous communities appreciate research that empowers them, provides social justice and is emancipatory and supportive of decolonization. A decolonized Pacific Islands Indigenous HRE needs the combined strength of biomedical and Indigenous approaches to HRE and HRE guidelines that engage with Indigenous principles, such as respect.

Fiji HRE Case Results: See Section 4.4.4: Tonga HRE Case Results: See Sections 5.5 & 5.7.1: Cross Case analysis Section 6.4.

Action taken: I have conducted one oral presentation seminar (in two locations) to which all participants in this PhD research were invited. The frameworks developed through this research were presented. In Fiji, a few staff members of the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs were present and they are very interested in the guidelines. Likewise, in Tonga, I conducted two oral presentations for the Tonga participants who are affiliated with HRE in government ministries and universities.

- iii) **Standard Operating Procedures to include HRE systems and processes, principles and application processes.** A main point here is that the process of voluntary informed consent in Indigenous settings is a communal process, as discussed in the findings of this research. The redesigning of voluntary informed consent process will involve a change from an individualistic approach involving only paperwork, to a communal approach that complies with Indigenous protocols, such as the entry protocol to *iTaukei* communities and the *sevusevu* that approves research by the community through their chief or the chief's representative.

The HREC should also be able to state in the SOP, review process of research proposals, that HREC will not approve a proposal if the researchers are not prepared to commit to indigenous research ethics and protocols.

Fiji HRE Case Results: See Sections 4.4.5.1, 4.4.5.9 & 4.4.5.6: Tonga HRE Case Results: See Sections 5.6.7. Cross Case Analysis Sections: 6.4 & 6.8.

Action taken: I included this point in my oral presentation of the results of the Fiji HRE case to the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, *iTaukei* Institute of Language and Culture, on 5th Dec 2023. The presentation was conducted at the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs, *iTaukei* Trust Funds Complex, 87 Queen Elizabeth Drive, Suva, Fiji. On asking for comments and approval at the end of the presentation, two comments for revision were made. These were addressed, after which the staff confirmed that the research results were entirely accurate, according to *iTaukei* cultural protocols.

The College Human Health Research Ethics Committee (CHHREC) members recommended in a meeting on 6th Dec 2023 that we revise the CHHREC standard operating procedures to include Indigenous principles. As of July 2024, these are being revised.

iv) Provide Indigenous capacity building and build awareness for researchers.

Institutional support in providing capacity building exercises in Indigenous research and ethics is to be strengthened. Researchers are to immerse themselves in the culture of the Indigenous population for their in-depth and accurate understanding of contextual issues of this Indigenous population which are important for research. This requires training programmes to be offered in Fiji and Tonga for outsider researchers. These training programmes could be developed and conducted by the Indigenous arm of government departments and research divisions of universities. Fiji HRE Case Results: See Section 4.4.4 especially Section 4.4.4.4.

Action taken: In an email communication within the CMNHS, the WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention and Management (CPOND) Director mentioned that the CPOND staff can conduct this training for researchers who are affiliated with them. Capacity building in Indigenous research and ethics at the national level in Fiji remains a gap (as of June 2024).

v) Build awareness of Indigenous HRE. Champions and mass support for HRE are needed to drive awareness of Indigenous research ethics, HRE guidelines and other regulations and governance mechanisms. HRE policy documents are to be made accessible, preferably online via institutional web pages. Participants suggested HRE capacity building activities to be conducted by the Ministry of Education and Training, as a way forward, to connect church groups and government in HRE. See section 4.4.4.4.

vi) **Coordination: Both countries need a national body to coordinate HRE activities.**

The current research identified links between government ministries through membership in research ethics committees. For example, a staff member of the Tonga Prime Minister's Office is an invited member of the ethics committee at the Ministry of Health. In both countries research proposals are often sent from one government ministry to another for review. The links between government ministries need to be formalized and strengthened through a national research ethics committee. See section 4.4.4.1.

The coordination role of a national body also involves the development a national HRE framework and a multi-stakeholder membership strategy to include government, NGOs and religious organizations. The structure and roles of each stakeholder of HRE in each country is to be clearly defined. Participants in the current research from NGOs and religious organizations in both countries expressed interest in being involved. The inclusion of NGOs and religious organizations in HRE mechanism will add value to HRE in both countries. See Section 4.4.4.1 and 4.5.1.2 & 5.7.1.

In Fiji, national *iTaukei* HRE Model Guidelines are to be linked to international regulations such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to Fiji's Constitution 2013 which states in the Preamble, "*Recognising the Indigenous people or the iTaukei, their ownership of iTaukei lands, their unique culture, customs, traditions and language*" (Fiji Government, 2013) and to national regulations such as the Fiji National Research Council Act 2017 (Fiji Parliament, 2017) that govern research governance and oversight mechanisms in the Republic of Fiji. The same approach may be applied in Tonga as well. However, Tonga does not have any legislation on research. Therefore, a non-judiciary national policy on HRE is recommended to be developed and adopted by a government HREC such as the one in the Ministry of Health of Tonga. See Section 4.5.1. and Section 5.7.1.

Financial support for HRECs. HRECs cannot function on altruistic grounds alone where members' contributions are for the benefit of others. HRECs need funding and support, for example, to enable the professional training of HREC members for HRECs' effective operations. See Section 4.4.4 and subthemes.

HREC members and reviewers need to be vigilant in the review processes and hold scientists accountable for their research according to Indigenous principles. HREC reviewers' skills can be strengthened with better training, ongoing support and study tours or placements with international ethics committees to gain knowledge of HREC best practices.

The monitoring role of the HREC can be strengthened by HREC members following up with researchers that they act on the research benefits anticipated. For example, the result of research will inform policy'. The HREC may request the research team to translate their findings into policy briefs for submission to relevant institutions to inform policies. If the benefit anticipated was 'capacity building', then the HREC can organize a training programme with the research team based on the topic areas of research.

Action taken: See Appendix 7: Research Ethics Full Approvals – d. Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee approval letter, training component. The TNHERC requested training of members to upgrade the technical skills needed to perform their work efficiently.

8.1.1.2 Recommendations for Researchers

i) **Researchers** must abide by the **straight path research protocols** for ethical research. The straight paths of *iTaukei* and Tongan HRE are based on the relationality of Indigenous communities in *Nofo 'a Kainga* in Tonga and *Vakavanua* in *iTaukei* communities in Fiji. The re-creation of the epistemology defines Indigenous HRE theories and practices for effective research. Fiji HRE case results: 4.4.5.2: Tonga HRE case results: Section 5.5.

Researchers are encouraged to employ Indigenous epistemologies, such as *Nofo 'a Kainga* and *vakavanua* **family connections** and **heritage** as a tool to negotiate through difficult research governance protocols in Indigenous communities.

ii) **Engage with relationality ideas.** See sections: 4.4.6 and 5.6. This is a compliance issue in the entry and engagement protocols with Indigenous communities. Ancient forms of relationality in *iTaukei* Fiji, such as *veimataki* or *iTaukei* family relationships, and the *Nofo 'a*

Kainga relational concept of Tonga, need to be applied in research involving *iTaukei* Fijian and Tongan people. Compliance with protocols ensures efficient research. Research protocols are to involve the following features of the *Vanua* and *Nofo 'a Kainga*: respect for *iTaukei* and Tongan hierarchical social structure and their Indigenous values, and respect for ancestral spirituality, Christianity, relationships and community. There are four implications for this engagement with relationality:

- **Personhood and reputational protection:** The personhood of Indigenous persons and their communities involved in research must be maintained and their reputations protected.
- **Intellectual property and other benefits:** Research in the past has largely benefitted non-Indigenous researchers far more than Indigenous people. As the Indigenous people in Fiji and Tonga, research activities are to be beneficial to them in both tangible and intangible forms. Indigenous intellectual property ownership or data sovereignty is to be acknowledged as a benefit of research. *iTaukei* and Tongans are the rightful owners of intellectual property that is their sacred knowledge.
- **Protection and elevation of *iTaukei* and Tongan *Vanua/Fonua*:** All research involving *iTaukei* and Tonga people needs to ensure the elevation and protection of humans and non-human things that are interrelated in the *Vanua/Fonua* to maximize public good.
- **Participation, representation and accountability:** Indigenous people are to actively participate in research and in the governance and oversight mechanisms of research. They are to be vigilant in their participation and be ready to make decisions that benefit themselves and their resources by establishing an accountability mechanism for research that involve themselves. Capacity building activities involving Indigenous people can develop the skills they need for their participation or representation in the governance and oversight of research. In the case of Fiji, the roles of education, training and advocacy may all be centred in the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs Research and Ethics Department. In Tonga, any one of the government ministries with a research and ethics department may be mandated with these roles.

iii) Further research at the Indigenous community level

Further research with Indigenous communities about ethical protocols of research needs to be explored. The *Fa Kavei Koula*, the Four Golden Principles of Tonga, need to be unpacked further, to establish some practical processes to guide research practices in Tonga. Although the *Fa Kavei Koula* were founded in the pre-Christian era, it seems that each principle is

consistent with Christian principles. Further research on the *Fa Kavei Koula* in relation to Christianity is needed to clarify Tongan research ethics principles. In *iTaukei* Fiji, acceptable research protocols may differ among its fourteen provinces and among other ethnic groups such as the Rotumans, Indo Fijians and Chinese. This requires further elucidation. See section 5.6.1.

8.1.1.3 Recommendations for Health Professional Education Institutions

The reliance on foreign leadership for the education of medical staff and other health professionals in Fiji and the Pacific indicates the predominant power of colonialism over Fiji and other PICs. The *Fa Kavei Koula*, the *Yavu Koula ni iTaukei* and HRE guideline frameworks that include fundamental Indigenous principles are to guide the design of research that promotes the **good health** and security of Indigenous people of Fiji, Tonga and other Pacific Islands. Researchers in the College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences of the Fiji National University are currently exploring and engaging Indigenous knowledge in their curriculums and at research conferences. See Section 6.3.

8.1.1.4 Recommendations for Communities

Community rights versus individual rights

Relationality in *iTaukei* and *Nofo 'a Kainga* in Tonga underpins any rights-based considerations. Communities involved in research are to take the lead in building the capacity of researchers in their communal rights approaches and applications. One such application is the *sevusevu* process. Informed consent in *iTaukei* context is achieved through *sevusevu*, and the decision to accept the *sevusevu* is a collective decision. Other important traditional regulations also need to be included in the capacity building exercises. Similar practices are accepted in Tonga. A traditional village chief's permission granted to a researcher is accepted by the community and people are freely obliged. See Sections 4.4.5, 4.4.6,

iTaukei and Tongan communities involved in research must request the precise and cited government approval granted for the conduct of the research in the country. This process will strengthen the researcher's compliance with any government HRE mechanism, which also strengthens research beneficence and community rights of data ownership, the reporting of research progress to ethics committees and the community's protection from government national HRE oversight mechanism such as a national research council. Communities are to be empowered through capacity building activities: firstly, a train the trainers approach

involving community leaders, then training of selected members of the community. See Section 6.3.

8.2 Concluding Remarks

This PhD research was conducted to explore the views of persons and stakeholders affiliated with HRE in Fiji and Tonga about engaging Indigenous principles in HRE. The results of the research confirmed the original problem statement, that Western values and agendas for HRE are imperfect in their application to traditional or non-Western cultures like *iTaukei* and Tongan communities. Western approaches to HRE need to be contextualized for relevance.

The involvement of Indigenous approaches, principles and cultural protocols in HRE is appropriate for successful research involving Indigenous people. The approach to the ethics review conducted in HRECs should involve the Indigenous principles identified and discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The finding that Indigenous members of HRECs conformed to Western principles while subjugating their own Indigenous values in ethics review practices is nuanced.

In the current research, Indigenous ethical pathways and protocols for research involving Indigenous people in Fiji and Tonga have been described in depth, grounded in strongly articulated moral foundations. HRE guideline frameworks for Indigenous HRE were also developed for *iTaukei* Fiji and for Tonga.

Work has begun on engaging Indigenous principles in HRE mechanisms. Nevertheless, the long list of recommendations for the four types of stakeholders indicates a lot of work remains with multiple stakeholders involved. Fiji and Tonga need strong leadership in order to formalize the linkages amongst stakeholders and the establishment of national HRE councils. Financial commitment is required from governments in both countries to drive the development of Indigenous HRE. Two small steps may be implemented first: capacity building activities engaging Indigenous principles in HRECs, and members of HRECs reviewing research proposals by engaging Indigenous HRE principles.

“...Let the international people know that what we are doing, adds value to their methods. We are not going “we versus them”. We are saying ‘Please consider Indigenous knowledge as equally important...’” (P26/Ministry of Health/Male/60-70 years)

Appendices

Appendix 1. Letter from the Prime Minister's Office of Tonga. Cabinet Decision on National Human Research Ethics Committee.

This administrative form
has been removed

Appendix 2: Book Chapter. Research Crisis Management for a Human Research Ethics Research Project in Fiji and Tonga

Citation: Lovo, E. (2020), COVID-19 research crisis management for a human research ethics research project in Fiji and Tonga. In *Researching in the Age of COVID-19* (pp. 61-69). Policy Press.

Chapter 6: Covid-19 Research Crisis Management for a Human Research Ethics Research Project in Fiji and Tonga

Etivina Lovo¹¹

Background

My research project “*Integrating Indigenous Principles of Human Research Ethics: The Case of Two Pacific Island Nations*” was in progress when the Covid-19 pandemic was declared in early 2020. It focuses on culturally appropriate and ethical human research in the Republic of the Fiji Islands (Fiji) and the Kingdom of Tonga (Tonga) in the South Pacific. *Talanoa*¹², an informal talk between persons or among people to share stories, ideas and emotions (Vaioloti, 2016) which is a culturally embedded qualitative research method, was employed (Fa’avae et al, 2016; Fua, 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Covid-19 enforced a change from face-to-face *talanoa* to online *talanoa*, presenting research and cultural challenges that had to be resolved in order to continue the study.

I, the principal investigator, am a Tongan woman and a long-term resident and worker in Fiji. We drew on a critical ethnographic theoretical perspective (Madison, 2011) to guide the enquiry, while a Case Study (Yin, 2009) qualitative research design was employed to explore priorities for the development of Human Research Ethics (Fagbami, Mataika, Shrestha, & Gubler) in Fiji and Tonga. Two case studies were being conducted in this research project considering the incorporation of *iTaukei* (Indigenous Fijian) cultural beliefs and traditions into the governance mechanism of human research ethics (Fagbami et al.) in Fiji. The second case study covers similar content, but in Tonga.

The ethno-geographic divisions of the Pacific Islands are Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia. Fiji is in Melanesia. However, Fiji’s population is multicultural (Mohamed et al,

¹¹ Acknowledging my PhD supervisors, Robyn Preston, Lynn Woodward, Unaisi Walu Nabobo Baba and Sarah Larkins, whose valuable ideas and guidance contributed to the completion of this chapter.

¹² Fijian and Tongan concept which has similar meanings with face to face interviews and focus group discussions in both Fiji and Tonga research contexts.

2018; Tagicakiverata and Nilan, 2018) and some Fijians have Polynesian ancestry (Foster and West, 2016). The majority of the Fijian population are *iTaukei*. The *iTaukei* practices are strongly guided by Indigenous cultural beliefs which are consolidated into the holistic concept of *Vanua*. Elements of *Vanua* include relationships amongst people, their physical environment, *lotu* (religious beliefs), respect of ancestors and customary laws and *mana*, the power that derives from these relationships. *Vanua* integrates these relationships as one body (Long, 2017; Ravuvu, 1987) foregrounding the virtue of selflessness. Other important characteristics or virtues include *veidokai* (respect), *duavata* (solidarity), *vakarokoroko* (respect), *dauvosota* (tolerance), and *veinanumi* (being considerate). An *iTaukei* person's conduct should be guided by the above characteristics and also acts of *loloma* (love and compassion), *veivuke* (help) and *talairawarawa* (obedience) among others (iTaukei Institute of Language and Culture (nd)). Until now, these concepts have been inadequately reflected in Fiji HRE procedures.

Tonga is a Polynesian Kingdom. The Monarch is the head of the Government, followed by nobles (*hou'eiki*), their spokespersons (*matapule*) and, at the bottom of the hierarchy, the commoners (Benguigui, 2011). Strong Christian belief (*Tu'ipulotu*) and *famili* or family are central in Tongan people's lives, hence these principles underpin HRE. *Fa Kavei Koula* or Four Golden Core Cultural Values framework guide the lives of Tongans: (i) *fefaka'apa'apa'aki* (mutual respect), (Suaalii-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea) *feveitokai'aki* (sharing, cooperating and fulfilment of mutual obligations), (iii) *lototoo* (humility and generosity) and (iv) *tauhi va* (loyalty and commitment) (The Kingdom of Tonga, 2014; Ofanoa et al, 2020). The *Fa Kavei Koula* framework underpins HRE processes considered culturally appropriate in Tonga.

Pre-Covid-19, the data collection for the Fiji HRE case study began with direct and indirect observations and face-to-face *talanoa*. I arranged data collection in Fiji and completed fifteen *talanoa* sessions. I had not begun data collection in Tonga, but originally planned travel to Tonga to conduct the next phase of data collection. Once the pandemic was declared, travel plans to Tonga were suspended, however data collection needed to commence in order to meet the timeline of the research project.

The dilemma was how to balance pragmatic considerations about timeliness, while attending to cultural correctness and commitments, traditional ethical concerns about language, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality in the online environment. I was also quite aware of the intricacies of Tongan cultural expectations in face-to-face situations. Before

Covid-19, I planned to employ a Tongan spokesperson to help me conduct the necessary cultural activities because I felt that I could not meet the required cultural standards unaided. I also ensured I owned appropriate attire for these occasions; *puletaha* – dresses with matching long skirts - to be worn with a mat (*ta'ovala*) wrapped and tied around the waist with a fine rope made of coconut fibre. All these preparations were stalled. It was vital to acknowledge the Tongan cultural expectations but modify these in accordance with Covid-19 social distancing policies.

Qualitative online *talanoa* using English, Fijian (Nabobo-Baba, 2008) and Tongan (Fua S. J., 2014) languages seemed to be the only possible method of data collection during the pandemic. I had concerns about how well I would be able to observe the cultural protocols, especially for *hou'eiki* (Tongan high chiefs) participants. However, I could not exclude these participants because of their powerful positions as gatekeepers of research. I had no practical experience of how a virtual *talanoa* with a high chief could be conducted while observing the most culturally appropriate methods. The appropriate Tongan attire was still required when conducting *talanoa* via Zoom. This new online data collection plan is being implemented in order to complete the Fiji data collection and then the Tonga data collection.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Cultural expectations and language challenges

Tongan research policy states that it is beneficial if researchers can speak the Tongan language fluently, be competent in the use of appropriate and respectful language, be aware of the Tongan culture and they must know how to behave appropriately in a Tongan research setting (Tonga Ministry of Education, 2014). As a Tongan woman, I have an in-depth knowledge of the expectations of the Tongan research policy. The Tongan language is arranged in three tiers. The first tier includes vocabularies used only for the King. The second tier, the *lea faka'ei'eiki* language, includes vocabularies used for the *hou'eiki* or nobles and some religious leaders like Catholic priests and nuns (Besnier, 2009). Although I know many of the *lea faka'ei'eiki* vocabularies, I lack confidence in delivering a formal speech using *lea faka'ei'eiki*. In Tonga specific persons are selected, trained and then given the roles of presenting speeches to the *hou'eiki* using the *lea faka'ei'eiki* language. The last tier includes vocabularies in the Tongan language used by the rest of the Tongan population generally referred to as the “commoners” (Besnier, 2009). This Tongan commoners’ language is my mother tongue which I speak, read and write fluently. Many commoners like me, do not have competency in the *lea faka'ei'eiki* especially in presenting a formal speech.

The research project planned to explore the legal and policy environment of HRE in Tonga. A *hou'eiki* (high chief) and politician was identified as a prospective participant with this knowledge. He was invited to participate, and he accepted the *talanoa* invitation to be conducted via Zoom. To be most culturally appropriate, this *talanoa* session should be conducted in the *lea faka'ei'eiki* (Philips, 2010) language for the *hou'eiki*. In a non-Covid-19 research environment in Tonga, the researcher would appoint a *matapule* (spokesperson) or cultural broker to conduct the communication in the *lea faka'ei'eiki*. The spokesperson should have high level of knowledge of the Tongan languages and cultural protocols and be able to represent the researcher and the research team to high ranking and noble research participants. Before the *talanoa* session begins, a formal speech, *fakataputapu*, is delivered by the spokesperson (Haugen, 2012). *Fakataputapu* is a speech to welcome the high chief and address him by his formal title and designation. The *fakataputapu* speech pays respect to the high chief, addresses something that is sacred and forbidden and requests a conversation. Part of the speech is an apology, asking that the researcher is forgiven in advance if he or she is unable to meet the expected Tongan cultural standards of communication with a *hou'eiki* participant (Haugen, 2012). I was contemplating organizing and implementing this process, but was doubtful whether a *matapule* would allow this formal presentation with me on Zoom so I did not pursue this plan.

I delivered the *fakataputapu* speech in the best *lea faka'ei'eiki* language that I know. I had to ask the high chief for permission to converse with him, to pardon me for my language flaws and any of my actions that were not up to his expectations and the accepted cultural standards. I also asked for permission that I use both Tongan and English languages to express myself in the *talanoa* to maximize his understanding of the research under discussion. This was an appropriate way to cover up my embarrassment due to my lack of skills in practicing the *lea faka'ei'eiki*. The standard of my attempt in conducting this *fakataputapu* speech would have been rated very low by Tongan standards. I felt embarrassed about my shortfalls, however, Covid-19 social distancing policies provided a rationale for pardoning my shortfalls. Tongan people refer to this pardoning concept as *hufanga*. However, the high chief accepted my feeble attempt at speaking the *lea faka'ei'eiki* language and delivering the speech. The *talanoa* went well in a mix of English, Tongan *lea faka'ei'eiki* and Tongan commoners' languages. He shared his knowledge of the Tongan legal and policy environment of HRE with me. In the end, I delivered a speech of *fakamalo*

loto hounga (speech of thanks) extending my sincere gratitude to him for sharing his knowledge with me and giving his precious time to *talanoa* with me.

The Tongan ethical value of *Feveitokai'aki* or reciprocity in research

It is an ethical requirement that researchers uphold the principle of reciprocity while researching in both Fiji and Tonga. A Tongan person living in Tonga must be recruited as a local counterpart (Tonga Ministry of Health, 2014), a requirement of the Tonga Human Research Ethics Committee to build local research skills and knowledge. This enacts the bioethical principle of beneficence in human research (Beauchamp & Childress, 2019). This is part of the benefits that my research project provides for Tonga. Although I am Tongan, I do not live in Tonga, so I appointed Mele (pseudonym) as the Tongan local counterpart in this project because she is a Tongan living in Tonga.

Tonga closed its borders but has not had any positive Covid-19 cases as of late July 2020. Mele was able to visit participants face-to-face in Tonga to facilitate Zoom *talanoa* sessions with me in Fiji. One participant, seeing Mele for the first time, expressed her happiness to meet her., telling Mele that they are closely related through Mele's father's side of the family, but they had never met prior to the data collection. Mele was also thrilled to have met this participant for the first time. This participant has held very high-profile positions in Tonga and in the Pacific Region. This participant gave Mele gifts, which she was culturally expected to accept as a relative. Mele did not expect this gift and was unprepared to reciprocate a blood relative's gift with a small return gift while facilitating the research. This act of gifting is consistent with the Tongan principle of *feveitokai'aki* (Fua, 2014; Ofanoa et al, 2020) or reciprocity. It is also about building and maintaining relationships or *tauhivā* (Ofanoa et al, 2020). *Tauhivā* is one of Tonga's pillars of cultural values (Ofanoa et al, 2020). Gift giving to participants for *tauhivā* is an accepted research practice and norm in Tonga and other Pacific Island countries like Fiji (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). However, the Fiji National University (FNU), where I work and which partially funded the Tonga research, does not cover gifts as allowable research costs. I was very happy to contribute personal funds so Mele could buy a small gift in order to strengthen the *tauhivā* with her relative who is a research participant.

Administrative Consideration

This research required a research permit from the Prime Minister's office in Tonga. An application was already sent to them prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. However, Covid-19

meant there was a need to adapt the data collection method and to inform the Prime Minister's office of the changes in respect of social distancing policies. The Tonga Human Research Ethics Committee was also informed. A revised application was completed and sent to the Tonga Prime Minister's office. These applications seemed burdensome, but the result was heartwarming. The Tonga Government demonstrated awareness of the importance of the research and is very supportive, despite Covid-19. The result was a beautiful letter from the Prime Minister's office with the Tongan Coat of Arms on the letterhead in full colour, granting approval and copied to all Chief Executive Officers of Government Ministries. This letter provided an official key to open doors for the research in Tonga. The relevant institutional ethics committees also had to be informed about the changes to the research process before the research process in Tonga could begin. The lockdown enhanced opportunities to recruit research participants who might otherwise have been unavailable due to frequent travel to represent Tonga internationally - it would have been very difficult to arrange a Zoom meeting with them otherwise.

Conclusion

My responses to the impact of COVID-19 on research had to consider the unique cultural dimensions of researching in Tonga. Appropriate cultural behavior and language competency are important in research, whether conducted virtually or face to face. Initially, balancing pragmatic aspects of the research project with attempting to achieve cultural and ethical correctness seemed difficult and complicated, but cultural adaptation is possible and helpful. Seeking pardon and persevering in research are supported by Indigenous values of *feveitokai'aki* in Tongans and *dauvosota* in iTaukei Fijians, which enable mutually supportive behaviours towards one another while researching during difficult times.

References

- Beauchamp, T., & Childress, J. (2019). *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*: Marking Its Fortieth Anniversary. *The American journal of bioethics* : *AJOB*, 19(11), 9–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2019.1665402>
- Benguigui, G. (2011) ‘Tonga in Turmoil’, *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 120(B. V. Lal), 349-367. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41705893>.
- Besnier, N., (2009) ‘Modernity, cosmopolitanism and the emergence of middle classes in Tonga’, *The Contemporary Pacific*, 215-262.
- Crossley, M., Koya Vaka’uta, C.F., Lagi, R. McGrath, S. Thaman, K. H, and Waqailiti, L. (2017) ‘Quality education and the role of the teacher in Fiji: mobilising global and local values’, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 47(6), 872-890. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305725.2017.1338938>.
- Fa’avae, D., Jones, A., and Manu’atu, L. (2016) ‘Talanoa’i ‘A e Talanoa—Talking about Talanoa: Some dilemmas of a novice researcher’, *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 1: pp 138-150.
- Foster, S. and West, F.J. (2016) ‘Pacific Islands’ [Online]. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Pacific-Islands> [Accessed July 12, 2020].
- Fua, S.U.J. (2014) ‘Kakala research framework: A garland in celebration of a decade of rethinking education’, *USP Press*, p 59.
- Haugen, J. D. (B. V. Lal), ‘Svenja Völkel, Social structure, space and possession in Tongan culture and language’, *Language in Society*, 41(2), 267-270.
- iTaukei Institute of Language and Culture, Indigenous iTaukei Research, Defining Research Locally (nd)
- Long, M. (2017) ‘Vanua in the anthropocene: relationality and sea level rise in Fiji’, *Symplokē*, 26: pp 51-70.
- Madison, D.S. (2011) ‘*Critical ethnography: Method, ethics and performance*’, Sage publications.
- Mohamed, Y. Durrant, K. Huggett, C. Davis, J. Macintyre, A. Menu, S. Wilson, J.N. Ramosaea, M. Sami, M. and Barrington, D.J. (2018) ‘A qualitative exploration of menstruation-related restrictive practices in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea’, *PloS one*, 13, e0208224.
- Nabobo-Baba, U. (2008) ‘Decolonising Framings in Pacific Research: Indigenous Fijian Vanua Research Framework as an Organic Response’, *Alternative* 4: 140-154.
- Ofanoa, M., Paynter, J. and Buetow, S. (Fiji MOHMS Strategic Plan 2020-2025) ‘‘O’ofaki: a health promotion and community development concept to bring Pasifika people together’, *Health Promotion International*, pp 1-5: Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daaa025> [Accessed 19 August 2020].
- Philips, S. U. (2010), ‘Semantic and interactional indirectness in Tongan lexical honorification’, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(2), 317-336. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2009.06.005> [Accessed 20 August 2020].

Ravuvu, A.D. (1987) 'The Fijian Ethos', *Institute of Pacific Studies*, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

Tagicakiverata, I.W. and Nilan, P. (2018) 'Veivosaki-yaga: a culturally appropriate Indigenous research method in Fiji', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 31, pp 545-556.

The Kingdom of Tonga, (2014) 'Culture, What makes Tonga different', *Enjoy Tonga* [Online] 6 August. Available from: <http://www.tongaholiday.com/things-to-do/culture/> [Accessed 19 August 2020].

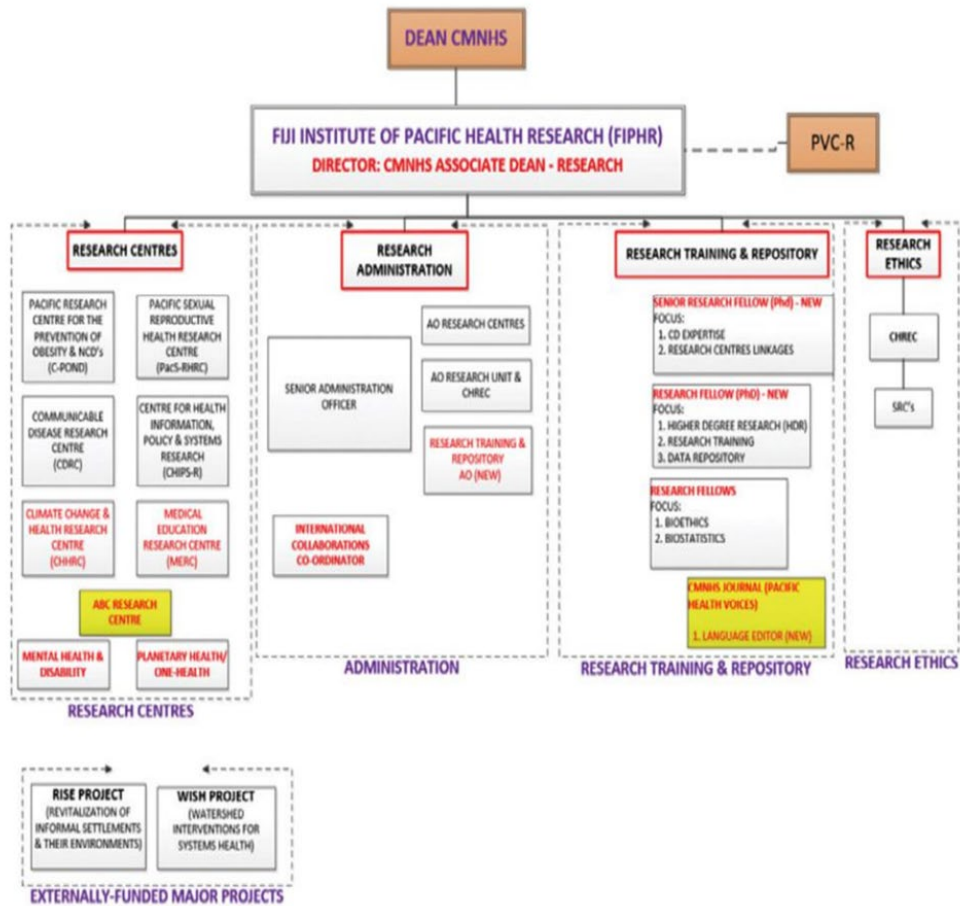
Tonga Ministry of Education (2014) 'Research and Ethics Policy', [Unpublished, Available on request].

Vaioleti, T. M. (2016) 'Talanoa research methodology: A developing position on Pacific research', *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12(B. V. Lal).

Yin, R.K. (2009) '*Case study research: Design and methods*', (4th edn), United States: Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, 2009.

Appendix 3: Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR) Structure

The Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR) 2020 – Organisational Structure



Source: FIPHR Strategic Plan 2020-2025, page 7.

“KO E ‘OTUA MO TONGA KO HOKU TOFI‘A” CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

TITLE: The text in the scroll at the bottom of the seal is the national motto

2. VISION: The garlands around the crown at the top of the seal symbolizes the royal dependence on God’s grace.

6. CONTENTS: The flag is the national flag of Tonga, with the red cross of Jesus Christ in a field of white depicting holiness, and the red field in the remainder of the flag symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ which was shed for

1. DEFINITION: The stars in the first quarter of the seal symbolize the three most important groups of islands in the Kingdom: Tongatapu, Ha’apai, and

3. PHILOSOPHY: In the third quarter, a dove symbolizes peace, unity and Christianity.



4. PURPOSE: In the fourth quarter, the three swords symbolize the three dynasties of the Tu’i Tonga, Tu’i

5. PROCESSES: On the six-pointed star in the middle is the cross symbolizing the nation of Tonga.

7. OUTCOMES: In the second quarter is a crown that symbolizes the monarchy.

Appendix 5: Dissemination

Conference Face to Face Oral Presentations of PhD Research Topic

i. Australasian Ethics Network, 28 September 2018.

- Won the Award of “Best Presentation”. Certificate Awarded.

Title: **Engaging Indigenous Pacific Islands Communities in Bioethical Research**

Surname: Lovo, First name: Etivina

Affiliations: Research Fellow and Member of the College Health Research Ethics Committee, College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences, Fiji National University

PhD Candidate (Cotutelle), College of Medicine and Dentistry, James Cook University and College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences, Fiji National University

Email Addresses: etivina.lovo@fnu.ac.fj or Etivina.lovo1@my.jcu.edu.au

Abstract

Background

Prominent international guidelines and principles of research bioethics have originated and been interpreted in a Western context. Westernized Pacific education systems resulted in Pacific peoples with colonized minds. Pacific Islands, like Fiji and Tonga, developed guidelines for research bioethics that are Western orientated. Decolonization goals involve the inclusion of Indigenous principles in research bioethics guidelines of Pacific islands.

Engaging Pacific Islands’ Indigenous people and principles in ethical research is crucial to achieve research bioethics and integrity.

Discussion

Developing a course curriculum for a PG Certificate in International Research Ethics with a Special Focus on Pacific Islands, emphasized the relevance, importance and inclusivity of Indigenous Pacific peoples and principles. Literature scoping identified Indigenous Pacific research frameworks including the Fijian “*Vanua*”, Samoan “*Ula*”, Solomon Islands “*Learn by doing*”, Tonga “*Kakala*” and the Vanuatu, “*Storian*”.

Analysis highlighted that while Pacific Research Frameworks presented Indigenous research bioethics principles, they were not identified as such. Principles are common across the Fijian *Vanua*, The Samoan *Ula* and the Tongan *Kakala*. Some of these common principles believed to be omitted from international guidelines, include spirituality, translated as *Lotu* in *Vanua*, *Faaleagaga* (with *mana* supernatural power) in *Ula* and *Fakalaumalie* in *Kakala*. Spirituality involves belief in Christianity, the ancestral worlds and traditional Gods.

Conclusion

Indigenous Pacific knowledge expressed by *Vanua*, *Ula* and *Kakala* is sacred *Tapu* or taboo. Requesting a share of Indigenous knowledge is requesting Indigenous peoples to break the taboo for general benefits and for future generations. Further respectful research is required.

i. Australasian Association of Bioethics & Health Law Conference 24th September 2018. Rydges Conference facilities, Townsville.

Topic: Integrating Indigenous principle of human research ethics: The case of two Pacific Island Nations.

Award: Praxis Australia award for best presentation early career researcher.

Abstract

Principles of research bioethics are defined in the context of Western developed countries. Understandings of HRE principles vary internationally which may be due to the influence of local beliefs and principles. Indigenous Pacific Island researchers have experienced problems in human research activities because of these variations.

There seem to be two origins of HRE principles, internationally accepted principles that originated from developed countries and Indigenous principles that originated from individual Pacific Island Nations (PIN).

Research activities within the PIN are guided by internationally accepted principles that originated from developed countries. Ethics committees govern HRE in countries accordingly.

The fundamentals of ethics in research in PIN have not been examined to identify important elements that can be used to strengthen human research and promote a high standard of HRE. This is problematic because the protection of human participants in research is inadequate in the Pacific.

Although, human research has accelerated immensely in Pacific countries, HRE remains stagnant. This PhD project proposes to conduct an in-depth investigation of the theoretical underpinning of Indigenous and imported ethical principles that guide human research ethics activities in Fiji and Tonga.

A case study approach will employ qualitative methods of empirical inquiry which will allow in-depth assessment of HRE principles, Western and Indigenous, and how they are applied in HRE activities in Fiji and Tonga. A Fiji HRE Case Study and a Tonga HRE Case Study will be included. The case studies will identify priority setting processes and analyze the practices and views of HRE members and their affiliates that involve Indigenous or foreign HRE principles.

The case studies will draw on a Critical Ethnographic theoretical perspective and framework to guide the PhD research project.

ii. **Knowledge Translation: Staff of the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs in Fiji.**

Topic: Etivina Lovo's published Literature Review Article: Title:

Indigenous knowledge around the ethics of human research from the Oceania region:
A scoping literature review.

What does it mean for *iTaukei* Research and the Ministry of *iTaukei* Affairs.

iii. **Auckland University, Pasifika Students, Indigenous Research Methodology Series, 16 August 2022.** Zoom Oral Presentation of selected topics from my PhD research.

iv. **Oral Presentations of the results of the case studies for research participants in public forums in Tonga.**

- An oral presentation was delivered to Tongan participants in a public lecture series at the Tonga National University, 24 August, 2023. A second presentation was conducted for Tongan key informants at the University of the South Pacific Complex at Atele in Tonga. The key informants were happy with the results of the Tonga HRE case study.



**You are invited to a free TNU Public Lecture
24th Aug 6pm ECE Hall, Pahu Campus**

Introducing Tongan academic Mrs. 'Etivina Naulala Lovo
PhD Candidate at James Cook University
Research Fellow (Bioethics & Professionalism)
College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences,
FNU



Topic: Integrating Indigenous Principles of Human Research Ethics (HRE): The cases of two Pacific Island Countries

A western biomedical model guides the approach to HRE in the Pacific Island Countries of Fiji and Tonga, while indigenous approaches are not recognized as applicable in health research. This research project aims at developing a framework that harmonizes indigenous and international principles in the application of HRE.

 **Tonga National University - 'Univesiti Fakafonua 'a Tonga**
21 August 2023 · 🌐

Announcing a TNU free public lecture by FNU academic Mrs Lovo....please promote this event amongst your network. Mālō and hope to see you there. 🇸🇲

- v. Oral Presentations of the results of the case studies for research participants in public forums in Fiji.



FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Integrating Indigenous Principles of Human Research Ethics: The cases of two Pacific Island Countries

Date: 30th November, 2023 | **Time:** 1:00pm – 2:00pm
Venue: CMNHS Pasifika Auditorium, Extension Street, Suva
Zoom: <https://fjinationaluniversity.zoom.us/j/6797444724?omn=84573704260>



Speaker : Mrs 'Etivina Lovo

Research Fellow, Bioethics
Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research
College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences
Fiji National University.

Background: A western biomedical model guides Human Research Ethics (HRE) approach in the Pacific Island Countries (PIC) of Fiji and Tonga, while indigenous approaches are not recognised as applicable in health research. This research project aimed to develop a framework that harmonises indigenous and international principles in the application of HRE.

Methods: A qualitative comparative case study design with a critical ethnographic theoretical perspective was utilised.

Results: Only the Fiji case study findings is included in this presentation.

Fiji HRE: Biomedical model of HRE dominates HRE systems. *Vakavanua* (the way of the land) *iTaukei* indigenous Fijian ontology is relational and a culture of protocols. Researchers should take time to understand local protocols and build relationships through traditional pathways, *veimataki*, and protocols such as *sevusevu*, the traditional method of asking the vanua (people past and present, land, spirituality that is ancestral beliefs and the environment) for permission to conduct research involving *iTaukei* people. Engagement of indigenous persons in research promotes reciprocal research benefits.

Cross Case Analysis: Relational value theory is the common ground for HRE systems. Western biomedical model is visible and dominates government HRE mechanisms, while indigenous approaches were practiced but invisible and unrecognised. Indigenous policy makers accept Western biomedical HRE guidelines without questions. Reciprocal knowledge development is an important research outcome.

Discussion/Conclusion

The legacy of colonialism impacted HRE systems. Decolonisation efforts are needed to restore and reassert indigeneity in HRE systems. A decolonising approach for HRE guidelines engaging indigenous principles and protocols combined with relevant internationally accepted principles were developed for Fiji and Tonga but can also apply in HRE systems of other indigenous populations. Relationality is vital for truly ethical research and epistemologies are the ethics of research involving indigenous Fijian and Tongans.

Care | Honesty | Accountability | Service | Excellence www.fnu.ac.fj Follow us     

Appendix 6. Workshop and training activities

Background

I conducted a series of workshops and training for capacity building of Human Research Ethics committee members and affiliates in Pacific Island countries. The activities were sponsored by WHO and DFAT and in partnership with Ministries of Health of the various countries that hosted the training. These capacity building activities had an objective of building capacity of the HREC members in human research bioethics governance and oversight approaches and in doing so, strengthen the roles of the committee. Topics included historical origins of HRE, accepted international and national guidelines and principles, including Indigenous principles relevant for HRE. Participants were expected that at the end of the workshops, they would have gained skills to efficiently operate the HREC and members to skilfully conduct the ethical review of research proposals, independently or collectively, employing ethically principled approaches to human research ethics, with consideration of local governance and oversight mechanisms and the socio-economic and cultural contexts.

- i. **Research Ethics Review capacity building.** I conducted this workshop on 21st-22nd February 2022, as a request from the Research and Innovation division of the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Fiji Human Research Ethics Review Committee members and other stakeholders. Facilitator: Etivina Lovo (Sitting: First from left.)



ii. Human Research Ethics Training for Pacific Islands Countries

I conducted a one-day capacity building workshop in HRE for a project from the CMNHS, titled “Cook Island Support for Strengthening Health Professionals’ Training During COVID” 28 September 2022 | Holiday Inn, Suva, Fiji. Participants were from 7 Pacific Island Countries of Fiji, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu. was Facilitator: Etivina Lovo (Sitting: 1st from left).



iii. Capacity Building in Human Research Ethics Tonga

I conducted a capacity building in HRE in Tonga on 30th – 31st August 2023 at Clinical Conference Room, Vaiola Hospital, Tonga. There were 14 participants. They were from the Tonga Ministry of Health: Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee, staff from the Dental Department, Tonga National University: School of Nursing and Health Sciences and the School of Education. Facilitator: Etivina Lovo (Sitting: middle front row.)



iv. Capacity Building in Human Health Research Ethics, for Vanuatu Human Health Research Ethics Committee

I conducted a capacity building in HRE in Port Vila, Vanuatu on 6-10 May 2024. There were 10 participants, from the Ministry of Health of Vanuatu, a representative of the Pacific Infectious Diseases (Operational Research, Surveillance and Resilience) Working Group, Senior Research Fellow, Burnet Institute based in the Ministry of Health in Port Vila, WHO Medical Officer. Communicable Diseases Control based in the Vila Central Hospital. Photo, I am second from right.



Appendix 7: Research Ethics Full Approvals

- a. **College Health Research Ethics Committee (CHHREC) full approval letter.**

This administrative form
has been removed

- b. Fiji National Health Research and Ethics Review Committee full approval letter.**

This administrative form
has been removed

c. James Cook University Ethics approval letter.

This administrative form
has been removed

- d. **Tonga National National Health Ethics and Research Committee approval letter.**

This administrative form
has been removed

Appendix 8. Publications

i. **Published Literature Review Article.**

Citation: Lovo, E., Woodward, L., Larkins, S., Preston, R., & Baba, U. N. (2021). Indigenous knowledge around the ethics of human research from the Oceania region: A scoping literature review. *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine*, 16, 1-14.

ii. **Book Chapters.**

Lovo, E. (Fiji MOHMS Strategic Plan 2020-2025). Engaging Indigenous Pacific Island Communities. In Zion, D., Briskman, L., & Bagheri, A. (Eds.), *Indigenous Health Ethics: An Appeal to Human Rights*. World Scientific. doi.org/10.1142/9781786348579_0010"

Lovo, E. (Fiji MOHMS Strategic Plan 2020-2025). COVID-19 research crisis management for a human research ethics research project in Fiji and Tonga. In Kara H. & Khoo S. (Eds.), *Researching in the Age of COVID-19 Vol 3: Volume III: Creativity and Ethics* (pp. 61-69). Bristol: Bristol University Press. [doi: 10.2307/j.ctv18dvt3x.11](https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv18dvt3x.11)

Lovo, E., & Veikune, A.H. (2023). Integrity through shattered intimacy: The Creation of New Ethics During COVID-19 Pandemic in the Pacific Islands. In Nabobo-Baba, U. et al., *The COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond*. Pacific Universities Women Academics' Narratives from the field (pp. 202-216). Pacific Theological Press

References

- Allen, G. (2007). Mind the gap: Griffith University's approach to the governance of ethical conduct in human research. *Monash Bioethics Review*, 26(1), 57-67. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03351466>
- Amin, S. N., Momoyalewa, S., & Peniamina, S. T. (2024). Culture, religion and domestic violence: Reflections on working with Fiji and Tuvalu Communities. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 13(3), 23-34. <https://repository.usp.ac.fj/id/eprint/14761>
- Anae, M. (2016). Teu Le Va: Samoan Relational Ethics. *Knowledge Cultures*, 4(3), 117-130. Retrieved from <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=411003>
- Aporosa, S., Atkins, M., & Leov, J. N. (2021). Decolonising quantitative methods within a Pacific research space to explore cognitive effects following kava use. *Pacific Dynamics: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 5(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.26021/10642>
- Arksey, H., & O'Malley, L. (2005). Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework. *International journal of social research methodology*, 8(1), 19-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000119616>
- Asante, A. D., Irava, W., Limwattananon, S., Hayen, A., Martins, J., Guinness, L., . . . Wiseman, V. (2017). Financing for universal health coverage in small island states: evidence from the Fiji Islands. *BMJ Global Health*, 2(2), e000200. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2016-000200>
- Asian Development Bank. (2021). *Fiji Country Classification*. Retrieved from <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/753796/fiji-country-classification.pdf>
- Aubry, M., Kama, M., Vanhomwegen, J., Teissier, A., Mariteragi-Helle, T., Hue, S., . . . Cao-Lormeau, V.-M. (2019). Ross River Virus Antibody Prevalence, Fiji Islands, 2013-2015. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 25, 827+. Retrieved from https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A590126714/ITOF?u=james_cook&sid=bookmark-ITOF&xid=859bf326
- Azeem, M., Salfi, N. A., & Dogar, A. (2012). Usage of NVivo software for qualitative data analysis. *Academic Research International*, 2(1), 262-266. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/OwD5C>
- Baba, T., Mahina, O., Williams, N., & Nabobo-Baba, U. (2004). *Researching Pacific and Indigenous Peoples Issues and Perspectives*: Centre for Pacific Studies Auckland. <https://tinyurl.com/hr5w2fzb>

- Babbage, C. (1830). *Reflections on the Decline of Science in England: And on Some of Its Causes, by Charles Babbage (1830). To which is Added On the Alleged Decline of Science in England, by a Foreigner (Gerard Moll) with a Foreword by Michael Faraday (1831)* (Vol. 1): B. Fellowes. <https://tinyurl.com/4h9ey3ex>
- Bade, J. N. (2021). The role of Tonga's constitutional monarchy in preserving Tonga's independence during the European colonial era in the Pacific. *History Australia*, 18(2), 241-256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2021.1918009>
- Bain, L. E. (2017). Ethics approval: Responsibilities of journal editors, authors and research ethics committees. *Pan African Medical Journal*, 28. <https://doi.org/10.11604/pamj.2017.28.200.14170>
- Bakalevu, S. (1997). A different system: Notions of education and ways of mathmatising in Fijian society. *MERGAZO, New Zealand*. <https://doi.org/10.18533/journal.v9i4.1872>
- Ball, J., & Janyst, P. (2008). Enacting Research Ethics in Partnerships with Indigenous Communities in Canada: "Do it in a Good Way". *Journal of empirical research on human research ethics*, 3(2), 33-51. <http://doi.org/10.1525/jer.2008.3.2.33>
- Barker, J. H. (2003). Common-pool resources and population genomics in Iceland, Estonia, and Tonga. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 6, 133-144. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1024137832504>
- Barraclough. (2017). *Fiji's wider role in developing ethics governance and practice in other Pacific nations*. WHO/WPRO. Suva Fiji. Retrieved from <https://repository.fnu.ac.fj/id/eprint/4408/>
- Barrett, J. (1937). The Central (Native) Medical School, Suva, Fiji. *Nature*, 140(3541), 472-474. <https://doi.org/10.1038/140472a0>
- Barry, L. E., Kee, F., Woodside, J., Cawley, J., Doherty, E., Clarke, M., . . . O'Neill, C. (2023). An umbrella review of the acceptability of fiscal and pricing policies to reduce diet-related noncommunicable disease. *Nutrition Reviews*, nuad011. <https://doi.org/10.1093/nutrit/nuad011>
- Bateman House, A. (2015). Even without written codes, ethical standards for human research existed before World War II. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/Kok2J>
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-4/baxter.pdf>
- Beals, F., Kidman, J., & Funaki, H. (2020). Insider and outsider research: Negotiating self at the edge of the emic/etic divide. *Qualitative inquiry*, 26(6), 593-601. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419843950>

- Beauchamp, T., & Childress, J. (2019). *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*: Marking Its Fortieth Anniversary. *The American journal of bioethics : AJOB*, 19(11), 9–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2019.1665402>
- Benedek, T. G. (1978). The 'Tuskegee Study' of syphilis: Analysis of moral versus methodologic aspects. *Journal of chronic diseases*, 31(1), 35-50. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0021-9681\(78\)90079-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0021-9681(78)90079-6)
- Bennett, Brunton, M., Bryant-Tokalau, J., Sopoaga, F., Weaver, N., & Witte, G. (2013). Pacific research protocols from the University of Otago. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 25(1), 95-124. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23725732?seq=1>
- Besnier, N. (2009). Modernity, cosmopolitanism, and the emergence of middle classes in Tonga. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 215-262. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23724851?seq=1>
- Bessarab, D., & Ng'Andu, B. (2010). Yarning about yarning as a legitimate method in Indigenous research. *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, 3(1), 37-50. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/UblAY>
- Birhane, A. (2021). Algorithmic injustice: a relational ethics approach. *Patterns*, 2(2). Retrieved from [https://www.cell.com/patterns/fulltext/S2666-3899\(21\)00015-5](https://www.cell.com/patterns/fulltext/S2666-3899(21)00015-5)
- Black, K., & McBean, E. (2016). Increased Indigenous participation in environmental decision-making: A policy analysis for the improvement of Indigenous health. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 7(4). Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48767180>
- Bobba, S. (2019). Ethics of medical research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. *Australian journal of primary health*, 25(5), 402-405. <https://doi.org/10.1071/PY18049>
- Boblin, S. L., Ireland, S., Kirkpatrick, H., & Robertson, K. (2013). Using Stake's qualitative case study approach to explore implementation of evidence-based practice. *Qualitative health research*, 23(9), 1267-1275. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732313502128>
- Bolinga, C. (2023). Yumi tok stori: A Papua New Guinea Melanesian research approach. *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 132(1/2), 203-218. <http://doi.org/10.15286/jps.132.1-2.203-218>
- Bosch, X., & Titus, S. L. (2009). Cultural challenges and international research integrity. *The Lancet*, 373(9664), 610-612. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(09\)60379-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60379-2)
- Bossert, S., & Strech, D. (2017). An integrated conceptual framework for evaluating and improving 'understanding' in informed consent. *Trials*, 18(1). <http://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-017-2204-0>

- Brewster, D. (2010). *The Turtle and the Caduceus: how Pacific politics and modern medicine shaped the Medical School in Fiji, 1885–2010*: Bloomington. <https://books.google.com.fj/books?id=noD7QwAACAAJ>
- Briney, A. (2020). Discover Oceania's 14 countries by area [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/oceania-countries-size-4159351>.
- Brison, K. J. (2024). Competing Temporalities in a Fijian Pentecostal Church. In *Christian Temporalities: Living Between the Already Fulfilled and the Not Yet Completed* (pp. 53-72): Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-59683-4_3
- Britannica. ((nd)). Land of Fiji. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Fiji-republic-Pacific-Ocean/Land#ref1003314>
- Bull, J., Beazley, K., Shea, J., MacQuarrie, C., Hudson, A., Shaw, K., . . . Gagne, B. (2020). Shifting practise: Recognizing Indigenous rights holders in research ethics review. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 15(1), 21-35. Retrieved from <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/QROM-04-2019-1748/full/pdf>
- Burton, B. (2002). Proposed genetic database on Tongans opposed. *BMJ : British Medical Journal*, 324(7335), 443-443. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1122388/>
- Cammock, R., & Andrews, M. (2023). Revisioning the Fijian research paradigm. *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 132(1/2), 129-146. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180121996321>
- Cammock, R., Conn, C., & Nayar, S. (2021). Strengthening Pacific voices through Talanoa participatory action research. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 17(1), 120-129. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180121996321>
- Campbell, R. (2016). "It's the way that you do it": Developing an ethical framework for community psychology research and action. *American journal of community psychology*, 58(3-4), 294-302. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12037C>
- Canadian Institute of Health Research. (2018). TCPS 2: Tri-Council policy statement: ethical conduct for research involving humans. In *Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada*, . Ottawa: Government of Canada. <https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/documents/tcps2-2018-en-interactive-final.pdf>
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research. (2016). *About Knowledge Translation*. Retrieved from <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/40948.html>
- Carrie, H., Mackey, T. K., & Laird, S. N. (2015). Integrating traditional Indigenous medicine and western biomedicine into health systems: a review of Nicaraguan health policies and

- miskitu health services. *International journal for equity in health*, 14, 1-7. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12939-015-0260-1>
- Chu-Fuluifaga, C. (2023). Decolonizing Methodologies: A Pacific Island Lens. In: Okoko, J.M., Tunison, S., Walker, K.D. (eds) *Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods*. Springer Texts in Education. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04394-9_19
- Centre for Samoan Studies. (2015). University Research Ethics Committee Retrieved from <https://nus.edu.ws/nus-research-urec/>
- Centre for Samoan Studies. (2020). Ethical principles governing research Retrieved from <https://samoanstudies.ws/urec/>
- Chan-Tiberghien, J. (2004). Towards a 'global educational justice' research paradigm: Cognitive justice, decolonizing methodologies and critical pedagogy. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 2(2), 191-213. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14767720410001733647>
- Chand, S. (2015). The Political Economy of Fiji: Past, Present, and Prospects. *Round table (London)*, 104(2), 199-208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2015.1017252>
- Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft*, 2, 347-365. <https://listwr.com/pvsRPK>
- Charters, C. (2010). A self-determination approach to justifying Indigenous peoples' participation in international law and policy making. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 17(2), 215-240. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157181110X495872>
- Chilisa, B., Major, T. E., & Khudu-Petersen, K. (2017). Community engagement with a postcolonial, African-based relational paradigm. *Qualitative research*, 17(3), 326-339. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1468794117696176>
- Close-Barry, K. (2016). *A Mission Divided: race, culture and colonialism in Fiji's Methodist Mission*: ANU Press. <https://doi.org/10.22459/md.12.2015>
- College Human Health Research Ethics Committee (HHREC) Standard Operating Procedures, (2018). <https://repository.fnu.ac.fj/id/eprint/4405>
- College Human Health Research Ethics Committee (HHREC) Standard Operating Procedures, (2020). <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/college-of-medicine/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2024/02/CHREC-SOP.pdf>
- College Human Health Research Ethics Committee. (2021). *CHHREC Stakeholders' Meeting Report, Fiji*. Retrieved from <https://repository.fnu.ac.fj/id/eprint/4409>

- Constitute Project.org. (2013). Countries/Oceania Tonga. Retrieved from <https://www.constituteproject.org/countries/Oceania/Tonga>
- Cooper, D. (2019). When research is relational: Supporting the research practices of Indigenous studies scholars. <https://tinyurl.com/yc68h4ab>
- Cossham, A., Bidwell, P., & Pai, L. (2024). Research ethics and international and cross-cultural research: Fiji and Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association*, 73(3), 248-265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24750158.2024.2359153>
- Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS). (2016). International Ethical Guidelines for Health-related Research Involving Humans (4th ed.). Geneva: CIOMS. Retrieved from <https://cioms.ch/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/WEB-CIOMS-EthicalGuidelines.pdf>
- Council of Europe. (2005). *Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, concerning Biomedical Research*: Council of Europe. <https://rm.coe.int/168008371a>
- Country Reports.Org. (1997-2024). Tonga Facts. Retrieved from <https://www.countryreports.org/country/Tonga.htm>
- Cregan, K. (2012). Regulating Ethics in Australian Healthcare Research. *Cambridge quarterly of healthcare ethics*, 21(3), 384-390. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963180112000102>
- Cresswell, J. (2013). Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches. In. <https://repositorio.ciem.ucr.ac.cr/handle/123456789/501>.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into practice*, 39(3), 124-130. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2
- Cumpston. (1956). Sir Arthur Gordon and the Introduction of Indians into the Pacific: The West Indian System in Fiji. *Pacific Historical Review*, 25(4), 369-388. <http://doi.org/10.2307/3636502>
- Curtis, E. (2016). Indigenous positioning in health research: The importance of Kaupapa Māori theory-informed practice. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 12(4), 396-410. <https://doi.org/10.20507/AlterNative.2016.12.4.5>
- Daily Post Vanuatu (Producer). (2019). Doctors Oppose Clinical Trial. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/3ezz6heh>
- Darke, P., Shanks, G., & Broadbent, M. (1998). Successfully completing case study research: combining rigour, relevance and pragmatism. *Information systems journal*, 8(4), 273-289. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1046/j.1365-2575.1998.00040.x>

- Datta, R. (2018). Decolonizing both researcher and research and its effectiveness in Indigenous research. *Research Ethics*, 14(2), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016117733296>
- Daucakacaka, J. (2023, April 12). Framework to protect traditional knowledge and cultural expression. *FBC News*. <https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/framework-to-protect-traditional-knowledge-and-cultural-expression/>
- Daudt, H. M., van Mossel, C., & Scott, S. J. (2013). Enhancing the scoping study methodology: a large, inter-professional team's experience with Arksey and O'Malley's framework. *BMC medical research methodology*, 13, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-13-48>
- Davis, S., Sule, P., Bughediwala, M., Pandya, V., & Sinha, S. (2017). Ethics committees and the changed clinical research environment in India in 2016: A perspective! *Perspectives in Clinical Research*, 8(1), 17-21. <http://doi.org/10.4103/2229-3485.198555>
- De Vries, R., & Rott, L. (2015). Bioethics as Missionary Work: The Export of Western Ethics to Developing Countries. In *Bioethics Around the Globe*: Oxford University Press. <http://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780195386097.003.0001>
- Degei, S. (2007). *The Challenge to Fijian Methodism-the vanua, identity, ethnicity and change*. The University of Waikato. <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/10289/2481/1/thesis.pdf>
- Denholm, J. T., Bissell, K., Viney, K., Durand, A. M., Cash, H. L., Roseveare, C., . . . Biribo, S. (2017). Research ethics committees in the Pacific Islands: gaps and opportunities for health sector strengthening. *Public Health Action*, 7(1), 6-9. <http://doi.org/10.5588/pha.16.0076>
- Dent, L. A., Donatuto, J., Campbell, L., Boardman, M., Hess, J. J., & Errett, N. A. (2023). Incorporating Indigenous voices in regional climate change adaptation: opportunities and challenges in the U.S. Pacific Northwest. *Climatic change*, 176(3), 27. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-023-03499-z>
- Donald, D. (2012). Indigenous Métissage: a decolonizing research sensibility. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 25(5), 533-555. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2011.554449>
- Dove, E. S. (2020). *Regulatory stewardship of health research : navigating participant protection and research promotion*. Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788975353>
- Dunbar, T., & Scrimgeour, M. (2006). Indigenous health research ethics in Australia: applying guidelines as the basis for negotiating research agreements. *Monash Bioethics Review*, 25(2), S53-S62. <http://doi.org/10.1007/bf03351454>

- Dunne, E. M., Satzke, C., Ratu, F. T., Neal, E. F., Boelsen, L. K., Matanitobua, S., . . . Reyburn, R. (2018). Effect of ten-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine introduction on pneumococcal carriage in Fiji: results from four annual cross-sectional carriage surveys. *The Lancet Global Health*, 6(12), e1375-e1385. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(18\)30383-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(18)30383-8/fulltext)
- Efi, T. A. T. T. T. (2007). *Bioethics and the Samoan Indigenous Reference: Official Speeches*. Keynote address to the UNESCO Regional Pacific Ethics of Knowledge Production Workshop in Apia in November 2007. http://www.head-of-state-samoa.ws/pages/speech_bioethics.html
- Ekeroma, A., Biribo, S., Herman, J., Hill, A., & Kenealy, T. (2016). Health research systems in six Pacific Island Countries and Territories. <https://repository.fnu.ac.fj/id/eprint/1525/>
- Encyclopedia of Bioethics. German Guidelines on human experimentation 1931. In W. T. Reich (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* (2 ed., pp. 2762-2763)]. https://artscience.us/Med_Ethics/reichsrundschreiben_1931.pdf
- Ermine, W., Sinclair, R., & Jeffery, B. (2004). *The ethics of research involving Indigenous peoples*. Retrieved from <https://gladue.usask.ca/node/6247>
- Fa'avae, D., Jones, A., & Manu'atu, L. (2016). Talanoa'i 'A e Talanoa—Talking about Talanoa: Some dilemmas of a novice researcher. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 12(2), 138-150. <https://doi.org/10.20507/AlterNative.2016.12.2.3>
- Fa'avae, D. T. M., Hemi, K. V., & Aporosa, S. (2021). Grounding our collective Talanoa: Enabling open conversations. *Waikato Journal of Education. Special Issue: Talanoa Vā: Honouring Pacific Research and Online Engagement*, 26, 5-10. <https://doi.org/10.15663/wje.v26i1.839>
- Fa'avae, D. T. M. (2021). 8 Vā and Veitapui as Decolonial Potential: Ongoing Talatalanoa and Re-imagining Doctoral Being and Becoming. *Re-imagining doctoral writing*, 167. <https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2021.1343.2.08>
- Fagbami, A. H., Mataika, J. U., Shrestha, M., & Gubler, D. J. (1995). Dengue type 1 epidemic with haemorrhagic manifestations in Fiji, 1989-90. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 73(3), 291-297. Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/7614660>
- Faleolo, R. (2023). Re-visioning online pacific research methods for knowledge sharing that maintains respectful va. *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 132(1/2), 93-110. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0074-0490>

- Faletau, S. M. F. (2020). *Anga'i Tangata faka-Tonga: Tongan Masculinity*. ResearchSpace@ Auckland. <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/58121>
- Farbotko, C., Watson, P., Kitara, T., & Stratford, E. (2023). Decolonising methodologies: Emergent learning in island research. *Geographical Research*, 61(1), 96-104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.12519>
- Farrelly, T., & Nabobo-Baba, U. (2014). Talanoa as empathic apprenticeship. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 55(3), 319-330. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12060>
- Feetham, P., Vaccarino, F., Wibeck, V., & Linnér, B.-O. (2023). Using talanoa as a research method can facilitate collaborative engagement and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. *Qualitative Research*, 23(5), 1439-1460 <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941221087863>
- Ferris-Leary, H. (2013). *An Analytical Perspective on Moana Research and the Case of Tongan Faiva*. ResearchSpace@ Auckland. <https://tinyurl.com/4zwty73p>
- Fiji Bureau of Statistics. (2007). Census 2017 of Population Housing. Retrieved from <http://statsfiji.gov.fj>
- Fiji Bureau of statistics. (2020). *2019-2020 Household Income and Expenditure Survey Main Report*. <https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/census-surveys/household-income-and-expenditure-survey/>
- Fiji Government. (2013). Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji. [https://www.laws.gov.fj/ResourceFile/Get/?fileName=2013%20Constitution%20of%20Fiji%20\(English\).pdf](https://www.laws.gov.fj/ResourceFile/Get/?fileName=2013%20Constitution%20of%20Fiji%20(English).pdf)
- Fiji High Commission to United Kingdom. (2021). About Fiji. Retrieved from <http://www.fijihighcommission.org.uk/index.html>
- Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services. (2015). Fiji National Health Research Guide. [A guiding document for the ethical and responsible conduct of health research in Fiji]. <http://www.health.gov.fj/fijihrp>.
- Fiji MOHMS Strategic Plan 2020-2025. (2020). *Strategic Plan 2020-2025*. Retrieved from <http://www.health.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Strategic-Plan-2020-2025-1.pdf>
- Fiji National Health Research and Ethics Review Committee. (2019). *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Policy Document*. [Policy Document]. <http://www.health.gov.fj/fijihrp>.
- Fiji Parliament. (2017). *The National Research Council Act 2017* Retrieved from <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Act-20-National-Research-Council-Act.pdf>

- Finau et al. (2000). Pacific Health Research Council: health research by and for Pacificans. *Pacific Health Dialog*, 7(2). <https://tinyurl.com/3ewjktda>
- Finn, S., Herne, M., & Castille, D. (2017). The value of traditional ecological knowledge for the environmental health sciences and biomedical research. *Environmental health perspectives*, 125(8), 085006. <https://doi.org/10.1289/EHP85>
- Fischer, J. L., Kahn, M., & Kiste, R. C. (nd). Micronesian culture cultural region, Pacific Ocean. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Micronesia-cultural-region-Pacific-Ocean>
- Fitzpatrick, E. F. M., Martiniuk, A. L. C., D'Antoine, H., Oscar, J., Carter, M., & Elliott, E. J. (2016). Seeking consent for research with Indigenous communities: a systematic review. *BMC Medical Ethics*, 17(1), 65. <http://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-016-0139-8>
- Flavell, M., & Cunningham, E. (2023). Engaging in research with Pacific communities as a non-Pacific researcher: reflecting on lessons learnt. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 18(2), 153-170. <http://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2022.2108465>
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2016). Country Profile Fiji. *FAO Aquastat Reports*. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/3/ca0385en/CA0385EN.pdf>
- Forsyth, M. (2012). Do you want it giftwrapped? Protecting traditional knowledge in the Pacific island countries. *Indigenous Peoples' Innovation: IP Pathways to Development*, Canberra: ANU ePress, 189-214. <https://tinyurl.com/nkdzt42b>
- Foster, & Macdonald. (2021). Economy of Fiji. In *Encyclopedia Article* (Vol. 2021). <https://www.britannica.com/place/Fiji-republic-Pacific-Ocean/Economy>
- Fournier, C., Stewart, S., Adams, J., Shirt, C., & Mahabir, E. (2023). Systemic disruptions: decolonizing Indigenous research ethics using Indigenous knowledges. *Research Ethics*, 19(3), 325-340. [Original work published 2023] <https://doi.org/10.1177/17470161231169205>
- Freeman & Sutton. (2010). Fiji Health Sector Improvement Program Independent Completion Report. [*AusAid Health Resource Facility*. (July 2010)] <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/fiji-fhsip.pdf>
- Friesen, P., Gelinas, L., Kirby, A., Strauss, D. H., & Bierer, B. E. (2023). IRBs and the Protection-Inclusion Dilemma: Finding a Balance. *American journal of bioethics*, 23(6), 75-88. <http://doi.org:10.1080/15265161.2022.2063434>
- Fua, Manu, Takapautolo, & Taufe'ulungaki. (2007). *Sustainable livelihood and education in the Pacific: Tonga pilot report*. Retrieved from https://repository.usp.ac.fj/id/eprint/5383/1/SLEP_TO_Jan_07.pdf

- Fua S. J. (2014). Kakala research framework: A garland in celebration of a decade of rethinking education. In: USP Press.
https://repository.usp.ac.fj/id/eprint/8197/1/Kakala_Research.pdf
- Futter-Puati, D., & Maua-Hodges, T. (2019). Stitching tivaevae: a Cook Islands research method. *AlterNative : an international journal of Indigenous peoples*, 15(2), 140-149.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1177180119836788>
- Gan, Z. R. (2020). Transnational policy migration, interdisciplinary policy transfer and decolonization: Tracing the patterns of research ethics regulation in Taiwan. *Developing World Bioethics*, 20(1), 5-15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dewb.12224>
- Gatty, R. (Ed.) (2009) Fijian-English Dictionary Suva, Fiji University of the South Pacific.
<https://tinyurl.com/48ppnn95>
- Gegeo & Gegeo. (2013). (Re) Conceptualising language in development: towards demystifying an epistemological paradox. *The Journal of Pacific Studies*, 33(2), 137-155.
<https://repository.usp.ac.fj/id/eprint/7814>
- Gegeo, D. W., & Watson-Gegeo, K. A. (2001). "How we know": Kwara'ae rural villagers doing Indigenous epistemology. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 55-88.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23718509>
- Gibson, D. (2022). Beyond the air-conditioned boardroom : bridging western and Fijian Indigenous knowledge in tourism research. *Pacific dynamics*, 6(1), 99-123. DOI :
<http://dx.doi.org/10.26021/12511>
- Gifford, E. W. (1924). Euro-American Acculturation in Tonga. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 33(4(132)), 281-292. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20701997>
- Gifford, E. W. (1929). Tongan Society. *Bishop Museum Bulletins*, 61. Retrieved from <http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/pubs-online/bpbm-bulletins.html>
- Gilbert. H.E. (2019, January 19), Guam Could See Changes in 2 ethics panels. *Pacific Daily News*. <https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/2019/01/20/guam-could-see-changes-2-ethics-panels/2511647002/>
- Gopichandran, V. (2017). Development of capacity for research ethics review in low-and middle-income countries: need for a systems approach. *Public Health Action*, 7(1), 1.
<http://doi.org/10.5588/pha.17.0010>
- Government Media Centre. (2019). *Fiji to Establish a National Research Council*. Retrieved from <https://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/Fiji-to-establish-national-research-council>.
- Government of the Kingdom of Tonga. (2024). Government's Ministries. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.to/>

- Government of Vanuatu. (2013). *Vanuatu Cultural Research Policy*.
<https://tinyurl.com/9jsz3sit>
- Government of the Kingdom of Tonga. (2002). National Health and Research Committee.
 [Letter: Cabinet Decision on National Human Research Ethics Committee].
- Gray, B. (2014). Bioethics for New Zealand/Aotearoa. *N Z Med J*, 127(1397), 67-76.
<https://tinyurl.com/2vte5yuk>
- Greer, R. C., Kanthawang, N., Roest, J., Wangrangsimakul, T., Parker, M., Kelley, M., & Cheah, P. Y. (2023). Vulnerability and agency in research participants' daily lives and the research encounter: A qualitative case study of participants taking part in scrub typhus research in northern Thailand. *PloS one*, 18(1), e0280056-e0280056.
<http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0280056>
- Grodin, M. A. (1994). Historical origins of the Nuremberg Code. *Medicine, ethics and the Third Reich: Historical and contemporary issues*, 169-194.
<https://tinyurl.com/y9z5b6nu>
- Grodin, M. A., & Annas, G. J. (1996). Legacies of Nuremberg: medical ethics and human rights. *Jama*, 276(20), 1682-1683. <http://doi.org/10.1001/jama.1996.03540200068035>
- Gyaneshwar, R., Nsanze, H., Singh, K., Pillay, S., & Seruvatu, I. (1987). The prevalence of sexually transmitted disease agents in pregnant women in Suva. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 27(3), 213-215.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1479-828X.1987.tb00989.x>
- Halapua, S. (2000). Talanoa process: The case of Fiji. *East West Centre, Hawaii*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265273895_Talanoa_process_The_case_of_Fiji
- Harald G. Kratochvila, W. (2007). Vivien Spitz (2005) *Doctors from Hell—The Horrific Account of Nazi Experiments on Humans*. Boulder, CO (USA), Sentient Publications, EUR 21, 50. *Ethik in der Medizin*, 19, 236-237. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00481-007-0521-7>
- Hassan, M. S., Nordin, R., Wook, I., & Ab Rahman, N. H. (2025). Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the Right to Self-Determination: A Case Study of Indigenous Peoples in ASEAN Member States. In *Routledge Handbook of the UN Sustainable Development Goals Research and Policy* (pp. 284-296): Routledge.
<https://tinyurl.com/3efvfpbn>
- Haugen, J. D. (2012). SVENJA VÖLKEL, Social structure, space and possession in Tongan culture and language.(Culture and language use: Studies in anthropological linguistics 2.) Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010. Pp. vx, 272. Hb. \$143. *Language in Society*, 41(2), 267-270. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404512000085>

- Havea et al. (2018). "God and Tonga Are My Inheritance!"—Climate Change Impact on Perceived Spirituality, Adaptation and Lessons Learnt from Kanokupolu, 'Ahau, Tukutonga, Popua and Manuka in Tongatapu, Tonga. *Climate change impacts and adaptation strategies for coastal communities*, 167-186. <http://doi.org/10.1177/15562646211023705>
- Havea, S., Alefaio-Tugia, S., & Hodgetts, D. (2023). Drawing wisdom from the Pacific: A Tongan participative approach to exploring and addressing family violence. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 20(3), 420-440. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2023.2180462>
- Hayward, A., Sjoblom, E., Sinclair, S., & Cidro, J. (2021). A New Era of Indigenous Research: Community-based Indigenous Research Ethics Protocols in Canada. *Journal of empirical research on human research ethics*, 16(4), 403-417. <http://doi.org/10.1177/15562646211023705>
- Health Research Council of New Zealand. (2014). *Pacific Health Research Guidelines*. <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/pacific-health-research-guidelines-2014>
- Hedgecoe, A. (2021). *Trust in the system: Research Ethics Committees and the regulation of biomedical research*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526152923>
- Held, M. B. (2020). Research ethics in decolonizing research with Inuit communities in Nunavut: The challenge of translating knowledge into action. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920949803>
- Hereniko, V. (2000). Indigenous knowledge and academic imperialism. *Remembrance of Pacific pasts: An invitation to remake history*, 78-91. . <http://doi.org/10.1515/9780824888015-008>
- Hernandez-Carranza, G., Carranza, M., & Grigg, E. (2021). Using auto-ethnography to bring visibility to coloniality. *Qualitative Social Work*, 20(6), 1517-1535. <http://doi.org/10.1177/14733250211039514>
- Hill, P., & Samisoni, J. (1993). Two models of primary health care training. *Medical education*, 27(1), 69-73. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.1993.tb00231.x>
- Hindley, P., November, N., Sturm, S., & Wolfgramm-Foliaki, E. (2020). Rolling out the mat: A talanoa on talanoa as a higher education research methodology. In *Theory and Method in Higher Education Research* (Vol. 6, pp. 99-113): Emerald Publishing Limited. <http://doi.org/10.1108/S2056-375220200000006007>
- Huang, G. C., Newman, L. R., & Schwartzstein, R. M. (2014). Critical Thinking in Health Professions Education: Summary and Consensus Statements of the Millennium Conference 2011. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine*, 26(1), 95-102. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10401334.2013.857335>

- Hudson & Russell. (2009). The Treaty of Waitangi and Research Ethics in Aotearoa. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 6(1), 61-68. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-008-9127-0>
- Hudson, M., Milne, M., Reynolds, P., Russell, K., & Smith, B. (2010). Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori research ethics: A framework for researchers and ethics committee members. *Health Research Council of New Zealand*, 1-29. <https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/assets/fmhs/faculty/tkxm/tumuaki/docs/teara.pdf>
- Hultsman, J. (1995). Just tourism: An ethical framework. *Annals of tourism research*, 22(3), 553-567. [http://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(95\)00011-T](http://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(95)00011-T)
- Hunt, S. (2014). Ontologies of Indigeneity the politics of embodying a concept. *Cultural Geographies*, 21(1), 27-32. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1474474013500226>
- Hyatt, A., Chan, B., Moodie, R., Varlow, M., Bates, C., Foliaki, S., . . . Aranda, S. (2023). Strengthening cancer control in the South Pacific through coalition-building: a co-design framework. *The Lancet Regional Health-Western Pacific*. <http://doi.org/100681.10.1016/j.lanwpc.2022.100681>
- Indigenous Peoples' Literature (Producer). (2017). Indigenous people of Oceania *Indigenous People of Oceania*. <https://www.Indigenouspeople.net/>
- International Military Tribunal. (1949). *Trials of war criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals under Control Council law no. 10 Nuernberg, October -April 1949*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., to 1953: Washington, D.C. : U.S. G.P.O., [1949-1953] Retrieved from Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://lccn.loc.gov/2011525364>.
- iTaukei Institute of Language & Culture. *Indigenous iTaukei Research, Defining Research Locally*. <https://www.itaukeiaffairs.gov.fj/index.php/divisions/tilc/2017-09-12-06-12-57/research>
- iTaukei Institute of Language and Culture: Ministry of iTaukei Affairs. ((nd)). Retrieved from <https://www.itaukeiaffairs.gov.fj/index.php/divisions/tilc>
- Johansson-Fua, S. (2023). Kakala Research Framework. In *Varieties of Qualitative Research Methods: Selected Contextual Perspectives* (pp. 275-280): Springer. https://repository.usp.ac.fj/id/eprint/13884/1/JanetMolaOkokoS_2023_44KakalaResearchFrame_VarietiesOfQualitativ.pdf
- Johnston, K. L. (2021). *Understandings and experiences of dementia in Fiji*. James Cook University. <https://doi.org/10.25903/4pwx%2Dzf18>
- Jones, N. (2020). Tonga: The Legend of 'Aho'eitu. Polynesian Cultural Center. <https://blog.polynesia.com/the-legend-of-ahoeitu>

- Kalavite, T. (2019). Tongan translation realities across tā ('time') and vā ('space'). *Journal of New Zealand & Pacific Studies*, 7(2), 173-183. https://doi.org/10.1386/nzps_00004_1
- Kasulis, T. P. (2002). *Intimacy or integrity: Philosophy and cultural difference*: University of Hawaii Press. <https://tinyurl.com/388648k4>
- Katz, R. (1999). *The straight path of the spirit: Ancestral wisdom and healing traditions in Fiji*: Inner Traditions/Bear & Co. <https://tinyurl.com/yc4xcu3r>
- Kedrayate, A. (2004). Learning in traditional societies in the South Pacific: a personal reflection. *Adult Education and Development*, 61, 81-86. <https://tinyurl.com/yw4shy9y>
- Kerr, J., & Adamov Ferguson, K. (2020). Ethical Relationality and Indigenous Storywork Principles as Methodology: Addressing Settler-Colonial Divides in Inner-City Educational Research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 27(6), 706-715. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420971864>
- Kirch, P. V., & Rallu, J.-L. (2007). *The growth and collapse of Pacific island societies: Archaeological and demographic perspectives*: University of Hawaii Press. <https://tinyurl.com/3wpfz9jj>
- Knaplund, P. (1959). Sir Arthur Gordon and New Zealand, 1880-1882. *Pacific Historical Review* 28 (2), 155-157. <http://doi.org/10.2307/3636543>
- Knight, J. A., Comino, E. J., Harris, E., & Jackson-Pulver, L. (2009). Indigenous Research: A Commitment to Walking the Talk. The Gudaga Study—an Australian Case Study. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 6(4), 467. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-009-9186-x>
- Komesaroff, P. A. (2012). Cross-Cultural Issues in Ethics: Context Is Everything. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 9(4), 417-418. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-012-9402-y>
- Kotobalavu, J. (2023, May 30). Ratu Sukuna's three-legged stool concept – its value for the 21st century. *Opinions/From the Crowd. The Fiji Times*. <https://tinyurl.com/yky8mc68>
- Kowal, E., Pearson, G., Peacock, C. S., Jamieson, S. E., & Blackwell, J. M. (2012). Genetic Research and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 9(4), 419-432. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-012-9391-x>
- Koya, C. F. (2017). Rethinking research as relational space in the Pacific pedagogy and praxis. In *Relational Hermeneutics: Decolonisation and the Pacific Itulagi* (pp. 65-84): USP and The Pacific Theological College. <https://tinyurl.com/5xm9nkey>
- Kumar. (2021). *Fiji Medical Association Paper presented at the College Human Health Research Ethics Committee Stakeholders Conference Report, Holiday Inn Suva. [Oral Presentation: Vice President of the Fiji Medical Association]*.

- Kumar, M. (2012). *A Quest for Identity/Equality: Indians in Fiji, 1879-1970. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 73, 1053-1064.* <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44156305>
- Kwaymullina, A. (2016). Research, Ethics and Indigenous Peoples: An Australian Indigenous perspective on three threshold considerations for respectful engagement. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples, 12(4), 437-449.* <http://doi.org/10.20507/AlterNative.2016.12.4.8>
- Lal, B. V. (2008). *A time bomb lies buried: Fiji's road to independence, 1960-1970:* ANU Press. <http://doi.org/10.22459/TBLB.03.2008>
- Lal, B. V. (1992). *Broken waves: A history of the Fiji Islands in the twentieth century:* University of Hawaii Press. <https://tinyurl.com/hs4bfya>
- Lal, B. V. (2012). *A Journey Begins. In Chalo Jahaji: On a journey through indenture in Fiji:* ANU. http://doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_459865
- Lal, B.V. (2012). *Chalo Jahaji: On a journey through indenture in Fiji:* ANU Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24h3ss>.
- Lander, H. (1985). The Fiji School of Medicine: Changes in 1984. *Fiji Medical Journal, 13 (1 & 2).* <https://fma.org.fj/fiji-medical-journal/>
- Latukefu, S. (2014). *Church and state in Tonga: The Wesleyan Methodist missionaries and political development, 1822–1875:* University of Queensland Press. <https://tinyurl.com/233za37a>
- Latumahina. (2013). Cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude: A Lesson from Tonga. <https://www.lifeoptimizer.org/2013/02/21/attitude-of-gratitude/>
- Lauckner, H., Paterson, M., & Krupa, T. (2012). Using constructivist case study methodology to understand community development processes: proposed methodological questions to guide the research process. *Qualitative Report, 17, 25.* <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1790>
- Laurie, G. (2021). Introduction: Towards a Learning Health Research Regulation System. In A. Ganguli-Mitra, A. Sorbie, C. McMillan, E. Dove, E. Postan, G. Laurie, & N. Sethi (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Health Research Regulation* (pp. 1-10). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108620024.001>
- Lawson, S., & Lawson, E. H. (2015). Re: Chiefly leadership in Fiji: past, present, and future. *SSGM Discussion Paper 2015/5 Australian National University.* <http://doi.org/10.25911/H48M-ZZ71>
- Leenen-Young, Naepi, Thomsen, Fa'avae, Keil, & Matapo. (2021). 'Pillars of the colonial institution are like a knowledge prison': the significance of decolonizing knowledge and pedagogical practice for Pacific early career academics in higher education.

Teaching in Higher Education, 26(7-8), 986-1001.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1928062>

Leggat, F. J., Wadey, R., Day, M. C., Winter, S., & Sanders, P. (2023). Bridging the know-do gap using integrated knowledge translation and qualitative inquiry: A narrative review. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 15(2), 188-201.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2021.1954074>

Lelliott, J. (2003). The cultivation of whiteness: science, health and racial destiny in Australia. In (Vol. 326, pp. 888): British Medical Journal Publishing

Group. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.326.7394.888>

Leslie, H. Y. (2005b). Tongan Doctors and a Critical Medical Ethnography. *Anthropological Forum*, 15(3), 277-286. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00664670500282097>

Liamputtong, P. (2008). Doing Research in a Cross-Cultural Context: Methodological and Ethical Challenges. In: Liamputtong, P. (eds) *Doing Cross-Cultural Research*. Social Indicators Research Series, vol 34. Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-8567-3_1

Ligon, B. L. (2005, October). Albert Ludwig Sigismund Neisser: discoverer of the cause of gonorrhea. In *Seminars in pediatric infectious diseases* (Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 336-341). WB Saunders. <https://doi.org/10.1053/j.spid.2005.07.001>

Long, M. (2017). Vanua in the anthropocene: relationality and sea level rise in Fiji. *symplokē*, 26(1-2), 51-70. <https://doi.org/10.5250/symploke.26.1-2.0051>

Longerich, P. (2010). *Holocaust: The Nazi persecution and murder of the Jews*: OUP Oxford. <https://tinyurl.com/34tsce6p>

Lovett, R., Lee, V., Kukutai, T., Cormack, D., Rainie, S. C., & Walker, J. (2019). Good data practices for Indigenous data sovereignty and governance. *Good data*, 26-36. <https://tinyurl.com/5n8j42up>

Lovo, E. (2022). *Human Research Ethics Training For PICs, "Cook Island Support For Strengthening Health Professionals' Training During COVID"*. [Fiji National University, Wokshop Report]. <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/>

Lovo, E., Woodward, L., Larkins, S., Preston, R., & Baba, U. N. (2021). Indigenous knowledge around the ethics of human research from the Oceania region: A scoping literature review. *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine*, 16, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13010-021-00108-8>

Lumivero. (2017). NVivo (Version12). Retrieved from <https://lumivero.com/products/nvivo/>

- Luyten, P.-J. (2022). *COVID-19 Talanoa: The Voices of Tongan Kāinga in South Canterbury*. University of Otago. <https://tinyurl.com/yc8k5krm>
- Macdonald, B. (1990). " Power and Prejudice", by Brij V. Lal (Book Review). *The Contemporary Pacific*, 2(1), 198. <https://tinyurl.com/3ywkafs5>
- MacNaught, T. J. (1974). Chiefly civil servants? Ambiguity in district administration and the preservation of a Fijian way of life 1896–1940. *The Journal of Pacific History*, 9(1), 3-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223347408572241>
- MacNaught. (2016). *The Fijian Colonial Experience: A study of the neotraditional order under British colonial rule prior to World War II*: ANU Press. https://doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_612754
- Madison, D. S. (2005). Introduction to critical ethnography: Theory and method. *Critical ethnography: Method, ethics & performance*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452233826>
- Madison, D. S. (2011). *Critical ethnography: Method, ethics, and performance*: Sage publications. <https://tinyurl.com/4heyems5>
- Maiono, J. R., Ruwhiu, D., & Kalavite, T. (2025). Walking the Talk in Field Research: Embracing Fijian values in fieldwork. In *The Routledge Handbook of Field Research* (pp. 250-258): Routledge. <https://tinyurl.com/yezczfew>
- Maniotis, A. (2002). Vaccines, How to Predict Epidemics, and the Generation of Immunity in Populations. <https://andrewmaniotis.wordpress.com/vaccines-how-to-predict-epidemics-3/>
- Manu'atu, T. M. (2018). *A Tongan Cultural Model of Identity*. (M.A.). Northern Illinois University, United States -- Illinois. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/tshu84uf>
- Mariner, W., & Martin, J. (1820). *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands, in the South Pacific Ocean*: C. Ewer. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001275504/Cite>
- Marks, A. R. (2006). Doctors from hell: the horrific account of Nazi experiments on humans. *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, 116(3), 842-842. <http://doi.org/10.1172/jci27539c1>
- Marshall, P. A. (2012). Indigenous Populations: Decision Making and Informed Consent to Research. *AJOB Primary Research*, 3(4), 69-71. <http://doi.org/10.1080/21507716.2012.740969>
- Martin. K. (2006). *Please knock before you enter: an investigation of how rainforest Aboriginal people regulate outsiders and the implications for western research and researchers*. James Cook University. https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/4745/1/01Extended_abstract.pdf

- Martin, Stewart, G., Watson, B. K. i., Silva, O. K., Teisina, J., Matapo, J., & Mika, C. (2020). Situating decolonization: an Indigenous dilemma. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(3), 312-321. [10.1080/00131857.2019.1652164](https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2019.1652164)
- Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (1994). Maykut, Pamela, and Richard Morehouse, Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide. Bristol, PA: Falmer Press, 1994. <https://tinyurl.com/bp6ybphu>
- Mbah, M. F., Bailey, M., & Shingruf, A. (2023). Considerations for relational research methods for use in Indigenous contexts: Implications for sustainable development. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 27(4), 431–446. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2023.2185345>
- Meadows, L., Lagendyk, L., Thurston, W., & Eisener, A. (2003). Balancing culture, ethics, and methods in qualitative health research with Aboriginal peoples. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(4), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690300200401>
- Melanesian Spearhead Group. (2019). Our Values. Retrieved from <https://www.msgsec.info/about-msg/>
- Meo-Sewabu, L. (2014). Cultural discernment as an ethics framework: An Indigenous Fijian approach. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 55(3), 345-354. <http://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12059>
- Meo-Sewabu, L., Hughes, E., & Stewart-Withers, R. (2017). Pacific research guidelines and protocols. *Pacific research Guidelines and protocols*. https://repository.usp.ac.fj/id/eprint/11644/1/PRPC_Guidelines_2017_v5.pdf
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and Expanded from " Case Study Research in Education."*. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome St, San Francisco, CA 94104. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED415771>
- Merry, S. E. (1991). Law and colonialism. *Law & Society Review*, 25(4), 889-922. <https://www.istor.org/stable/pdf/3053874.pdf>
- MHMS & WHO. (2019). *National Consultation on Ethics and Governance of Human Research in Fiji*. Retrieved from <https://repository.fnu.ac.fj/id/eprint/4407>
- Migiro, G. (2018). Countries in Oceania. Retrieved from <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/how-many-countries-are-in-oceania.html>.
- Mila-Schaaf, K. (2009). Pacific health research guidelines: the cartography of an ethical relationship. *International social science journal*, 60(195), 135-143. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2451.2009.01707.x>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*: Sage. <https://tinyurl.com/bdze24jd>

- Minaya, G., & Roque, J. (2015). Ethical problems in health research with Indigenous or originary peoples in Peru. *Journal of Community Genetics*, 6(3), 201-206. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s12687-015-0240-6>
- Ministry of Education and Training. (nd). *Tonga Christian Framework*. [Educational Framework based on Christianity and Tongan Philosophy] <https://www.education.gov.to/>
- Ministry of Education Heritage and Art. (2019). *Policy on Research*. https://www.education.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Policy_on_Research.pdf
- Ministry of Education Heritage and Art. (2023). Corporate Services Roles and Responsibilities Research Unit. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.fj/corporate-services/>
- Ministry of Finance and National Planning. (2015). *Tonga Strategic Development Framework 2015-2025*. Prime Minister's office Website Retrieved from <https://pmo.gov.to/index.php/tonga-sustainable-development-goal/>
- Ministry of Health. (2020). *Ministry of Health National Strategic Plan* <https://tinyurl.com/4j92xxzm>
- Ministry of Health and Medical Services. (1999). National Health Research, 1999, A Comprehensive Guide to the conduct of research in Fiji and the framework for developing health research policy. [A policy document of the Fiji Ministry of Health]. <https://www.health.gov.fj/>
- Ministry of Health and Medical Services and WHO. (2019). *National Consultation on Ethics and Governance of Human Research in Fiji*. Retrieved from <https://repository.fnu.ac.fj/id/eprint/4407>
- Ministry of Health and Medical Services Fiji. (2020). *Strategic Plan 2020-2025*. Retrieved from <http://www.health.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Strategic-Plan-2020-2025-1.pdf>
- Ministry of iTaukei Affairs. (2023 March 30). Inaugural Minister for iTaukei Resource Owners Forum. Ministry of iTaukei Affairs. http://www.itaukeiaffairs.gov.fj/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&layout=edit&id=384
- Ministry of iTaukei Affairs Fiji. (2017). Free and Prior Informed Consent. *Ministry of iTaukei Affairs*. Retrieved from <https://www.itaukeiaffairs.gov.fj/index.php/divisions/development-services-division/fpic>
- Ministry of Meteorology. (2016). Tonga Climate Change Policy. *Government of Tonga*. <https://ccprojects.gsd.spc.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/19.-Tonga-CC-policy.pdf>

- Mosby, I. (2013). Administering colonial science: Nutrition research and human biomedical experimentation in Aboriginal communities and residential schools, 1942–1952. *Histoire sociale/Social history*, 46(1), 145-172. <http://doi.org/10.1353/his.2013.0015>
- Muimuiheata, S. (2022). *Food practices and diabetes management: The lived experience of Tongan people with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in New Zealand*. Auckland University of Technology. <https://tinyurl.com/2s3c966y>
- Nabobo-Baba, U. (2008). Decolonising Framings in Pacific Research: Indigenous Fijian Vanua Research Framework as an Organic Response. *Alternative* 4(2), 140-154. <https://doi.org/10.1177/117718010800400210>
- Nadarajah, Y., Martinez, E. B., Su, P., & Grydehøj, A. (2022). Critical reflexivity and decolonial methodology in island studies: Interrogating the scholar within. *Island Studies Journal*, 17(1), 3-25. <https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.380>
- Naepi, S. (2015). Navigating the currents of kaupapa Māori and Pan-Pacific research methodologies in Aotearoa New Zealand. *MAI journal*, 4(1), 71-84. <https://tinyurl.com/3hwnk44f>
- Naidu, V., Matadradra, A., Sahib, M., & Osborne, J. (2013). Fiji: The challenges and opportunities of diversity. <https://tinyurl.com/22aksr2p>
- Narube, S. (2018 Oct 13). The Three Legged Stool. *Fiji Sun in Press Reader*. <https://tinyurl.com/2vmbh5k9>
- National Ethics Advisory Committee. (2019). National Ethical Standards for Health and Disability Research and Quality Improvement. *Wellington: Ministry of Health*. <https://tinyurl.com/35anhd9>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2018). *Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders and Keeping research on track II*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/57k3puy3>
- National Health Ethics and Research Committee. (2016). Health Research. In Ministry of Health Annual Report. Pp 25-27. Tonga Ministry of Health. <https://tinyurl.com/e88r83yx>
- National Health Medical Research Council. (2003). Values and ethics: Guidelines for ethical conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research: The Council. <https://tinyurl.com/yfazi5u4>
- Naviticoko, P. (2023, April 24). Projects to protect iTaukei intellectual property. *FBC News*. <https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/project-to-protect-itaukei-intellectual-property/>

- Nelkin, D. (1993). The Nazi doctors and the Nuremberg code: human rights in human experimentation. *Jama*, 269(9), 1168-1169. <http://doi.org/10.1001/jama.1993.03500090104044>
- Neuberger, J. (2005). Nazi medicine and the ethics of human research. *The Lancet*, 366(9488), 799-800. [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(05\)67199-1.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(05)67199-1.pdf)
- Newbury, C. (2011). History, Hermeneutics and Fijian Ethnic 'Paramountcy': Reflections on the Deed of Cession of 1874. *The Journal of Pacific History*, 46(1), 27-57. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00223344.2011.573631>
- Newland, H. S., Woodward, A. J., Taumoepeau, L. A., Karunaratne, N. S., & Duguid, I. G. (1994). Epidemiology of blindness and visual impairment in the kingdom of Tonga. *British journal of ophthalmology*, 78(5), 344-348. <http://doi.org/10.1136/bjo.78.5.344>
- Nexus Commonwealth Network. (2020). Tonga Government. Retrieved from <https://www.commonwealthofnations.org/sectors-tonga/government/>
- NHMRC and Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. (2023). *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council. <https://tinyurl.com/pvf8fsxh>
- Niumeitolu, H. T. (2007). The State and the Church, the State of the Church in Tonga. <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/2236>
- Nolan, L. A. C. (2022). Exploring the Experiences of Pacific Peoples Within Twelve Step Programmes. <https://tinyurl.com/59fu59wf>
- Office of the Attorney General. (2019). Fiji's System of Government. *Parliament of the Republic of Fiji*. <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/fijis-system-of-government/>
- Office of the UN High Commission of Human Rights in Human Experimentation. (2005). International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. *United Nations*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>
- Oldehaver, J. L. (2021). *Talanoa as a framework to develop more effective dialogic pedagogy with Pasifika students*. ResearchSpace@ Auckland. <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/56680>
- Oriel, J. (1989). Eminent venereologists. 1. Albert Neisser. *Genitourinary Medicine*, 65(4), 229. [10.1136/sti.65.4.229](https://doi.org/10.1136/sti.65.4.229)
- Overton, J., Murray, W., Prinsen, G., Ulu, T., & Wrighton, N. (2018). *Aid, ownership and development: The inverse sovereignty effect in the Pacific Islands*: Routledge. <https://tinyurl.com/3s8tppzs>

- Oxford Languages. (nd). Oxford Languages and Dictionary Retrieved from <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>
- Palakiko, D. M., Matagi, C. E., Antonio, J. K., Torris-Hedlund, M. A., Marshall, S. M., & Makahi, E. (2024). The impact of decolonizing methodologies: reflections of Indigenous researchers. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 24(5), 524-535. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-03-2024-0073>
- Panel on Research Ethics Canada. (2022). *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* Retrieved from https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2022.html
- Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. (2017). National Research Council Act Retrieved from <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Act-20-National-Research-Council-Act.pdf>
- Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. (2021). History of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. Retrieved from <https://www.parliament.gov.fj/our-story/>
- Pauwels, S. (2015). Chieftoms and chieftancies in Fiji. Yesterday and today. *Journal de la Société des Océanistes*(141), 189-198. <https://tinyurl.com/5d9y5kw2>
- Pene, F., Taufe'ulungaki, A., & Benson, C. (2002). Tree of opportunity: Re-thinking Pacific education. *Suva: University of the South Pacific*. <https://tinyurl.com/4tub3ruk>
- Penington, A. (1984). The Fiji School of Medicine--a brief history. *Hawaii Medical Journal*, 43(9), 314, 316, 318-314, 316, 318. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/6389432/>
- Penman, B. S., Gupta, S., & Shanks, G. D. (2017). Rapid mortality transition of Pacific Islands in the 19th century. *Epidemiology and Infection*, 145(1), 1-11. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0950268816001989>
- Petelo, S. F. (2022). A Talanoa Analysis of Justice System Impacted Tongan Students' Experiences in Community College. *San Francisco State University*. <https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/t722hh00g>
- Philips, S. U. (2010). Semantic and interactional indirectness in Tongan lexical honorification. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(2), 317-336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2009.06.005>
- Prasad, B. C. (2019). Merging interests in Fiji: essential ingredients for better economic performance. <https://tinyurl.com/3h9fwdam>
- Pulu, V., Tiatia-Seath, J., Borman, B., & Firestone, R. (2021). Investigating principles that underlie frameworks for Pacific health research using a co-design approach: learnings from a Tongan community based project. *Pacific Health Dialog* 2021: 21(7):399-406.

[10.26635/phd.2021.115](https://doi.org/10.26635/phd.2021.115)

- Putt, J. (2013). *Conducting Research With Indigenous People and Communities*. Sydney: Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/30677415.pdf>
- Ramoce, W. (2021). iTaukei Research Protocol. College Human Health Research Ethics Committee Stakeholders' meeting 2021. [Oral Presentation]. <https://repository.fnu.ac.fj/id/eprint/4409>
- Ravai, V. (2014). Na veiwekani ni Tako kei na Lavo. *The Fiji Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.fijitimes.com.fj/na-veiwekani-ni-tako-kei-na-lavo/>
- Ravuvu, A. D. (1987). *The Fijian Ethos*: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva. ISBN: 9820201861, 9789820201866. <https://books.google.com.fj/books?id=JDoniML0wQcC>
- Resnick, D., & Hofweber, F. (2025). *Research Ethics Timeline*. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/timeline>
- Resnik, D. B. (2025, 31/01/2025). Research Ethics Timeline. *Research*. Retrieved from <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/timeline>
- Rice, T. W. (2008). The historical, ethical, and legal background of human-subjects research. *Respiratory care*, 53(10), 1325-1329. <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdf/10.4187/respcare.08531325>
- Rietbergen-McCracken, J. (2017). Participatory policy making. *World Alliance for Citizen Participation*. <https://tinyurl.com/2t7vud8x>
- PRISMA. (2019.). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and Meta analysis *PRISMA-statement*. Retrieved from [prisma-statement.org](https://www.prisma-statement.org/). <https://www.prisma-statement.org/>
- RNZ Pacific News. (2019). Vanuatu signs a 25 year deal with controversial dru company. *RNZ*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/3fmsac55>
- Graham, R., Wayne, I., Timaima, T., Rigieta, N., Sisa, O., & Sheetal, S. (2011). The Fiji islands health system review. *Health Systems in Transition*, 1(1). https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/207503/9789290615439_eng.pdf
- Roelcke, V. (2017). The Use and Abuse of Medical Research Ethics: The German Richtlinien/guidelines for human subject research as an instrument for the protection of research subjects—and of medical science, ca. 1931–61/64. In *From clinic to concentration camp* (pp. 33-56): Routledge. <https://tinyurl.com/3bw4dndu>

- Royal Palace Office. (2016). History of the Royal Family. Retrieved from https://www.royalpalace.to/royal_history.php)
- Royska, J. (2015). On the Alleged Right to Participate in High-Risk Research. *Bioethics*, 29(7), 451-461. <http://doi.org/10.1111/bioe.12146>
- Ryle, J. (2005). Roots of Land and Church: the Christian State Debate in Fiji. *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 5(1), 58-78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742250500078071>
- Ryle, J. (2016). *My God, my land: Interwoven paths of Christianity and tradition in Fiji*. Routledge.
- Sadler, G. R., Lee, H. C., Lim, R. S. H., & Fullerton, J. (2010). Recruitment of hard-to-reach population subgroups via adaptations of the snowball sampling strategy. *Nursing & health sciences*, 12(3), 369-374. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1442-2018.2010.00541.x>
- Sanga, K., Fa'avae, D., & Reynolds, M. (2023). Living well together as educators in our oceanic'sea of islands': epistemology and ontology of comparative education. In Robert F. Arnove & Carlos Alberto Torres, *Comparative education: the dialectic of the global and the local*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. <https://philarchive.org/archive/SANLWT>
- Sanga, K., Maebuta, J., Johansson-Fua, S. u., & Reynolds, M. (2020). Re-thinking contextualisation in Solomon Islands school leadership professional learning and development. Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington. Journal contribution. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.12838094.v2>
- Sanga, K., & Reynolds, M. (2018). Melanesian tok stori in leadership development: Ontological and relational implications for donor-funded programmes in the Western Pacific. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 17(4), 11-26. <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0487-4111>
- Sass, H.-M. (1983). Reichsrundschreiben 1931: Pre-Nuremberg German Regulations Concerning New Therapy and Human Experimentation. *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy: A Forum for Bioethics and Philosophy of Medicine*, 8(2), 99-112. <http://doi.org/10.1093/jmp/8.2.99>
- Sauni, S. L. (2011). Samoan Research Methodology: The Ula-A New Paradigm. *Pacific-Asian Education Journal*, 23(2). 53-64. <https://tinyurl.com/ym262bpx>
- Scarr, D. (1970). A roko tui for Lomaiviti: The question of legitimacy in the Fijian administration 1874–1900. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00223347008572162>
- Scholz, R. W., & Tietje, O. (2002). *Embedded case study methods: Integrating quantitative and qualitative knowledge*: Sage. <https://tinyurl.com/yzp8k3hu>

- Schuman, J. (2012). Beyond Nuremberg: A critique of informed consent in third world human subject research. *JL & Health*, 25, 123.
<https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/jlh/vol25/iss1/6/>
- Sekona, H. K. (2014b). Tonga—a land dedicated to god. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints: Tonga*. Retrieved Mar, 7, 2017.
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2014/08/tonga-a-land-dedicated-to-god?lang=eng>
- Senituli, L. (2007). Ngeia oe tangata. In Ratuva, S. (Ed.), Pacific genes and life patents, Pacific Indigenous experiences and analysis of the coomodification of life. New Zealand: *Call of the Earth Llamado de la Tierra and The United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies*. <https://tinyurl.com/b3phxs46>
- Shanks, G. D., Hussell, T., & Brundage, J. F. (2012). Epidemiological isolation causing variable mortality in island populations during the 1918–1920 influenza pandemic. *Influenza and other respiratory viruses*, 6(6), 417-423.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1750-2659.2011.00332.x>
- Shaver, J. H. (2015). The evolution of stratification in Fijian ritual participation. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 5(2), 101-117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2014.893253>
- Shuster, E. (1997). Fifty Years Later: The Significance of the Nuremberg Code. *The New England journal of medicine*, 337(20), 1436-1440.
<http://doi.org/10.1056/nejm199711133372006>
- Silaigwana, B., & Wassenaar, D. (2015). Biomedical Research Ethics Committees in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Collective Review of Their Structure, Functioning, and Outcomes. *Journal of empirical research on human research ethics*, 10(2), 169-184.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1556264615575511>
- Smith, L.T., (2013). Social justice, transformation and Indigenous methodologies. In *Ethnographic worldviews: Transformations and social justice* (pp. 15-20): Springer.
https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-007-6916-8_2
- Smith, B., (2014). Maori-centred codes of ethics: championing inclusiveness in creating professional codes of ethics across the New Zealand health sector. *N Z Med J*, 127(1397), 9-12. <https://tinyurl.com/ypwrce8>
- Smith, K., & Otunuku, M. a. (2015). Heliaki: transforming literacy in Tonga through metaphor. *The Sojo Journal: Educational Foundations and Social Justice Education*, 1(1), 99-112.
<https://repository.usp.ac.fj/id/eprint/9431>
- Smith, L. T. (2005). On tricky ground. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 3, 85-107.
<https://tinyurl.com/2vd8xhn7>

- Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*: Bloomsbury Publishing. <https://tinyurl.com/2s4j5cxs>
- Smith V. A. (1917). *Akbar the great Mogul, 1542-1605*: Dalcassian Publishing Company. <https://tinyurl.com/4nx2794d>
- Srinivasan, P. (Producer). (2019, 20 April 2020). US company vows to proceed with cannabis drug trials in Vanuatu despite "dormant" ethics committee. *ABC Pacific Beat*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/49uujtd4>
- Stake, R. (1995). *Case study research: Cham: Springer*. <https://tinyurl.com/ye235znn>
- Stuart, A. (2006). Contradictions and Complexities in an Indigenous Medical Service: The case of Mesulame Taveta. *The Journal of Pacific History*, 41(2), 125-143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223340600826029>
- Suaalii-Sauni, T., & Fulu-Aiolupotea, S. M. (2014). Decolonising Pacific research, building Pacific research communities and developing Pacific research tools: The case of the talanoa and the faafaletui in Samoa. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 55(3), 331-344. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apv.12061>
- Sukuna, L. (1983). *Fiji: the three-legged stool: selected writings of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna*: Macmillan Education. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/8374585-fiji>
- Tagicakiverata, I. W., & Nilan, P. (2018). Veivosaki-yaga: a culturally appropriate Indigenous research method in Fiji. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 31(6), 545-556. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1422293>
- Talei, C. I. (2023). Va: A praxis for pacific architectural research and practice. *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 132(1/2), 219-236. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3084-0989>
- Tariq, S., & Shamraez, H. (2024). A Comprehensive Exploration of Scientific Development under Akbar the Great (1556-1605). *The Lighthouse Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1), 103-117. <https://kpheart.edu.pk/ojs/index.php/ljss/article/view/136>
- Taumoefolau. (2012). Tongan Ways of Talking. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 121(4), 327-372. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43285197>
- Tauri, J. M. (2018). Research ethics, informed consent and the disempowerment of First Nation peoples. *Research Ethics*, 14(3), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1747016117739935>
- Tavola, H. (1991). Secondary education in Fiji : a key to the future. *Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific*. <https://tinyurl.com/3tcyvk6c>

- Taylor, J. (2011). The intimate insider: Negotiating the ethics of friendship when doing insider research. *Qualitative Research*, 11(1), 3-22.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1468794110384447>
- Teariki, M. A., & Leau, E. (2023). Understanding Pacific worldviews: principles and connections for research. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 1-20.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2023.2292268>
- Tecun, A. (2017). Tongan kava: Performance, adaptation, and identity in diaspora.
<https://performancereal.pubpub.org/pub/ilutv30i/release/2>
- Tecun, A., & Ata Siu'ulua, S. (2023). Tongan coloniality: contesting the 'never colonized' narrative. *Postcolonial Studies*, 1-18.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2022.2162353>
- Tecun, A., Hafoka, I., 'Ulu 'ave, L., & 'Ulu 'ave-Hafoka, M. (2018). Talanoa: Tongan epistemology and Indigenous research method. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 14(2), 156-163. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180118767436>
- Tegama, N., & Fox, A. (2023). Ethics, the university, and society: Toward a decolonial approach to research ethics. *Alliance for African Partnership Perspectives*, 2(1), 75-91
<https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/26/article/911264/pdf>
- Thaman, K. H. (1997). Reclaiming a place: Towards a Pacific concept of education for cultural development. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 106(2), 119-130.
<https://www.istor.org/stable/20706708>
- Thaman, K. H. (2003). Decolonizing Pacific studies: Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom in higher education. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 15(1), 1-17.
<http://doi.org/10.1353/cp.2003.003>
- Thaman, K. H. (2006). Acknowledging Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Higher Education in the Pacific Island Region. In V. L. Meek & C. Suwanwela (Eds.), *Higher Education, Research, and Knowledge in the Asia Pacific Region* (pp. 175-184). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230603165_9
- Thambinathan, V., & Kinsella, E. A. (2021). Decolonizing methodologies in qualitative research: Creating spaces for transformative praxis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211014766>
- The World Bank. (2023). World Bank National Accounts Retrieved from
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=FJ>
- Thomas & Quinn. (1991). The Tuskegee Syphilis Study, 1932 to 1972: implications for HIV education and AIDS risk education programs in the black community. *American journal of public health*, 81(11), 1498-1505.
<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/ajph.81.11.1498>

- Thomsen, P., Leenen-Young, M., Naepi, S., Müller, K., Manuela, S., Sisifa, S., & Baice, T. (2021). In our own words: Pacific Early Career Academics (PECA) and Pacific knowledges in higher education pedagogical praxis. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 40(1), 49-62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1852188>
- Thow, A. M., Swinburn, B., Colagiuri, S., Diligolevu, M., Quested, C., Vivili, P., & Leeder, S. (2010). Trade and food policy: case studies from three Pacific Island countries. *Food Policy*, 35(6), 556-564. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2010.06.005> [Get rights and content](#)
- Timms, O. (2016). *Bio-Medical Ethics*: Timms, Olinda, Bio-Medical Ethics. (2016), pp.179. <https://tinyurl.com/3nedzfjr>
- Tomlinson, M. (2014). Passports to Eternity: Whales' Teeth and Transcendence in Fijian Methodism. *Flows of Faith: Religious Reach and Community in Asia and the Pacific*, 215-231. <http://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2932-2-13>
- Tonga Institute of Education. (2009). *Research Manual for Teachers*. <https://www.education.gov.to/>
- Tonga Ministry of Education. (2014). *Research and Ethics Policy*. <https://www.education.gov.to/>
- Tonga Ministry of Health. (2014). Operational Guidelines for the National Health Ethics and Research Committee. <http://health.gov.to>
- Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee. (2014). *Annual Report*. <http://health.gov.to>
- Tonga National Health Ethics and Research Committee. (2015). *Annual Report*. <http://health.gov.to>
- Tonga Prime Minister's Office. (2019). *Tonga Government Research Permit Requirements*. Tonga. <https://www.gov.to/prime-ministers-office/>
- Tonga Statistics Department. (2021). *Tonga Population: Population and Housing Factsheet*. Retrieved from <https://tongastats.gov.to/>
- Tonga Visitors Bureau. (2011). Kingdom of Tonga: Three Millennia of History. Retrieved from <https://thekingdomoftonga.com/history/>
- Tongan Working Group. (2012). Fofola e fala kae talanoa e kāinga: A Tongan conceptual framework for the prevention of and intervention in family violence in New Zealand: *Fāmili Ielei*. New Zealand Government: Ministry of Social Development. <https://tinyurl.com/2v5e67up>

- Tröhler, U. (2009). The Historical Development of International Codes of Ethics for Human Subjects Research. *The Cambridge World History of Medical Ethics*, 566-575. <https://tinyurl.com/yh43zvnd>
- Trudgett, S., Griffiths, K., Farnbach, S., & Shakeshaft, A. (2022). A framework for operationalising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sovereignty in Australia: Results of a systematic literature review of published studies. *EClinicalMedicine*, 45. <https://tinyurl.com/y9xcpdzk>
- Tu'ipulotu, S. T. T. (2013). Gospel of hope for the world of hopeless: The success of early Christianity and hope for the Tongan Church. Claremont School of Theology. <https://tinyurl.com/anbs8mcb>
- Tuimavana, R. (2020). The concept of self and success from an iTaukei perspective in Fiji: Before and after education and development. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 9(4), 98-113. <https://doi.org/10.18533/journal.v9i4.1872>
- Tuwere, I. S. (2002). *Vanua: Towards a Fijian theology of place*: editorips@ usp. ac. fj. <https://tinyurl.com/2s3sk5v3>
- UNESCO. (2005). *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/2dntpww2>
- UNESCO. (2006). Universal declaration on bioethics and human rights. <https://www.unesco.org/en/ethics-science-technology/bioethics-and-human-rights>
- UNESCO. (2007). UNESCO bioethics Core curriculum. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246885>
- UNFPA. (2019). *Health facility Readiness and Service availability (HFRSA) Assessment, 2019*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/nhbzn9vf>
- UNHCR Refworld. (2004). Chronology for East Indians in Fiji. Retrieved from <https://www.refworld.org/docid/469f3889a.html>
- United Nations. (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. <https://tinyurl.com/54447z5e>
- United Nations General Assembly. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
- United Nations Pacific. (2020). *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Fiji*. <https://tinyurl.com/ns97hhvn>
- United Nations Statistics Division. ((nd)). Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use. Retrieved from <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>

- United States National Commission For The Protection Of Human Subjects Of Biomedical Behavioral Research. (1978). *The Belmont report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. <https://tinyurl.com/y9r8x2sj>
- University of Adelaide. (2002). Apology for Past Experiments on Aboriginal People". <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/news/news314.html>
- University of the South Pacific. (2009). Human Research 'Ethics Handbook' In University of the South Pacific (Ed.). <https://tinyurl.com/2hy4ztjw>
- University of the South Pacific. (2023). Fijian History Retrieved from <https://fijianhistory.com/great-council-of-chiefs>
- Vaioleti. (2011). *Talanoa, manulua and founa ako: Frameworks for using enduring Tongan educational ideas for education in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. University of Waikato. <https://tinyurl.com/mr2465ax>
- Vaioleti, T. (2013). Talanoa: Differentiating the Talanoa Research Methodology from phenomenology, narrative, Kaupapa Maori and feminist methodologies. *Te Reo*, 56/57. 191-212. <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.674853083445219>
- Vaioleti. (2016). Talanoa research methodology: A developing position on Pacific research. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.15663/wje.v12i1.296>
- Vaipulu, S. F. (2013). Towards an'otualogy: Revisiting and Rethinking the Doctrine of God in Tonga. <https://tinyurl.com/5n8skwda>
- Vaitohi, A. (2022). Prevalence of Non-Communicable Disease among Adults in Tonga. *Ballard Brief*, 2022(3), 12. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ballardbrief/vol2022/iss3/12/>
- Vaka'uta, N., & Jackson, D. (2021). Theology. In *Christianity in Oceania* (Vol. 5, pp. 259-271). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. <https://dokumen.pub/christianity-in-oceania-9781474480109.html>
- Vakalahi, H. F., & Ihara, E. S. (2011). Research with Indigenous cultures: A case study analysis of Tongan grandparents. *Families in society*, 92(2), 230-235. <https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.4105>
- Veatupu et al. (2019). Me'akai in Tonga: Exploring the nature and context of the food Tongan children eat in ha'apai using wearable cameras. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(10), 1681. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16101681>
- Veracini, L. (2008). 'Emphatically Not a White Man's Colony': Settler Colonialism and the Construction of Colonial Fiji. *The Journal of Pacific History*, 43(2), 189-205. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00223340802281510>

- Vollmann, J., & Winau, R. (1996). Informed consent in human experimentation before the Nuremberg code. *Bmj*, 313(7070), 1445-1447. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.313.7070.1445>
- Von Knieriem, A. (1959). *The Nuremberg Trials*: Chicago: Henry Regnery. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2195279>
- Wanjohi, M. N., Thow, A. M., Abdool Karim, S., Asiki, G., Erzse, A., Mohamed, S. F., . . . Hofman, K. J. (2021). Nutrition-related non-communicable disease and sugar-sweetened beverage policies: a landscape analysis in Kenya. *Global Health Action*, 14(1), 1902659. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2021.1902659>
- Webmedia Fiji Limited. (2023). Tonga-Culture & Events. Retrieved from <http://southpacificspecialist.org/tonga-culture-events/>
- West-McGruer, K. (2020). There's 'consent' and then there's consent: Mobilising Māori and Indigenous research ethics to problematise the western biomedical model. *Journal of Sociology*, 56(2), 184-196. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783319893523>
- WhereIG. (2022). Where is Tonga located? Retrieved from <https://www.whereig.com/au-oceania/where-is-tonga.html>
- WHO. (2009). *Research ethics committees: basic concepts for capacity-building*: World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241598002>
- WHO Western Pacific Region. (2017). *Fiji WHO Country Cooperation Strategy 2018-2022*. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WPR-2017-DPM-008>
- World Health Organization. Regional Office for the Western Pacific. (2015a). The Kingdom of Tonga health system review. *Health systems in transition*, 5 (6), WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific. Retrieved from <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/208225>
- World Health Organization. Regional Office for the Western Pacific. (2015b). The Kingdom of Tonga health system review. *Health systems in transition*, 5 (6), WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific. Retrieved from <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/208225>
- Widmer, A. (2010). Native medical practitioners, temporality, and nascent biomedical citizenship in the New Hebrides. *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 33, 57-80. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1555-2934.2010.01066.x>
- Williams, B. (2008). *The Advent of Methodism and the I Taukei: The Methodist Church in Fijian Nation-making*. La Trobe. <https://tinyurl.com/yeks4nay>
- Willows, N. D. (2017). Ethics and Research with Indigenous Peoples. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences* (pp. 1-24). Singapore: Springer Singapore. https://link.springer.com/rwe/10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4_49

- Wilmouth, D. M., Østerstrøm, F. F., Smith, J. B., Anderson, J. G., & Salawitch, R. J. (2023). Impact of the Hunga Tonga volcanic eruption on stratospheric composition. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 120(46), e2301994120. <http://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2301994120>
- Wilson, D., (2017). Culturally Safe Research with Vulnerable Populations (Māori). In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences* (pp. 1-19). Singapore: Springer Singapore. https://link.springer.com/rwe/10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4_31
- Wilson, N., Barnard, L. T., Summers, J. A., Shanks, G. D., & Baker, M. G. (2012). Differential mortality rates by ethnicity in 3 influenza pandemics over a century, New Zealand. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 18(1), 71. <http://doi.org/10.3201/eid1801.110035>. PMID: 22257434; PMCID: PMC3310086.
- Wilson, S. (2020). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*: Fernwood publishing. <https://fernwoodpublishing.ca/book/research-is-ceremony-shawn-wilson>
- Wolfgramm-Foliaki, E. (2016). Under the Mango Tree: Lessons for the Insider-Outsider Researcher. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.14297/jpaap.v4i3.165>
- World Bank. (2003). *Tonga Health Sector Support Project*. Retrieved from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/398521468778164804/pdf/multi0page.pdf>
- World Bank. (2021). Climate Change Knowledge Portal for Development Practitioners and Policy Makers: Tonga. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/4dtd7keb>
- World Bank Group. (2017). Republic of Fiji Systematic Country Diagnostic. Retrieved from <https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/28541>
- World Council of Churches. (2002). Whose DNA? Retrieved from <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/whose-dna>
- World Health Organization. (2000). *Operational Guidelines for Ethics Committees That Review Biomedical Research*. [https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/66429/TDR PRD ETHICS 2000.1.pdf](https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/66429/TDR_PRD_ETHICS_2000.1.pdf)
- World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific. (2011). *The ethics review committee standard operating procedures*. Manila. <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/207611>
- World Medical Association. (2001). *Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects*. Retrieved from <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki/>

Wright, C. J., Hindley, N. P., Alexander, M. J., Barlow, M., Hoffmann, L., Mitchell, C. N., . . . Clerbaux, C. (2022). Surface-to-space atmospheric waves from Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai eruption. *Nature*, 609(7928), 741-746. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-05012-5>

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods 4th edition*. Paper presented at the United States: Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. <https://tinyurl.com/2p9p4r7z>