A Tongan cultural model of identity

Tevita Molisi Manu’atu

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ABSTRACT

A TONGAN CULTURAL MODEL OF IDENTITY

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This thesis examines Tongan people’s assumptions and perspectives about the Tongan identity as expressed through discourse in relations to the subject. The data from these discourses were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with twenty-eight participants from various backgrounds, focusing on two representative populations; The Kingdom of Tonga and the United States of America. The collective data was then analyzed using cultural model theory and background as a framework. This thesis examines how Tongan identity is affected from the perspectives of Tongans themselves, and what the shared conceptualization—cultural model—of Tongan identity is. This study uncovered five main components of the Tongan cultural model of identity, which overlaps and are integrated within one another. This study also explains six factors that are perceived to be the defining factors behind what it means to be Tongan, which varies in saliency—in regards to Tongan identity—depending on the situation and the environment that one is in.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Transnational individuals construct new identities in order to adapt to their surrounding environment, making it difficult when relating to the people whom they left behind in their birthplace. This is certainly true in Tonga’s case. Today, more Tongans live overseas than in Tonga (Lee, 2003; Prato, 2009; Small, 2011). Tongans living abroad look for a sense of belonging and connection to their origins but face issues when confronting their newly acquired identity with that of those who never left. This thesis seeks to use a cultural model approach to answer this question: What does it mean to be Tongan? I compare Tongans living in Tonga with those who migrated to the United States and investigate how they conceive their identity.

Originally, this research topic was constructed due to a sense of not belonging and questioning my identity as a Tongan after a year of studying in the United States of America. After the first year, I went back to the Kingdom of Tonga for the summer of 2016. The reason for the trip was to act as a research assistant to Dr. Giovanni Bennardo, who was doing research on cultural models of nature in the island of Vava’u in Tonga. From the experience with the locals, a sense of separation which I have not felt before seemed to be interjected into the social relationships between myself and other people. Before leaving the Kingdom to go to study in the United States, there was always a sense of belonging and camaraderie wherever in the Kingdom I would go. The way Tongans treated me and the feeling that was received was always one of acceptance and warmth in a very unique and unexplainable way.
When I returned, the feeling was still there and the actions from the locals were also still there, but something felt off as if there was something that has separated myself from the people. At first, I thought it was just because they were technically strangers whom I had not met before and that friends and relatives back in my own village would be the same as before. Alas, my expectations were wrong as the feeling still persisted when I went to my village and met the villagers I had grown up with for over 20 years. What did this mean? Am I not considered part of the society the same way I was before? What could have changed that made me feel separated from other Tongans? Am I not considered Tongan anymore? Is it just my way of thinking? After having a mini identity crisis for a short while, I decided to leave it alone and just continue with what I was doing.

When I returned to the United States, I spent a few weeks with my Tongan relatives in California and spent time in the Tongan community there. To my surprise, the feeling of separation still existed, but in a different way. For a while, I could only interpret it as being inbetween, being a Tongan-Tongan and a Tongan-foreigner. The people of the same generation as I was seemed completely different yet still the same when in comparison to myself. This unexplainable feeling of being different from both the Tongans in Tonga and the Tongans in California also generated many questions in my mind. Are Tongans overseas a different type of Tongan from Tongans in Tonga? What about Tongans such as myself who go overseas for only a few years in a foreign land but still call Tonga home? Are we different? If so, why are we different? Questions such as these, among others, came to mind as I asked myself what it means to be Tongan. From personal experience and from my own personal perspective, Tongans in Tonga and overseas are still Tongans regardless of all their differences and experiences. If that is truly the case, why does the experience and the feeling seem different from both groups towards
myself? What is the foundational decider on what makes a person Tongan? Is it true that there are people who are considered more Tongan than other Tongans? This led to my curiosity and drive to find the answers to these questions in regards to Tongan identity.

After studying cultural model theory\(^1\) in class with Dr. Giovanni Bennardo, I decided to use this theory to look for answers to my questions. I looked for a Tongan cultural model of identity and conducted some interviews with Tongans—both in Tonga and in California—using my native Tongan language. From general experiences with Tongans in regards to finding answers for anything, the answers given are mostly the “ideal” answers or the answers that the interviewees wants the researcher to know or think, instead of the “real” answers about what they are really thinking. Answers such as these are usually given in order to look “good.” It is rare that people reply with the complete truth, including both good and bad aspects, because they are convinced that such types of answers will make them look bad, especially to outsiders. However, by using cultural model theory and its consequent methodology I was able to obtain results that sufficiently answered the questions I had. This was done through conducting semi-structured interviews focusing on the topic of migration and the effects and experiences that the participants have in regards to migration. Using this different focus, the participants subconsciously provide answers and personal accounts targeted towards the topic of migration, and yet from these semi-structured interviews, they are triggered to provide their personal thoughts and opinion about what it means to be Tongan without being directly primed to do so.

As a native anthropologist studying my own culture, there are both positive and negative aspects that I brought to this research. The positive side includes the cultural knowledge that I was brought up in and taught about from a very young age. My connection and familiarity with

\(^1\) This is further explained in Chapter 2.
the participants helped in smoothly carrying out the questioning and the research as a whole. The participants were very interested and involved when giving their explanations and stating their points of view. This was also the case when finding participants to volunteer.

The drawback of being a native anthropologist in terms of carrying out the interviews and finding answers—especially when interviewing people you know—was having too much familiarity. The interviews that could have been conducted in only an hour or less went on for three to four hours. This included around an hour of introductions and personal conversations before even beginning the interview itself. During the interviews, there would sometimes be a topic or something that the participants remembered in relation to my *kainga* (relatives/extended family) or my village, island or anything in connection to me that they found out in the hour-long introduction, and they would go off on a tangent about that topic which did not provide any useful information in regards to the topic at hand. It was yet still enjoyable and I personally did not interrupt them until they finished and then we would move on to the next set of questions. After the interviews, we would continue talking about other things such as my experiences in the United States and we would joke back and forth for a while before finally ending the interview.

Another drawback about studying my own culture is in terms of social status and interactions. Since I am a Tongan, there are certain expectations for me to behave in a specific way. With my older participants, I would behave differently than towards those of the same generation as myself. There were also those with higher social status than myself and so I had to conduct my behavior in an acceptable way. Another drawback with being a native anthropologist is in terms of perspectives and interpretations. Due to my years of study in anthropology, I tried as hard as I could to adopt an outsider’s perspective when conducting my analyses and interpretations while also keeping my knowledge and experience as a native on the side to help
me clarify issues and content produced by participants in the interviews. However, it was still a fairly hard thing to do.

In this thesis, Chapter 2 will focus solely on the connections between cultural models, the self and identity theory. Chapter 3 will give an introduction into the ethnographic setting of the study, giving insight into the background of the two populations that this study was focused on. Chapters 4 and 5 will explain the methodology used for this study and the results of the analyses conducted. The last chapter will then conclude the study, providing the overall findings for the Tongan cultural model of identity and also discussing the possibilities of future research.

After conducting this research and through many weeks of data analysis, I found out the importance of *kainga* and kinship and how it is very foundational for Tongan identity. Other factors when regarding Tongan identity (language, behavior, place of residence, physical features, fashion), although important, only contribute to how much more Tongan a person can be. This suggests a measuring scale based on *kainga* and the Tongan *toto* (blood). This research has helped me open my eyes and solidify my understanding in regards to Tongan identity and how it is being conceptualized by Tongans, which is the content of their cultural model of Tongan identity.
CHAPTER 2

CULTURAL MODELS, SELF AND IDENTITY

As mentioned earlier, in order to adapt to their surrounding environment and operate successfully in a new culture, transnational individuals construct new identities, making it difficult when relating to the people whom they left behind in their birthplace. This thesis seeks to use the cultural model as an approach to answer this question: What does it mean to be Tongan? Tongans living abroad look for a sense of belonging and connection to their origins but face issues when confronting their newly acquired identity with that of those who never left.

Cultural Models

A culture is made up of shared knowledge and beliefs. This knowledge is in the mind (mental models) and generates the way people in the culture behave towards everything (Bennardo & De Munck, 2014; De Munck, 2000: 22-23). These shared mental models, hence, cultural models, are mostly out of awareness and taken for granted. The cultural model approach seeks to uncover these out-of-awareness models that shape people’s perspectives. Similar to any theory, cultural model theory is based on some axioms/assumptions from which we can infer or derive different propositions (Bennardo, 2017). Cultural model studies suggest that people’s ways of thinking are based on certain templates (i.e., models) in the mind, and reasoning is a
result of this template. Cultural model theory is a mentalistic approach to culture and assigns to models three main characteristics: a structure made up of a core component and peripheral nodes, variability (models are used differently by different populations and also within a population), and nesting (any model can be nested into another, which often results in one model made up of multiple models; Bennardo & De Munck, 2014).

In terms of structure, the core component is the foundation of the cultural model and what is being shared throughout the population. The peripheral nodes are more based on personal experiences and context. They have default values and are adjusted to the situation or environment a person is in at the moment. This structure of people’s mental representations allows for individual flexibility (Bennardo, 2009). The variation in distribution is possible not just between populations but also within one population. The idea is that even though there is a common perspective shared among the population, there will be people who use it more or less often than others, in addition to the fact that a perspective may slightly vary across sections of the population.

There has been a lot of research done on identity in Tonga (Small, 2011 and Van Der Grijp, 2004 among others), and although scholars have made great observations on how Tongan people identify themselves, this study asks the question: Are these observations part of what is in the minds of Tongan people? Using the suggestions of these past studies, I intend to find whether it is the case that they are parts of a cultural model and, if so, how is it applied in Tonga, how is it applied by Tongans in the United States, and compare the differences (if any).

When applying cultural model theory to the study of Tongan identity, I expect to be able to reveal the underlying model behind Tongan thinking about what it means to be Tongan, and not just what they say it is. In other words, I am using this approach to discover what Tongans
think about identity; that is, what is the model of Tongan identity to them in their minds? Human thought is consummately social. As Clifford Geertz puts it, “...social in its origins, social in its functions, social in its forms, social in its applications. At base, thinking is a public activity…” (cited in Morris, 1994: 148). Using a cultural model approach will delve into these shared social thoughts about Tongan identity.

**Self**

Self is defined by Triandis (1989) as consisting of all the statements that are made by any individual either overtly or covertly that includes the words *I, me, mine* and *myself*. This is a very broad definition and the terms used vary across cultures and languages depending at times on how they perceive the self (whether it exists or it is nonexistent). Triandis (1989) also addresses many aspects of the self. In Triandis’s words, these aspects are: “Attitudes (e.g., /like X), beliefs (e.g., /think that X results in Y), intentions (e.g., /plan to do X), norms (e.g., in *my* group, people should act this way), roles (e.g., in *my* family, fathers act this way), and values (e.g., /think equality is very important).” This explanation of the many aspects of the self ties into the connection between self, identity and culture, where cultural values, beliefs, norms and roles are all aspects of the shared sameness of each member’s self. This shared connection and sameness contributes to shaping one’s identity, identifying with the group, culture or community one is in.

According to de Munck (2013: 179), self, identities and cultural models are all “interactive, dynamic and interdependent systems that connect the biological, psychological, social and cultural dimensions of human life.” For a better understanding of either self, identity or cultural models, we need to develop effective theories of the interrelations and interactions
between the three. We can further our understanding of each one by looking at them not just as individual components, but as interdependent correspondents.

As per Martin Sökefeld (1999), identity was originally perceived as “sameness,” which in psychology refers to “selfsameness.” It is expressed as a disposition of personality characteristics that have been acquired through experiences in childhood, and once acquired, it is considered to be fixed. Erikson (1980:109) states, “The term ‘identity’ expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential characteristics with others.” This expresses the saliency of identities that are structured from the self, that is, the sameness within the self is a basis from which one finds similarities with others that share the same essential characteristics to identify oneself with.

Identities structured from the self are sometimes seen as internalized sets of role expectations. Individuals have many identities that they switch on back and forth depending on the role that they play in a certain situation (Yardley-Matwiejczuk & Honess, 1987: 90). For example, say there is an individual who is a parent, a soldier and also a priest. When with his/her children, the identity that they put on is that of a parent and what they do and the mindset that they have as a parent is different from that of when the situation asks for them to be soldier. As a soldier, they put on the identity of a soldier and the mindset and behaviors of a soldier are automatically being portrayed. When going to church as a priest, their identity is that of a priest, and their behavior and mindset changes towards that role and identity at that time. This identity switching can apply in any situation with any individual. Every person has a hierarchy of identities to choose from in any given situation depending on which will serve them better. Erchak (1992) explains “self” as a flexible concept which depends on the context and the environment. This multiplicity of the self suggests that although there are many similarities
among individuals within the same culture, they are also unique in many ways, including the way they adapt to certain environments. De Munck (2013) also addresses this multiplicity when he mentions how identities are the “means by which the self engages with the outside world.” (pg 179). This engagement with the outside world can be explained as being shaped by cultural models on which the self relies for different perspectives of the outside world and to make sense of it. This illustrates the reason why a theory of the self involves a theory of identities which in its turn involves a theory of cultural models.

Seymour Rosenberg in Ashmore and Jussim (1997) addresses the multiplicity of the selves as made up of a variety of conceptual partitions of one’s self. A person has many selves that they switch to with their own set of rules and personalities. For example, a person will be a parent to his/her children and behave differently from how he/she behaves as a friend, brother, sister, and student and so on. This does not take away from the fact that they all make up who the person is (identity). Identity is the unity of all these selves and all that comes with it to make a person. Once a person has taken on an identity, say “Pacific Islander” for example, that person positions him or herself to the world accordingly (De Munck, 2013).

**Tongan Identity**

The initial reasoning behind my choice of topic was a genuine curiosity about my identity as a Tongan and what it means. I needed to find out whether my assumptions about Tongan identity are merely an individual perspective or a culturally shared and accepted as foundational definition of what it is to be Tongan. I grew up in a village where everyone is connected in a community and everything seems to fit into place. My moving to the Midwest United States was a shocking experience. I am one half of the Pacific Island community at Northern Illinois
University (at least to my knowledge), if not also the city of DeKalb. I had never felt so alone before, and I started to question my identity as a Tongan and a Pacific Islander. Does not having a connection to a Tongan community mean I am losing my “Tongan-ness”? Am I no longer Tongan because I have not been able to converse with anyone in my native language for so long? Am I losing touch with my identity because I have not participated in a Tongan traditional event in a while? There are other Tongans out there in the same situation that I am in, not knowing what group to fit into, struggling and questioning their identity.

Per De Munck (2013), an identity has two functions: one, as an organization of cultural models that produces one’s actions; and two, to serve as a port that harbors one’s self. Knowing and understanding one’s identity generates a strong sense of belonging, without which there is a high possibility of psychological effects on an individual’s psyche: loss of self-esteem, acquisition of antisocial behavior, and so on (Agee et al., 2013; Ashmore and Jussim, 1997; Burke & Stets, 2009). Agee et al., (2013) stressed the importance of identity among immigrant societies in a foreign nation, stating that “ethnic identity” serves as a buffer for the psychological effects of discrimination against minorities and immigrants. This is one of the reasons why it is important that this study be carried out. In fact, the results of the study will provide insight into transnational identity building in Tonga, but they can also be applied to transnational communities in general as well. The study shows how a person living abroad modifies his/their/her identity in relation to people one leaves behind.

Two common factors suggested to participate in the construction of a person’s identity are language and culture (Riley, 2007). There are varying ideas about what culture is, but I concur with Edward B. Tylor, who suggested that culture is a complex phenomenon that is made up of different aspects of a variety of organizations, social, economic and political that humans
acquire from within a community/group. These organizations such as kinship, religion and so on
have their own sets of rules that individuals abide by. As I mentioned before, this over-
comprising concept of culture is in the mind (Bennardo & De Munck, 2014), and is shared
among the individuals of the community (Tonga). I want to point out that in the same way as for
“identity,” the Tongan language has no specific term for “culture,” only terms exist that define
the different social organizations within a group. For examples, lea refers to language, kainga
refers to kinship, and anga faka-Tonga refers to the Tongan way or behavior. There is no over-
comprising term that includes all of them the way that “culture” does.

De Munck (2005) expressed national identity as being described in two forms. The first
represents the primary constituents of identity—similar to Edward B. Tylor’s definition of
culture—and are validated and decided on by institutions such as governments and national
organizations. These primary constituents are what is known to the public through publications
and media allowed by the government and organizations in power. The second represent the
secondary constituents of identity which are mostly built from the ground up, from which people
formulate personal accounts of identity that are shared and agreed upon within the group or
community they are in. These are often unspoken and unrecorded rules and cultural norms that
are shared across generations and members of the culture.

The term anga faka-Tonga “Tongan way” is the closest translation of the word “culture,”
even though it refers only to the behavior or the way of living in Tonga. The term anga means
behavior, faka means like, so the anga faka-Tonga could be translated as “behaving Tongan-
like.” Anga faka-Tonga is a different concept from speaking in Tongan, even though when
speaking in Tongan one also incorporates the knowledge of anga faka-Tonga. The anga faka-
Tonga is also considered a different concept from kinship when referring to identity, even though
they both fall under what we consider culture. In behavior and from what we can observe, these are all indistinguishable. However, they are all different concepts that often overlap in performance. For example, when speaking Tongan, one also needs to include parts of the *anga faka-Tonga* as well.

Before continuing, I would like to reiterate that there is no specific one-word term to describe the concept of identity in Tongan. In the literature on Tongan identity (Agee et al., 2013; Lee, 2003; Prato, 2009; Small, 2011; Van Der Grijp, 2004, and more), there are three main factors that are acknowledged as contributing to the definition of a Tongan’s identity. The first is language, the second is one’s *toto* [descent/blood]\(^2\) (which I will refer to as kinship: *kainga* [extended family] in the future), and the third is the *anga faka-Tonga* [the Tongan way].

One thing I noticed that was not commonly addressed in the literature was the concept of “place,” that is, the physical place in which one grows up. This seemed quite odd to me because of the frequent use of the idea (place) in casual conversations in Tonga. For example as a Tongan, when addressing another Tongan for the first time, the most common thing to ask is where the person is from, so as to find a foundation from which the relationship between the two could connect and figure out how to behave depending on that relationship. If the person is from a place associated with your group, that person is considered part of your group, and you need to behave accordingly. If the person is from a place that is not associated with your group, that person is not identified as part of your group, and you behave accordingly towards them.

The following four subparts of this chapter will delve into more details about the main factors that are suggested to define Tongan identity and how they are used in Tongan

\(^2\) Blood/descent or *toto*, which I will explain more about on Chapters 5 and 6, is a fundamental factor in deciding the Tongan *kainga*, as one cannot be considered and recognized as *kainga* unless one is related by blood. I will be referring to *toto* [blood/descent] in relation to *kainga* from now on.
communities. They are language, kinship, the Tongan way, and place, each having a claim on being the most salient factor of Tongan identity and may also be hypothesized as the core components of the cultural model of Tongan identity.

**Language**

Language is one of the most fundamental factors behind defining identity. As Gee (2005:1) puts it, language supports “…the performance of social activities and social identities and to support human affiliation within cultures, social groups and institutions.” In many cases, when an individual is a member of more than one social group, he/she tends to talk differently in each group shifting through different identities depending on different situations (Agee et al., 2013).

Language and its many uses vary within the Kingdom of Tonga. In the capital of the main island Tongatapu and many big villages throughout the islands, the Tongan language is not as emphasized as in the small rural villages. There is a new type of Tongan which some call “Tonglish” (a mixture of Tongan and English), and this is considered to be the accepted modern version of the language among the youth (Small, 2011).

The literature on Tongan identity addresses the importance of language in defining identity (Agee et al., 2013; Gee, 2005). Not only is the understanding of the language important, it is also just as important to be culturally competent in its use. This highlights the importance of understanding the cultural context of use and not just how to speak Tongan correctly, but also when, where and to whom to speak in specific ways. For example, the Tongan language includes three lexical sets used to talk to the king, the chiefs/nobles, and the commoners. These sets are
shared within the society, and they shape the way people behave towards (speak with) each other. Being culturally competent includes knowing which set of the language to use in different situations towards various individuals.

There are also other unspoken rules about conversations and behavior. For example, looking into people’s eyes is considered inappropriate most times. When talking to same-sex relatives, one uses a different language than the one used when talking to opposite-sex relatives. There are certain topics that one must never bring up in front of taboo relatives (opposite-sex cousins and siblings) such as sex (anything that has a sexual nature, hence couples do not really show affection in public), curse words (even music and movies that contain curse words or sex or even just kissing scenes), and human anatomy.\(^3\) It is always polite to nod when passing a stranger in the road and call out to people you know. Avoiding people you know is frowned upon. Keeping quiet and not asking questions is acceptable when an older person or someone of higher status is speaking (this carries on to classrooms as well). Talking to people of higher status is often done from a lower position (most of the time, while a chief sits on a chair, people talk to him/her from the floor, either sitting or kneeling) as a sign of respect. Understanding these rules about conversations and language use adds to one’s authenticity as a Tongan, suggesting language as a core component of the cultural model of Tongan identity.

\(^3\) I remember being asked before biology class in high school whether there were taboo (opposite-sex) siblings in the class. Those who did, had to decide which one had to leave the class, mostly the male students.
Kinship (*Kainga*)

One other deciding factor when people refer to their Tongan identity is kinship. This is common especially among people who grew up overseas and most common among the new generation of Tongan immigrants who know next to nothing about the Tongan culture or Tonga itself (Lee, 2003). This also includes not only mixed-ethnic individuals who have only one Tongan parent, but also those who have mixed Tongan parents. The main argument behind this is, as long as there is a relationship between the individual and someone from a Tongan *kainga*, he/they/she is a Tongan.

When talking about kinship, the most basic unit of kinship is the *kainga* [extended family], which I mentioned earlier. *Kainga* is defined as a bilateral cognatic group, and it includes relatives from both the mother’s and the father’s sides (Bennardo, 2009). As long as an individual is considered a part of a *kainga*, he/she is a Tongan, but whether or not he/she is considered a “real” Tongan varies depending on perspective and behavior. For example, in my experience with Tongans, if a relative (*kainga*) does well in a school overseas and is praised, every relative will acknowledge their connection to him/her and consider him/her a Tongan. If he/she is a criminal, those same relatives will either state that he/she is not “really” a Tongan or pull up a family tree that states he/she is part Samoan or another ethnicity and blame the bad behavior on that part because, apparently, Tongans do not behave that way. This research will also further explore if this is indeed the case.
In this thesis, I will be making many references to *kainga* [extended family/kinship] and *toto* [blood/descent.] I may use one of the terms later while intending to refer to all of them (kinship, descent, extended family, blood).

**Anga Faka-Tonga [The Tongan Way]**

Language and knowledge of the *anga faka-Tonga* [the Tongan way] often go together. In order to know about the *anga faka-Tonga*, the Tongan language needs to be learned and understood (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984). The *anga faka-Tonga* is made up of many unspoken rules and moral codes that Tongans must follow or face consequences. For example, similar to the language examples mentioned above, behavior is regulated by norms. There are different ways that people are expected to behave towards different people. A person behaves towards fathers differently from mothers, towards uncles different from aunties, and so on.

In relation to the *anga faka-Tonga* being a factor in one’s identity, Paul Van Der Grijp (2004) suggested four structures of Tongan identity:

- Understanding of the hierarchy and role of chieftainship;
- Dominant role of cognatic kinship (*fahu, ‘eiki-tu’a relationship*);
- Land property structured by chieftainship and cognatic kinship (*primogeniture*);
- Subsistence and the gift economy.

According to Van Der Grijp (2004), one must have an understanding of these four structures to be identified as Tongan. In other words, these four structures can be interpreted as the foundation of the *anga faka-Tonga* or the Tongan way of life.

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4 The *fahu* and *‘eiki-tu’a* relationship refers to the relationship between the father’s sister and the brother’s children. *‘Eiki* translates into “lord” or someone with higher rank. *Tu’a* is someone with low status. The father’s sister and her children will always be *‘eiki* while the brother’s children are always *tu’a*.
Tongans are expected to behave in a certain way. It is not enough to know about the *anga faka-Tonga*, but one also needs to behave and act accordingly. There is still some speculation about how Tongans traditionally behaved as depicted in Gifford’s book, *Tongan Society* (1929), Campbell, I. C (1992), and W. Mariner and John Martin (1817) or by the missionaries. In addition to the descriptions reported by the missionaries, Tonga is one of the few places in Polynesia that has accounts on pre-missionary life thanks to Mariner and Martin, among others. This literature is very important as it contributes to a better understanding not only of Tongan past but also of its contemporary culture.

There are four well-known pillars of the Tongan society that people claim should sum up the *anga faka-Tonga*, called the *faa‘i kavei koula* [four golden ropes.] They are ‘*ofa* [love] (Bennardo, 2009: 263-269; Kavaliku, 1977: 47-67), *faka’apa’apa* [respect], *loto tō* [humility] and *tauhi vā* [keeping good relations] (Ka‘ili, 2008; Spickard et al., 2002). This four-dimensional concept is more emphasized when referring to Tongans by individuals in Tongan communities overseas. If a person was born of Tongan parents, grew up in Tonga, knows the language and *anga faka-Tonga* but behaves in a different way, separate from the expected behavior, he/she is not considered Tongan by his/her surrounding community, especially the parents. In my experience, I have heard this many times, both in Tongan communities in Tonga and in the United States as well. The most common phrase that is heard is “*‘oku ‘ikai ke ‘i ai ha Tonga ia ‘e pehē...*” […]no Tongan is like that.] This suggests that there is a right way to behave as a Tongan and to behave otherwise is not Tongan-like.

**Place**
One important and frequent factor behind identity is place. Place in this context refers to where one grew up rather than just residency. Simply residing in Tonga does not necessarily mean a person grew up there (Daly, 2009). Many people grew up in different countries around the world but are now living in Tonga. There are also those people who grew up in Tonga into young adults before leaving and now residing overseas. Place plays a major role in the construction of identity because of the way we adapt to our surroundings. When moving from Tonga to a different place, people will have to adapt their behavior, language and mentality in order to fit in and live their life in the new community. However, the way of life they learned in their childhood and the place they grew up in will always remain as a part of themselves and play a role in their reasoning and decisions.

Another important aspect of place is the term *fonua* [land,] which in Tonga refers to many things such as the physical land (the islands), *kava* (a traditional ceremonial drink common in the Pacific Islands), *ta’ovala* [waist mat] and *kafa* [rope belt] (Reuter, 2006). In Tongan communities overseas, *kava* still plays a major role in holding the community together and a popular phrase when referring to the *kava* groups is …*pukepuke fonua*… [holding/keeping the land.] The *ta’ovala* and *kafa* are still worn by many people as a sign of respect and this behavior ties them back to the islands. In some way, this is one of the ways in which Tongans overseas still hold onto the factor of place. Even though they no longer live in the islands, they still wear a symbolic form of the islands.

**Fission and Fusion**
Another perspective on the idea of place leads to “fission and fusion.” One thing that is common in some cultures and groups is the sense of forming allies against a common enemy (Evans-Pritchard, 1969). This often happens in times of war. In terms of identity, the same thing happens.

In Tonga, the basic unit of the society is the *kainga* [extended family] and everything functions around it, such as village life, kinship, social relationships, weddings, funerals and so on (Bennardo, 2009). Based on my experiences, two individuals from two different *kainga* inside one village identify themselves as different people when referring to each other. However, when referring to a different village, all the *kainga* within the village fuse and identify themselves as one. When referring to people from a different district, the villages within the district fuse and become one. The same goes on at a national level where islanders from the Pacific identify themselves as Pacific Islanders when there is a reference to America or other nations.

The concept of fission and fusion ties into this study of cultural models through the previously mentioned rating/measuring concept. The cultural model of identity will have different components. When there is a fission, some components of the model will become more salient than others. When there is fusion, other aspects will become more salient than the rest. This shift in saliency could vary in different situations and contexts. This issue relates to the fact that a cultural model is flexibly applied, and it contains, in our case, graded concepts such as kinship and place.

This phenomenon is triggered by one important aspect of context, which is place (where people are). It is tied to place more than kinship. In fact, it is when being in different places that the shift occurs. For example, in accordance with this concept of fission and fusion, Tongans overseas fuse with other Pacific Islanders when addressing other ethnicities due to the saliency of
place, where everyone identifies as from the same place (the Pacific Islands). Fission, on the other hand, occurs on a smaller scale within the Pacific Islands or further into the villages within an island. This concept of fission and fusion reflects the use of different aspects of the cultural model of identity in different contexts. It also indicates that the content of the cultural model of Tongan identity may contain graded categories.
CHAPTER 3

ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING

I chose to conduct my research in two places; one is the island of Tongatapu in the Kingdom of Tonga and the other is the surrounding areas of San Bernardino in California. The Kingdom of Tonga is an archipelago consisting of 170 islands in the South Pacific Ocean (Figure 3.1). Out of these 170 islands, only 36 are inhabited, and the island of Tongatapu is the main island where the capital Nuku’alofa is located (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.1: Tonga on a world map.
According to the CIA World Factbook, as of July 2017, the population of the Kingdom of Tonga consists of 106,479 people with the majority between the ages of 25-54 (34.3% of the population) and a life expectancy of 76.4 years. An estimate in 2006 shows the different ethnic groups in Tonga as Tongan 96.6%, part-Tongan 1.7%, other 1.7% and unspecified 0.03%. The most prominent religions in the Kingdom are Wesleyan (consisting of multiple Tongan Churches such as Tokaikolo, Free Church of Tonga, and Church of Tonga), Mormon, and Roman Catholic,
with Christianity being the most widely accepted faith in the Kingdom, such that Tonga may be called a Christian nation.

The Kingdom of Tonga is the only remaining monarchy in the South Pacific and has been united under the rule of the current dynasty, the Tu’i Kanokupolu, since 1845 (CIA World Factbook, 2018). Tonga is currently a constitutional monarchy and is trying to implement a more democratic approach to government. The fifth monarch of the current dynasty, King George Tupou V, announced the relinquishing of most of his power as absolute ruler and decision maker for the parliament in 2010. Before 2010, the government was appointed by the king, and there were no political parties. The parliament seats consisted of nine nobility title holders, two governors, at least four cabinet ministers appointed by the king, and nine representatives voted by the people (Campbell, 2005). As of 2010, the number of people’s representatives went up to 17. The position of prime minister is now voted by the appointed members of Parliament, who are now mostly made up of members appointed by the people, with the current prime minister being the leader of the Democratic Party that initially campaigned for this reform, ‘Akilisi Pōhiva.

The Kingdom of Tonga still remains a hierarchical society regardless of the implementation and push towards democracy. There are three main levels to this hierarchy, with others being subcategories of these main levels. The top is undoubtedly the tu’i [King] being unchallenged in his/her status. A subcategory of this level consists of his/her immediate family. These are the princes and princesses. The second level includes the chiefs or hou’eiki who are more commonly known now as nōpele [nobles.] The subcategory of this level is the matāpule [working/talking chief] that carries out the orders and decisions of the hou’eiki. The final and bottom level of the social hierarchy consists of the commoners/ordinary people or kakai. There
are many ways that people use to move from level to level in the hierarchy. This includes marrying into the hou’eki, and also at times titles are appointed by the king or the chiefs to individuals who have contributed to the Kingdom or as a sign of respect and acknowledgement for someone’s achievements.

The main language spoken in Tonga is Tongan, while the secondary language that is most well known besides Tongan is English. As for other languages besides these two, e.g., French, Japanese and Chinese among others, they are also present but at a very low-frequency level because they are only taught as optional foreign languages in high schools and tertiary schools. The presence of these other languages is due mostly to tourism and the many foreigners who visit and stay at the islands of the Kingdom of Tonga for a little while. This presence is also due to Tongan students who go to study in foreign countries and learn the local language there.

A form of traditional material wealth in Tonga is based on ngatu [tapa cloth] and fine mats that are used as gifts or offerings to royalty and those of high status. These materials are shown and flaunted during traditional functions such as weddings, funerals, specific birthdays (especially the 21st birthday that is a sign of reaching adulthood), and other public events. In Tongan events that are held in public, the hierarchical statuses among the guests and the fakaafefakaalangilangi [guest of honor] are always specifically marked. The places/seats where these individuals are seated are covered with the best ngatu and fine mats that the host family or village can present.

The reason for the importance and value of these items is associated to the difficult and lengthy process that it takes to make them. Ngatu is made from the bark of the hiapo [paper mulberry tree.] Many hiapo plants are grown and cut down. Then, their bark is removed, washed at sea, dried and finally beaten with a ike [mallet] until they expand while becoming very thin.
These thin sheets are then stuck and beaten together with other sheets to make a tapa cloth that could reach around 75ft long and 15ft wide, even bigger if need be. This whole process of beating and sticking together is often done by a group of women. In villages, almost all of the adult females would work together in making these *ngatu* for each other, allocating a *ngatu* per person until they all each have one and more if they need it. This group is called *koka’anga*. After this process is complete, they use traditional ink—made mostly from boiled mangrove roots—to draw traditional designs on the *ngatu* using a *kupesi*, which is a wooden tablet carved with traditional designs. The *ngatu* is placed over the tablets, pressed so that the design of the tablet is transferred on it, and then painted with the prepared ink.

It usually takes months to complete one of these big *ngatu* cloths and it requires many people (women) working together. This is also true for the making of *fala* [fine mats] that are made from different varieties of pandanus leaves. These leaves are dried out and cut into strips and then woven to make the mats. The process of making these mats also takes up a lot of time and need many people to make them faster. The group of women who weaves the mats in groups is called a *lālanga* [weaving] group. These mats are also large in size, and there is also an important use for them according to Tongan customs and traditions.

A smaller sized mat called the *ta’ovala* is worn around a person’s waist as a sign of respect. The *ta’ovala* is used in all Tongan traditional functions and carries different meanings in different situations. For example, in funerals, those who are closest (in terms of kinship; the nuclear family of the deceased) wear bigger and more tattered *ta’ovala* than the other members of the *kainga*. This is also true for those who are of lower status than the deceased. In any traditional or nowadays “professional” event, as a sign of respect, people wear their *ta’ovala* around their waist before participating.
Ngatu and fine mats play a major role in Tongan society. They are not only used to show respect and carry out traditional responsibilities but also as a form of income for some families. Because of the difficulty in making these authentic Tongan craft goods and due to the importance of money in the new emerging market economy, only those families who are better off financially can afford to purchase these goods rather than trying to make their own. With the arrival of the internet and social media today, there are some people who have expanded their market to overseas, including the United States. These families advertise and sell their crafts to Tongan individuals and families in communities overseas who are interested in purchasing them.

The Village of Kala’au and Nuku’alofa.

I conducted my data collection for this research in the village of Kala’au on the Western side of Tongatapu as shown in Figure 3.3 and also in the surrounding areas of the capital Nuku’alofa. The village of Kala’au currently consists of 121 people, with the majority under the age of 23. There are two churches in the village. One is the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga and the other is the Church of Tonga. There are also members of other religions such as the Mormon Church, the Assembly of God and the Seventh-day Adventists.

According to the elders of the village, the residents of Kala’au are all connected to one ancestor who resided at the area during the period of the first monarchy headed by the Tu’i Tonga (AD950 - 1500s). He resided there with his wife and their children who married to individuals of other villages and outer islands and brought them to Kala’au to live there. The elders of the main families now can all trace back their lineage to the founding family, and they try to pass on this knowledge to the younger generation. Over the years, there has been a lot of
migration due to marriages and the common Tongan practice of adoptions. Currently, Kala’au residents consist also of new families from outer islands that have connections to Kala’au through marriage and have moved to the island of Tongatapu to support their relatives who married into the village. According to the census of the village residents, none of the current residents are considered *hafekasi* [half-caste] or of another ethnic identity besides Tongan.

*Figure 3.3:* The village of Kala’au (from nona.net).

The majority of the resident families of Kala’au consist of farmers and fishermen who rely on their crops and catches at sea initially for personal consumption but also for monetary income. The wives and older girls are part of a *lālanga* [weaving group] and a *koka’anga* [tapa making group] where they work together to make fine mats, *ngatu* [tapa cloth] and handicraft not only for special occasions such as weddings, birthdays, and funerals, as explained earlier, but also for sale. In the village, there are a few school teachers and carpenters, construction workers and fruit pickers who go to Australia and New Zealand in the fruit-picking season. However, like
all the other villagers, they also have their own plots of land that they farm for family consumption.

Nuku’alofa is the capital of the Kingdom of Tonga, located in the main island of Tongatapu as shown in Figure 3.4. Nuku’alofa is the place where people expect every new trend or development to start from. The middle of the capital is host to all the parliamentary and judiciary buildings and centers. It also hosts the market and fishing wharf where people from all around Tongatapu come to buy and sell their produce and catch of the day. Nuku’alofa is also host to other structures such as banks, the post office, the king’s palace, and many other structures making it an embodiment of high status and also the closest one could call an “urban” area in comparison to the villages.

![Figure 3.4: Nuku’alofa map (from Google Maps)](image)

The residents of the surrounding area of Nuku’alofa are made up of many different types of people from different places in the Kingdom. The families in these area of Nuku’alofa are
made up of many different clans and *kainga* [extended family.] This is in contrast to the tight-knit composition of the village residents of Kala’au, since they are mostly from one single *kainga*. Similar to how people from other islands move to villages in Tongatapu to stay with relatives for a number of reasons, the surrounding areas of Nuku’alofa also host people not just from the other islands, but also from villages in the east and west of Tongatapu. Typically people move to the capital area and stay with relatives there in order to be close to government offices, schools and working places in general.

The majority of the residents in this area have jobs in the capital or in places close to it. There are also some who have jobs in the capital and also maintain a plot of land on the eastern or western side of the island—where they are from—to cultivate crops for family consumption. Although it is very rare, there are some families who reside in rental homes near or within the capital. The reason this is rare, is because land is only owned by Tongans and is passed down from generation to generation. No matter where one moves to, there is always a piece of land where one can go home to, whether it is one’s own land or one’s parents or *kainga*. Nevertheless, there are still some personal circumstances and difficulties so that few people end up having to pay rent for a roof over one’s head where the majority of Tongan families never find themselves in such a predicament.

**San Bernardino, California.**

The second location where I conducted my research is San Bernardino, California. San Bernardino is located in the south of California as shown in Figure 3.5. This area has been the target of several decades of migration from Tonga. The local Tongans tend to reside in close
communities whose social life mostly focuses on Tongan churches. Members of the community meet in the church from time to time to socialize and often to welcome groups of visitors from Tonga. These latter, typically relatives, visit the community for a number of different reasons that often includes fundraising for special events back home.

Figure 3.5: San Bernardino, California, locator (from World Atlas).

According to the United States Census Bureau, as of 2016, the population of San Bernardino City, California was 216,239 people. Because most ethnic categories in United States Censuses include Pacific Islanders as Asians, I could not find a specific number about the population of Tongans residing in the city of San Bernardino, California. The Tongans in the community that I worked with are from San Bernardino and also include some Tongans who joined the San Bernardino Community from the neighboring Colton City, California.

The Tongans in this community are all from different backgrounds and walks of life. This ranges from length of stay in the United States to different occupations and educations. The
people who belong to this Tongan community consist of up to fourth-generation “Tongan Americans” (I use this phrase because some of the participants referred to themselves in this way) whose great-grandparents migrated to the United States and gained citizenship. There are also second-and third-generation “Tongan Americans” as well. The majority of the adult members of this community are first-generation immigrants who moved to the United States from the 1980s up to 2016. Examples of how and why some people migrated are presented in Chapter 4 under Demographics of Participants.

The most common occupation and form of income among the adults is yard work and construction. This is very common among the first-generation immigrants. People are also engaged in other jobs which range from being a hairdresser and a barber to being a consultant at an insurance company. In terms of education, most of the adults who migrated to the United States have finished high school back in the Kingdom of Tonga. Some of them actually dropped out due to personal reasons during high school, before migrating. In the younger generation, there are a few who are pursuing a college degree in different fields such as culinary arts, music, theology and other interests as well. The majority of the younger generation (up to 25 years of age) have graduated from high school, either in Tonga or in the United States. They are currently helping their parents with their jobs (boys helping out doing yard work and construction with their fathers) or taking up jobs such as working in retail.

The members of this community are not all from the same kainga [extended family] or area back in Tonga, although some actually are. Some migrated from the main island of Tongatapu, while some are from the other islands. Those from the same island sometimes are related to one another. However, there is also a very common practice among Tongans wherein they can always find a connection or a relative that makes them connected to any other Tongan
one way or the other, e.g., by ancestry, marriage and sometimes friendship, and call this connection *kainga*.

The majority of the families in this community reside in rental homes and single-family homes and in some cases there are up to nine people living in one house, six of whom are adults (people over 21 years of age). The main place to purchase food are the local food marts and supermarkets such as Walmart. This community also tries to cook traditional Tongan dishes as often as possible. This leads to the use of some ingredients that are not always available in the United States. For example, taro leaves are often bought from certain individuals who try to grow the taro plants in certain areas. This is done not only by those within the Tongan community but also other Pacific Islanders, including the Samoan community.

There are times when a frozen food container is shipped straight from Tonga that is filled with tropical tubers such as *talo* [taro,] ‘*uфи* [Tongan yams,] *kape* [giant taro] (it tastes completely different from taro), *kumala* [sweet potato,] *manioke* [tapioca] and other tubers as well. These food containers are often from relatives back home who send the food to the United States to sell to members of the Pacific Islander communities who miss the traditional foods. Coconut milk is also very important in Tongan cuisine. The lack of it has not been a problem since coconut milk is sold in cans and cartons in United States supermarkets.

Keeping their Tongan traditions and values is difficult, but they try to keep them alive and practice them with some understandable adaptations. For example, the funeral customs are the same as in Tonga, but they need to comply with US federal and state laws. In Tonga, funerals are accompanied by multitudes of people taking turns singing hymns and funeral songs, mostly during the day of the burial, often taking place the night before the burial all the way to the morning of the burial. When conducting funerals in this community, this part is either minimized
to a very short time or it is completely removed. In addition, Tongan traditional funerals are always accompanied by the slaughtering of at least one grown cow and a big pig to feed the guests and members of kainga from different places who attend the funeral. This does not happen with Tongan funerals in this community.

For weddings, although some may try to keep the traditional proceedings conducted in Tongan weddings, (e.g., wearing traditional wedding clothing made of fine mats and tapa, the kava wedding ceremony), the majority of people adopt the United States’ traditional wedding proceedings, e.g., wearing the white dress and the veil, tuxedo, vows, throwing of the bouquet and so on. The traditional personal statuses, e.g., the fahu which I explain on Chapter 2, and the wealth associated with them still exists but in a different form. Mostly monetary gifts have taken the place of the use of ngatu [tapa cloth] and fine mats.

Another tradition that is kept alive in this community is the social hierarchy. Those who had chiefly status while in Tonga before migrating retain that status when in the United States. However, there are a few differences and adaptations. Because of the many Tongan cultural events that need those with chiefly title to be present, the holder of each title name needs to physically be in Tonga during these times. Therefore, for those who are chiefly title holders and have migrated to the United States, the responsibilities related to the title name fall upon younger brothers or sons who are still residing in Tonga. When the chief returns to Tonga in the future, he may either retain his position or remain as an honorary member of the events that are being held (this is decided upon among those of high status within that clan). There are also cases when

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5 For the fahu, whether it is a funeral, wedding or any traditional event, the wealth (best) of the gifts in these events are all given to the fahu. He/she then decides what to do with the gifts, whether he/she keeps them or distributes them to other members of the kainga.

6 Chiefly titles are hereditary and are always passed down from father to son. If there is no heir/son, the position passes down to the younger brother of the chief or whomever the clan decides on.
some chief title holders keep their titles while overseas and return to Tonga whenever they are needed. There are also those in this community who are close family members with chief title holders back in Tonga, and they are referred to as that chief’s representative in this community.

The members of this community are made up of people from different villages and islands within the Kingdom. Each village (and some small islands) has their own hou'eiki [chief.] This chief has at least one related matāpule [working chief] (this person carries out the decisions of the hou'eiki). Matāpule are also a hereditary titles and are specific to each village (some villages are connected to one major clan and there are some overlaps in title names among them; some villages have similar chief titles). As a sign of respect between members of this community (especially during kava circles and community events), those from each respective village are referred to by that village’s matāpule titles. If there are two from one village, they share one title each. For the hou'eiki titles, they are seldom used to address others unless they are closely related to the line of those of hou'eiki.

In terms of everyday life, the members of this community conduct themselves in a seemingly effortless way trying to adapt to life in the United States. They keep a balance between this new lifestyle and holding on to the Tongan traditions and values and try to pass them down to the next generation. Even though change is inevitable when moving to a different place with its own culture and traditions, the members of this community still conduct themselves with the same respect and pride that is seen back in Tonga. As mentioned earlier, there are some traditions and cultural norms that have been slightly adapted to fit into the society in which they are currently living. These adaptive changes can be interpreted and used as a platform for change, that is, a way for the Tongan traditions and culture to evolve and adapt to the future when more Tongans continue to migrate and assimilate to other cultures and traditions.
CHAPTER 4

 METHODOLOGY

In order to find out what the Tongan cultural model of identity is, I conducted research with a mostly qualitative approach, also including a quantitative approach. I chose this type of approach based on the theoretical framework of cultural model theory, which suggests a tripartite methodology including collecting and analyzing ethnographic data, linguistic data, and cognitive data (Bennardo & De Munck, 2014). Each type of data complements the other and eventually contribute to the discovery of a cultural model. Ethnographic data serves as a basis for forming inferences on what the culture of the community is. Then, linguistic data is collected with semi-structured interviews, and an in-depth analysis of these data follows which is embedded in the ethnographic knowledge of the chosen community. Finally, cognitive/memory data is collected and analyzed in order to access the community’s shared perspective, i.e., a cultural model, following a different route from the one traversed through ethnographic and language data and analysis, the assumption being that the three types of results would eventually complement each other by contributing different and hopefully overlapping insights into the cultural model investigated.

My target population consists of Tongans living in Tonga and Tongans living in the United States of America. The reason for choosing these two populations stems from the idea that an individual’s residency anywhere and the length of stay may affect and contribute to the way they think, which leads to the construction of their identity (Radford, 2017). In the United
States, I conducted research on one of the Tongan communities in the state of California. In Tonga, I conducted research in the main island of Tongatapu.

Choosing a Sample

The sample of the population I selected includes 28 participants, 17 from Tongatapu and 11 from California. These individuals were chosen according to a number of parameters such as gender, age sets, social status, education, and occupation. Another parameter that was taken into account was the length of residency in the United States. This included individuals who were born and raised in the United States but have visited Tonga in their lives; others who lived in the United States all their lives with stories from the older generations as their only knowledge of Tonga; and first-generation immigrants who have become residents of the United States.

The target communities in Tonga were a village on the western side of the island of Tongatapu and the surrounding areas around the capital, Nuku’alofa. The reasons why I chose these two areas are to explore and compare two different perspectives on the topic of Tongan identity due to the differences in lifestyle and the level of outside influences from foreign cultures and development through globalization. Another reason for this choice is because, since there is a clearly felt separation between the two major groups, mainly the Tongan and the USA groups but also within the Tongan group between the two areas studied (the small village and the capital), the process of “fission and fusion” may have a role.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all the participants, and each participant was briefed on the general idea of what they would be questioned about, explaining that I would be interviewing them about their perception of the Tongan people who migrate to and from the
islands. I chose participants on a volunteer basis, both among the Tonga and the United States populations. At first, I had to find a connection with someone in both populations, and luckily, I had relatives in both areas who helped in setting up interviews with potential participants. The volunteers also referred other participants whom I was glad to include in the research. The age range of my participants is 25-75.

The interviews were conducted wherever the interviewees were most comfortable. For the participants from the Tonga population, the majority of the interviews were held in each of their respective homes. Only 4 out of 17 asked to be interviewed elsewhere (e.g., in the church hall; under a mango tree outside of their house). For the participants from San Bernardino, California, eight were interviewed at their homes, and three were interviewed at the Methodist Church hall. The interviews were videotaped and then transcribed. Some participants were not comfortable with being videotaped but agreed to only be audio recorded. These recordings were carried out with the full consent of the participants, and there were individuals who did not volunteer to participate in any form of recording but were very open to talk about the topic off-the-record. They also agreed for me to use their perspective as a contribution to my research.

Demographics of Participants.

The participants consisted of 16 females and 12 males; 17 of them were within the age group of 25-50, and 11 were between the ages of 50 and 75. In the Tongan sample population, nine of them were from a village on the west side of the island of Tongatapu, and eight of them were from the same island in the area around the capital, Nuku’alofa.
The participants from the United States were very diverse, each having different experiences about living in America. Two of them were born and raised in the United States, without any experience of visiting Tonga; three others came to the United States when they were under ten years old, not remembering a lot about their experiences in Tonga. Three more participants had recently migrated to the United States over the past ten years and have become permanent residents. Another three came to the United States in their late teens and had occasionally gone back to Tonga for major family events like weddings, funerals and reunions.

Participants from Tonga.

Participant SF (I use acronyms to preserve privacy) from Tonga is a 46-year-old male from a village in the western side of Tongatapu (the main island with the capital of the Kingdom of Tonga) called Kala’au. He is now a farmer whose main source of income is selling what he can from his crops from his plantation. He used to work for a Korean fishing boat and travelled at sea for months, even years, and would send money back to his siblings and their families. He is now living by himself in their family home while most of his relatives are living overseas all over the world, in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, and also in Europe.

Participant AT from Tonga is a 64-year-old female who is a retired primary school teacher for 10 years now. She was a teacher for over 20 years before she retired. She lives in the village of Kala’au with her children and grandchildren. She has many relatives who live both in the outer islands of the Kingdom and overseas. She does a lot of koka’anga [making traditional bark-cloth] to sell and also to prepare for cultural events.

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7 Tongan schools are only three levels; primary school for six years, high school for six years, and tertiary school for as long as one needs to depending on the subject chosen; tertiary is same as college level in the USA. One has to finish four years in tertiary before becoming a teacher.
Participant IT is a 71-year-old male from Tonga who lives in the village of Kala’au. He was a high school student who made it to the last year of high school before dropping out due to financial difficulties. He is still a fisherman who goes diving for fish and other seafood to sell, although not as much as he used to. Only one of his children lives with him now, as the rest of his children and grandchildren are overseas, mostly in Australia. They send money over to him so he does not have to work (fish) anymore, but he stubbornly wants to keep going to the sea because he loves it.

Participant FA is a 72-year-old female from Tonga, also living in Kala’au. She lives with her husband and daughter, but most of her children are married overseas and live all around Europe. She was in primary school for six years before she dropped out. She weaves mats and makes traditional handicrafts for sale, and her daughter and grandchildren help her. From time to time, her relatives from the capital come to take her to live with them, but after a while, she just wants to come back to her village.

Participant FE is a 69-year-old female from the island of Vava’u in the northeast of Tongatapu. She was in primary school for five years before she dropped out to help her mother with taking care of her siblings. She got married to a man in Kala’au and has lived there since getting married. She has a few of her children overseas, but most of them are still in the Kingdom, even though they are in different islands. She weaves traditional mats and makes tapa cloth for sale.

Participant LF is a 51-year-old male from Kala’au. He studied all the way to the fourth year in high school and then dropped out to help his father with the farm. He lives with his wife and son in Kala’au and works as a carpenter and a subsistence farmer. Their main source of income is from his carpentry work and his wife making tapa cloth and fine mats. LF says that he
does not have any relatives overseas, and his only connection with places outside of the Kingdom is when he went to Australia once to pick fruits for a farm there. He says that it was not a good experience and that he would never do it again.

Participant SA is a 47-year-old male from the island of Vava’u. He is currently the Wesleyan priest assigned to the delegation in Kala’au. He has been in Kala’au for a full year now, and he moved there with his wife and three children. SA has many friends and families overseas in New Zealand and the United States in Salt Lake City, Utah. He says he still keeps in contact with all of them and that he is thankful for the diverse connections from which he can learn a lot.

Participant FNE is a 44-year-old female from Kala’au. She lives with her husband and four kids. She finished six years in high school and then settled down. Her eldest son works in a resort, which is where they get their income from, while her husband works at the plantation from which he gets food for family consumption and to sell for money. She has many relatives who are married and live overseas in New Zealand and Australia, and she says they keep in contact frequently.

Participant PF is a 42-year-old male from Kala’au. He completed high school and went on to study in tertiary for two years before he went into carpentry. He lives with his wife and six kids. Recently, they spend most of their time in the nearby village of Te’ekiu where his wife is from, due to her parents being sick. He has many siblings and friends living overseas, and he himself travels a lot to New Zealand and Australia to visit friends and family.

Participant AFS is a 30-year-old female from the outskirts of Nuku’alofa (the capital of the Kingdom of Tonga). She is married with one child, and she recently received a Certificate for
Participant LL is a 47-year-old female from Kolomotu’a (also near the capital, Nuku’alofa). She completed high school and has been working at a radio station in Nuku’alofa for two years now. She worked for a newspaper before that. She travels from time to time to New Zealand to visit her sister and her family there, and she says she has never been anywhere else outside of Tonga.

Participant ST is a 26-year-old female from Kolofo’ou (the outskirts of the capital). She is currently a student at the University of the South Pacific in Tongatapu, and she is still undecided on what her goal is after school. ST lives with her parents who are both primary-school teachers at Kolofo’ou. She has never been outside of Tonga, besides going to the outer islands in the Kingdom. She has family in New Zealand and Wales, and from time to time they come and visit her family.

Participant AF is a 42-year-old female from Kolomotu’a (the outskirts of the capital). She works at the Christian radio station in Nuku’alofa. She is also part of an evangelical Christian group that runs Bible studies every Sunday afternoon. AF lives with her husband and five kids. She has been abroad in Australia for over a month for a family visit. She is currently thinking about applying for citizenship in New Zealand so her children can move there with her, and that is where most of her siblings and relatives are.

Participant PL is a 52-year-old male from Te’ekiui and is now living in Kolomotu’a with his wife and three kids. He is working at a telephone company as a salesperson. PL says that he
has no relatives overseas and that most of them live in Tongatapu while some live in the outer islands. The only place he has been to overseas is Fiji to study there at the University of the South Pacific.

Participant SL is a 27-year-old female from Vaotu’u married to and now living in Kolofo’ou. She graduated from high school and studied at tertiary level for three years before she decided not to continue. She found a passion for making handicrafts, especially out of coconut shells and has been making a living out of selling those to tourists and also making fine mats for sale.

Participant SV is a 38-year-old woman from Kolomotu’a. She is a single mother of four. She went to high school for five years and then had to drop out for financial reasons. She is now making handicrafts and fine mats for sale and also making tapa (bark cloth) which she ships to her younger sister in Australia to sell to Tongans living there. SV has never been outside of Tonga, but she says her sister is working on applying for residency for her and her family to go live in Australia.

Participant SUI is a 53-year-old male from Kolofo’ou. He is married with eight children, and he is a farmer who mostly farms Tongan ʻufi [yams] for export to places like the United States and New Zealand. SUI went to high school for four years but had to drop out due to his mother passing away; after that his family could not afford to pay tuition. He came back and helped his older brother and father in the plantation with planting ʻufi and they began exporting it to mostly Tongan communities overseas who want Tongan food but cannot access it where they are. He travels back and forth due to this business and also to find other work whenever he can. He also does some landscaping and carpentry work.
Participants from the U.S.A.

Participant AA is a 61-year-old female who migrated to the United States when she was 16 years old. She lives with her husband and two children in San Bernardino, California, and has only been to Tonga a total of five times since she has been in the United States; the most recent visit was in 2009. AA went to high school for four years in Tonga before she dropped out and moved to the United States searching for a better life and the hope to help her family back in Tonga. She is currently retired and is part of the Tongan community in her area of residence (San Bernardino, Colton, and others).

Participant TKT is a 34-year-old female also from San Bernardino, California. She migrated to the United States five years ago and is now a permanent resident. TKT works at a retail store near her house, and she currently resides with her aunt and three cousins. TKT says she has not been to Tonga in the last five years, but is planning on a visit next year to see her family back in Tonga.

Participant TKF is a 52-year-old female born in the island of Vava’u (one of the main islands of the Kingdom of Tonga) and moved to California at the age of eight. Her aunt flew her over to raise her as one of her own because she did not have any children. TKF has been to Tonga twice since then for only short periods of time to visit relatives.

Participant ELM is a 68-year-old female born and raised in the island of Tongatapu (the main island where the capital is). She recently moved to the United States three years ago to be close to her children. All five of her children are in the United States, and she gets to visit them in different states from time to time.
Participant SEL is a 61-year-old female also born and raised in Tongatapu. SEL came to the United States after she graduated from high school at the age of 17. Her older sister at the time was already an American citizen and offered to help her get her citizenship while trying to apply for college. She ended up going to college and later got a job working at a nursing home. She is now retired, married and living with her daughter and four grandchildren.

Participant PMA is a 48-year-old male. He was born and raised in Tongatapu, graduated from high school, and then helped his father out at the plantation, as it was their main source of income. PMA moved to the United States nine years ago to live with his mother and brother. PMA has now been working in landscaping and doing yard work for the past five years.

Participant SSA is a 39-year-old male who was born and raised in the United States. SSA has never been to the Kingdom of Tonga, although he wishes that one day he could. He is very fluent in speaking Tongan and insisted on conducting this research in his native Tongan language. He has been taught by his parents about what it means to be Tongan, how to behave. He is currently studying business in college, likes drinking kava (Polynesian drink) a lot, and participates in many of the Tongan traditional events (dances, singing, and get-togethers) that are being held in his community.

Participant LAV is a 28-year-old female who was also born and raised in the United States. She is currently studying to be an opera singer and would like to teach opera to Tongans back in the islands when she graduates. LAV’s parents moved to the United States more than 40 years ago and are long-standing members of the Pacific Islander community.

Participant TLO is a 26-year-old male born and raised in the island of Tongatapu. His grandparents raised him until he was seven and then moved to the United States where his
biological parents were. TLO does not remember much about his childhood in Tonga, just a few snippets of events that happened. TLO is helping out his father with his landscaping job while taking business classes at a community college.

Participant TPA is a 50-year-old female born and raised in the island of Vava’u in Tonga. She graduated from high school at the age of 17, before her mother passed away, and her uncle (mother’s brother) offered to take her with him to the United States to get a better life. Most of her relatives were overseas and she was an only child when both parents passed away. She is now married with three children.

Participant SM is a 32-year-old female born in the island of Ha’apai in Tonga. She was adopted when she was five by her mother’s sister who lived in the United States. SM now works at a restaurant together with one of her cousins. SM visits her family in Tonga from time to time, but no more than a month in each trip.

**Types of Data Collected.**

**Ethnographic Data.**

As mentioned earlier, the theoretical framework of the cultural model theory leads to a tripartite data collection methodology. Consequently, I collected ethnographic, linguistic and cognitive/memory data. The ethnographic data includes the literature review about Tonga that I have done and also personal experience as a native Tongan with knowledge of the culture. This is important because it contributes to making the methodology of the research appropriate to the culture being studied and also assists in the interpretation of the data during the analyses.
I also conducted participant observation throughout this research, observing and writing down notes on casual and formal interactions when people talk about a comparison between Tongans in Tonga and overseas, what the Tongan people are known for, and what a Tongan should do to be considered Tongan. In casual settings such as the kava (a Pacific Island traditional drink made from a pepper plant) drinking places, I would start a conversation about emigrants and people who moved to and from the islands for a variety of reasons, and everyone would talk about their experiences and ideas about different people. These casual conversations supplied a great deal of information about the topic of my investigation.

Ethnographic data serves as a basis for learning and understanding the culture on which one is planning to conduct research. In relation to the focus of the research, published literature with ethnographic data shows what work has been done on the subject, what methodologies were used, and also paints a picture of how the people react to certain topics of conversation. When analyzing ethnographic data, one gets to make general inferences on the culture that is being studied, based on this ethnographic knowledge. Each culture has its own traditions and way of life. Understanding this first and building a considerable amount of cultural competency helps make the research more significant to the people that are being researched and builds a connection with them that is rooted on respect.

**Linguistic Data.**

Language is considered a gateway/entrance into the mind. It serves as an important doorway into how people think (D’Andrade, 1995; Quinn, 2005; Strauss and Quinn, 1997). In order to investigate a cultural model that is by definition shared among a community, I used a
semi-structured interview and administered it to a sample of the population. I asked the same major questions across all my informants. Semi-structured interviews are essential in collecting linguistic data in search of a cultural model. It allows the participants to freely follow their own train of thought and make connections to what they think is important without being constrained to a certain type of response. There were other questions that I asked in reaction to some of the stories told by the informants relate to different situations, but the major questions remained the same for all my interviews. Because cultural models are out of awareness, the questions were chosen to focus on some topic that would indirectly activate their model of Tongan identity. I also tried to avoid as much priming as possible.

The questions were constructed with the idea of investigating the cultural model of Tongan identity in mind. However, as mentioned earlier, I focused on a topic that indirectly activates the cultural model of identity due to the fact that cultural models operate out of awareness and therefore it is not productive to ask direct questions. In my case, I chose to ask about migration and the relationships between emigrants and the people who stay behind in the islands.

Migration has been a salient phenomenon in the Pacific Islands since the 1940s. Tonga started to migrate overseas in the 1950s and this wave has not slowed down since then (Dixon and Small, 2004). This migration is due to many reasons, mainly looking for ways to make money and send back remittances for the families in the islands. I asked a variety of questions about the participant’s relationships with people who have migrated overseas, people from other islands (or states in the case of the United States) within the Kingdom, people who have one Tongan parent and one foreign one. I also asked for a comparison between these groups of people not specifying what type of comparison. They each had their own way of comparing,
whether it was focusing on differences and similarities in behavior, physical features, or others (see Appendix for a list of the questions I used).

I asked the same questions to both populations in Tonga and the United States. The questions focused on the relationship within their own groups and with people from the other population. These questions were of an explanatory nature and they were asked to just talk about their experiences, whatever they could think of about the relationships they had. When the participant provided only a yes/no answer or a very short answer, I added more probing questions to those included in the semi-structure interview I had prepared. Typically, I used questions of this type: “Can you explain more about that?”; “Can you think of something else that you can add to what you already said?” and other similar ones.

In general, all the questions I asked were very helpful in obtaining data for the research and the participants answered enthusiastically in talking about themselves and their experiences. The stories that they told reflected their views on “what it means to be Tongan,” stating approval and disapproval of certain aspects of behavior, language, and other things when talking about Tonga. This was the same both in the participants in Tonga and in the United States.

When analyzing the transcripts of the interviews collected, there were three levels of analysis included: word level, sentence level, and discourse level. At the word level, the analysis of the data was done by looking for keywords that are most commonly used by the participants when talking about the topic investigated, i.e., cultural model of Tongan identity. These keywords were taken from both the raw transcribed data of the interviews and the gist of said transcripts. The gist was obtained by rewriting the transcripts with the main points of each answer to my questions being highlighted and put into a separate file. This brought out the main points from each individual participant and salient concepts mentioned about Tongan identity.
The results of the keyword analysis was later tabulated by using Microsoft Excel. The transcripts, both the original and the gist versions were then processed in Excel to find out which words were used most frequently, especially in describing topics such as migration, half-cast Tongans, people living overseas and others.

At the sentence level, I conducted a semantic role analysis on the language of the transcripts and looked for which key words were used as the agents or patients within the sentence. The keywords were the ones obtained from the results of the keyword analysis. I chose the top five terms together with some other terms that were chosen out of saliency rather than frequency. This was done to look at the meaning of words in relations to other words in the sentences in order to find out how the participants conceived of Tongan identity in the various situations discussed. When looking at sentences in the transcripts, I also kept tabs of common phrases used to describe different situations and how often they appeared among all the participants.

After conducting these analyses, I then moved forward to the discourse level. I conducted a reasoning and causal analysis on the same transcribed interviews, looking for the factors that cause or lead to what it means to be Tongan, according to the participants. These questions guided my analysis: What are the most frequent causes that the participants agree on which make a person Tongan? What are the most frequent instances of reasoning including these causes? These analyses were mostly done by initially using Microsoft Excel to count occurrences of types of reasoning and then by using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA. This latter was helpful in the coding of these different types of reasoning and causal passages by sorting them into groups. At the same time, I could easily go back to each reasoning type and still access the linguistic context of its occurrence in the texts. This made it possible for me to
interpret with more confidence ambiguous and what at times appeared to be obscure instances of reasoning.

**Cognitive/Memory Data.**

It is easier for people to remember things that are most important to them or things they do frequently. It is for this reason that I conducted a free listing task about the researched topic, which is Tongan identity. By conducting this task, I was able find out what concepts are most important to the participants when thinking about what it is to be Tongan. For this task, I first introduced a scenario within which the participants were to imagine meeting a stranger and figure out whether the person is Tongan or not (see Appendix). The participants were asked to list as many things they could think of and that they would consider important before deciding if the stranger is Tongan, whatever these things may be. An assumption of the task is that what they first list/remember will be the most salient concepts in their minds.

The analysis of the cognitive data was done by entering all the results of the free listing task into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then comparing the various lists. The terms that appeared the most across the board (everyone mentioned it) were considered to be the most salient as a shared perspective. Their position (the time it was mentioned; first, second, and so on) also played a relevant role on deciding which were the most salient among the terms.

These three data collection and analysis strategies were used both in the Tongan population in Tonga and the Tongan population in the United States. There were three levels of comparison done within the analyses. The first was a general comparison which included all 28 participants. The second was a comparison between the Tongan participants residing in Tonga
and the participants residing in the USA. The last comparison was conducted within both communities among different groups of people who share similarities such as place of residence, social status, gender, age, and number of years in the education system (refer to Chapter 6 for more details about these comparisons).

The reason I conducted these comparisons was to find the differences or lack thereof within the two communities and between them. The results of all these analyses contribute to refining my hypothesis about the Tongan cultural model of identity I will suggest at the end of the analyses of the ethnographic and linguistic data.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Results of Keyword Analysis.

After transcribing the interviews, I entered all the words in the texts into Microsoft Excel and tabulated them to compute their frequencies. Then, in conducting a keyword analysis of all the transcripts, I selected a set of words that were most frequently used when referring to the concept of Tongan identity. I also selected some terms that were not highly frequent but nevertheless I considered them as very salient in relation to the topic I am investigating, i.e., Tongan identity. I present the top five most frequent words and the three salient terms, though less frequent, in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Most Salient Keywords

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lea</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulungaanga</td>
<td>658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faka’apa’apa</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palangi</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kainga</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafekasi</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toto</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the top five terms, we can see a pattern of saliency attributed to these concepts. Since Tongan identity is the topic being discussed, it is understandable that *Tonga* is the most frequent term used when speaking about it. When I looked at the context of use of this term, especially when interviewing the participants who reside in Tonga, the most frequent use of the term is to refer to a way of being or way of life, rather than just in reference to the place itself. For example, this use is mostly linked to the term *faka-Tonga* or “Tongan-like/way” when people mention it, and this is more frequent with participants in Tonga than in the United States.

Phrases such as ‘*ulungaanga faka-Tonga* [Tongan-like behavior], *lea faka-Tonga* [Tongan language], *fōtunga'i Tonga* [Tongan facial feature] and others are also used more frequently by participants residing in Tonga than participants residing in the United States. After discovering the frequent use of these phrases—and their respective differences in frequency of use between the two populations—I am able to point out a frame of mind into which Tongan identity fits. Tongan identity is related to a certain type of behavior, to a way of speaking and to a way of existing that justifies a person’s “Tongan-ness.” The fact that both participant populations use the same phrases and terms suggests that they all commonly share this understanding, even though one population, the one residing in Tonga, expresses it more often than the other, the one residing in the US.

*Lea* [language] is the second highest word in terms of frequency and this finding supports my earlier explanation of how language is one of the foundations of a person’s identity (Gee, 2005:1). This frequent use of the term *lea* is associated not just to speaking the Tongan language but also to speaking it in a certain way. Any person who learns a language can understand and speak that language, but there are certain things tied into it that one must understand as well. This does not necessarily refer to a type of dialect or accent that one needs to learn. Language as
mentioned earlier is tied to culture, and to fully understand and use a language, one must be able to be not only linguistically competent but also culturally competent in knowing what to say, when to say it, and how to say it.

In the interviews, the word *lea* is used most frequently to compare *lea faka-Tonga* [Tongan language] and *lea faka-palangi* [European language]. When talking about *lea faka-palangi*, the participants never mention any variety or differences about the ways in which *lea faka-palangi* is spoken. When they talk about *lea faka-Tonga*, instead, the participants make reference and explain a number of linguistic varieties and nuances. For example, a common use of the phrase *lea faka-Tonga* is to compare between the “right way” of speaking in Tongan and a way that is referred to as *heheu*, which means to struggle to speak clearly in Tongan, and the use of a *palangi* [foreigner] type of presentation. This term is used mostly to describe people who clearly understand and know the language but pretentiously speaks *heheu* as a way to appear different or of higher status.  

This is not the case for the majority of people who do speak this way (*heheu*) due to years of disconnection from the native language and not being able to speak it overseas for a long period of time. Nonetheless, most of the participants agree that there are still such people who behave that way today. Similar to my interpretation of *Tonga* being the most frequently used term, the use of *lea* also suggests a shared understanding and agreement on a certain way of speaking that is considered to be Tongan, and to speak otherwise is considered non-Tongan or in some cases *fie-palangi* -wanting to be/appear as a foreigner or European].

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8 Europeans or *palangi* have always been considered as people of wealth and value in Tongan society. In the past, only those who had status could have associations with foreigners, particularly Europeans. This has changed now with migration and globalization where almost everyone has relatives and connections with people overseas, but association with foreign individuals and materials is still considered a form of higher status.
Certain ways of speaking in Tongan rely on the type of relationships between speakers. These certain ways include selective words or phrases being used or not used, tone of voice, topic of conversation, eye contact or none and other things being taken into consideration. For example, when talking with opposite-sex siblings, some topics of conversations (for example, sex and human anatomy, among other things) including words and phrases are taboo and considered inappropriate. Anytime someone breaks these taboos, the community automatically looks down on the person who does so. They are perceived as bringing shame into not just themselves and their families, but the community as a whole.

The third and fourth terms in the keyword frequency overlap in the sense that they both refer to behavior. As mentioned in Chapter 2, faka’apa’apa [respect] is considered one of the pillars of Tongan society and is one of the most popularly agreed upon concepts in thinking about Tongan ‘ulungaanga [behavior]. The fact that it is a highly frequently used term in this keyword analysis shows its saliency also in the matter of Tongan identity and how it is vastly shared among all the participants. The context in which these terms are used is in referring to Tongan behavior in relation to others.

Both populations are in agreement about the use of faka’apa’apa and how it is a major aspect of Tongans’ behavior. Regardless of what the conversation maybe about, there is always a major reference to faka’apa’apa [respect] when referring to ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga [Tongan behavior]. The main narrative is that Tongans are always respectful towards everyone, and it is also a certain type of respect. In fact, faka’apa’apa varies depending on the type of relationship, such as father-children relationships, mother-children relationships, aunty-nieces/nephews relationships, relationships between siblings and other type of relationships. Each relationship
has its own unspoken set of rules that people follow, and ultimately, following these unspoken rules is the foundations of *faka ʻapa ʻapa*.

The frequent use of these two terms in similar contexts also suggests how the participants all share this understanding of attributing saliency to them. It shows that ʻ*ulungaanga* and *faka ʻapa ʻapa* are not only salient when considering Tongan identity but also that there is a shared understanding of what specific type of ʻ*ulungaanga* [behavior] it is implied. For example, in aunty-nieces/nephews relationships, the children of the aunt’s brother are expected to respect their aunty as a form of authority that cannot be challenged. This act of complete obedience and reverence is the same as the relationship between parent-child, but on a higher level. In the relationship between opposite-sex siblings/cousins, they are rarely in the same area together unless it is necessary. It is taboo for opposite-sex siblings to witness intimacy between lovers, hear cursing and violent behavior while in each other’s presence. This happens accidentally from time to time which leads to a lot of awkwardness and ends up in one of the siblings leaving the room or getting as far away as possible.

The fifth most frequent term, *palangi* [foreigner], is the term mostly used when referring to foreigners, or more precisely to Caucasian foreigners. This term is mostly used when comparing Tongans and people from overseas. This comparison regards different aspects such as language/speaking, behavior, way of dressing, and types of personality. When making these comparisons, the participants share an agreement about what the Tongan way of doing things is and what the *palangi* way of doing things is.\(^9\) Some say that the Tongan way has changed

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\(^9\) The Tongan way is explained in Chapter 2 in relation to the “four pillars” of Tongan society, and unfortunately, the popular view from the participants is that the *palangi* way is often the opposite of the Tongan way. The Tongan way is incorporated into everyday activities like eating, conversations and other things. For example, when eating/drinking, the traditional perspective of doing so respectfully is to sit down and eat there or take a knee and eat there. Of course this has changed throughout the years and seldom happens today.
throughout the years, and Tongans have incorporated some palangi aspects\textsuperscript{10} into their Tongan way of living through clothing, housing, transportation, food and snacks, entertainment (e.g., TV, movies, songs), and lately internet. Similar to the other four top terms in the keyword frequency, the use of the term palangi in the context of these comparisons also highlights a certain way of life that is the Tongan way as it contrasts to the palangi way.

I chose the other three terms in Table 5.1 (6, 7, and 8) based not only on their frequency (not very high) but also on their saliency in relations to the topic of Tongan identity. Even though they do not have a very high frequency, the context and meaning in which they are used shows a salient connection to Tongan identity, and consequently, I chose to include them in this analysis. These three terms are all related to each other in the sense that they all refer to social relationships, both synchronically and diachronically.

The first term, kainga [extended family], represents a fundamental aspect of Tongan culture and it crucially participates to the establishment of identity. The kainga is a very close and tight-knit kinship group, and members of the same kainga are considered close like the members in a nuclear family are.\textsuperscript{11} The second term, hafekasi [half-caste], refers to those who have one Tongan parent and one parent of a different ethnicity. The third term, toto [blood], is used in the literal meaning of the word but also used when talking about descent and inheritance.

\textsuperscript{10} These aspects include changes in traditional dancing and music, oratory language and others. For example, traditional dance and music has now incorporated using foreign instruments and even beats from hip-hop to reggae, R&B and other styles. In terms of cooking, the Tongan ūmu or earth-oven dish called lū used to use banana leaves to wrap it and now people use aluminum foil instead.

\textsuperscript{11} The term used for father’s brother is the same term used for father. This term includes all father’s male cousins whether first, second, third, fourth cousin or so on. The same happens on the mother’s side. The mother’s sisters and cousins are called by the same term as the mother. A similar phenomenon happens for siblings and cousins. They are all called by the same term and the only variation is due to their gender. This use of the same terms points to the closeness that exists among members of the kainga.
When the participants are talking about *kainga*, its importance is addressed as something that people should hold on to very strictly. The use of the term *hafekasi* [half-caste] is mostly used by participants who either have relatives that are *hafekasi* or have friends that are *hafekasi*. The term *toto* is typically used to describe a connection that flows from generation to generation and it is not subject to change. One participant stated in the interview that:

Example 1:

“...ko e toto ko e’a ia ‘oku tafe. ‘Ikai ke lava ha taha ia ‘o faka’ikai’i...”

“...blood is something that flows. No one can deny it...”

This statement is produced in the context of a participant talking about *hafekasi* people. Specifically, he is talking about Tongans who are born and raised overseas but still have a connection to a *kainga* whose members are still living in Tonga or have long passed or have migrated out of Tonga. The question that I had asked was to explain their experiences and what they thought about people who have migrated overseas. This participant explains how there are some people who see Tongans living overseas as being different and not being Tongan, but he believes otherwise. The argument that this participant makes is that being Tongan is in the blood, and no social or cultural rules can determine a person’s Tongan-ness besides their blood. Regardless of whether they are *hafekasi* or whether they want to or not, they will always be Tongans because of their blood.

The primary reason why I chose to include these three terms, even though they are not high in frequency, is because of their saliency in relation to the topic of Tongan identity. Furthermore, in post-interview conversations with all the participants from both populations living in Tonga and in the United States, I asked more direct questions about what they thought made an
individual Tongan. Although they mention a variety of factors like language, behavior, and even laughter (i.e., ways and timing of laughing), all of them mention *toto* [blood] as one of the deciding factors for the attribution of Tongan identity.

*Kainga* plays an important role in connecting and defining the participants’ Tongan-ness. When talking about what makes a person Tongan, the first assumption that the participants make is that there is a connection of Tongan *toto* and being born into a Tongan *kainga* regardless whether they are *hafekasi* or not. After this assumption is made, then other aspects are taken into consideration, such as place of residence, language used, type of behavior, and what they look like, among other things. This shows the saliency and reasoning for including these three terms (*kainga, hafekasi, toto*) in this analysis.

When taken together, these words from the keyword analysis point to a collectively shared idea of what it is to be Tongan. Among all the participants, these terms, both the top five and the other three terms, illustrate a number of factors that participate in the construction of what Tongan identity is conceived to be: *kainga* being a foundational aspect of Tongan identity; place of residence, language, and behavior contributing to a person’s Tongan-ness, in that order. The frequent use of these terms across all the participants suggests not just their saliency but also the shared and agreed upon conception of what is salient when referring to Tongan identity.

I later used these keywords to conduct a semantic role analysis at the sentence level. In fact, I looked for whether these terms are used in the role of patient or agent. I conducted this analysis because its results could provide additional clues toward a definition of a cultural model of identity among Tongans. In fact, for example, the use of certain key terms in the “agent” role would suggest a more active part in shaping the conceptualization of identity.
Results of the Semantic Role Analysis.

I used the eight words that were elicited from the keyword analysis to conduct a semantic role analysis; I searched for these terms in MAXQDA software to find their position in their linguistic contexts, i.e., sentences and specific moments during the interviews, in which they were used. A number of semantic roles are possible; however, during this search I focused primarily on whether the terms had been used as agents or patients in the sentences. Since my research is about Tongan identity, the results of this analysis provide relevant information about these keywords playing the role of agent or patient when thinking about identity.

Tonga.

The most frequent term, *Tonga*, is more commonly used in the role of patient. However, out of the few times (nine times in total) that it is used as an agent, the most common use is as a teacher or mentor who helps in preserving and maintaining the Tongan way of life through experience. Example 2 is a statement in which this occurs.

Example 2:

“*Ko Tonga pe te ne lava ‘o liliu e fa’ahinga ‘ulungaanga kovi ko eni, fiema ‘u ke ‘ave ‘o ako ‘i.*”

“Tonga is the only place that can change this type of bad behavior, (they) need to be taken and be taught.”

This is an idea that was expressed by many participants who are parents with children of their own, and this happened both in the participants from Tonga and those from the United States. The major point that came across from these participants is that Tonga is seen as a place of
“reform” for the new generations of Tongans born overseas who are assimilating to foreign cultures. As mentioned earlier, Tonga has a set of unspoken rules in terms of behavior that is being upheld by elders and passed down to the next generations. Behaving outside of these norms is considered “bad” or non-Tongan, leading to many social grievances and displeasing views from the community.

Sending offspring born and raised overseas to live in Tonga does not happen very often, but occasionally, some parents send their children to stay with their relatives in Tonga and go to school there, especially at the high school level. When asked about this practice, the participants, both from those living in Tonga and in the United States, express the importance of not just teaching their children about the Tongan way of life and the culture through the words of their parents, but also letting them experience it firsthand. They are convinced that this experience would teach them more about Tongan culture. Seeing Tonga as such a “teaching” place relates to the importance that the concept of place has in constructing a person’s identity. As an agent, Tonga is seen as a keeper of the Tongan way, and this cannot be fully taught anywhere else unless experienced in Tonga.

As mentioned above, the most common use for the term Tonga is as a patient. The most common occurrence of the term is when talking about changes of state. The use of the term refers to Tonga being changed by something. This phenomenon is clearly illustrated in examples 3, 4 and 5.

Example 3:

“Lahi e liliu e Tonga he nofo fuoloa heni”

“Many changes happen to Tongans when staying too long here [US].”
Example 4:

“Ko e tupunga e lahi e liiu ‘i Tonga mei he vave e hake mai e fakalakalaka’”

“The reason for the many changes in Tonga is due to quick development.”

Example 5:

“Koe liliu e Tonga ko e me’a fakafo’ituitui pe ia, kai ke lava ha ta ha ia fakamalohi’i, ko e fie liliu pe, liliu”

“The change in Tongans is an individual thing, no one can force it; when one wants to change, it changes.”

Examples 3 and 4 are among the common uses of the term Tonga as patient. Tonga is seen as changing and this is the result of outside intervention whether it be development and globalization or the length of stay by Tongans in a different land. For the first example, the question that was asked was directed at the participants who now reside in the United States. The question was to explain what they thought about the Tongan people who have migrated and lived overseas in general. The most popular answer is that there are clear changes among the Tongan population overseas, mostly in terms of language and behavior. These changes are considered neither bad nor good, just that it is inevitable to change. Example 3 indicates the length of stay as the reason for these changes. This expression of length of stay was expressed by seven participants from the Tongan population who said their relatives and friends who stay overseas longer tend to show more changes in their behavior and their overall demeanor.

Regarding Example 5, this type of statement appears in interviews with both populations, specifically, with two participants from Tonga and three from the United States. This statement implies that the change that occurs is a personal and individual choice within Tongans regardless of other factors such as length of stay overseas. In the post-interview sessions, the meaning
attributed to this is that no matter how long a person stays overseas, change is inevitable. However, it is the individual who has the power to decide whether to accept the change and remain changed or not, disregarding or keeping their Tongan identity.

**Lea [Language]**

The term *lea* [language] is mostly used in the role of agent. Although the term itself is often used as a verb (speaking), it is also used at times as a noun. It is on these occasions that it is used as an agent or patient. As an agent, the term is used as a preserver of identity. In this sense, *lea* is seen as what constitutes a person’s identity. Examples 6 and 7 illustrate this point.

Example 6:

“*Ko e lea (faka-Tonga) pe te ne kei pukepuke mai ‘etau fānau’*

“The language (Tongan) is the only thing that holds our children.”

Example 7:

“*‘Oku hanga he lea ‘o fakatahataha’i mai kitautolu, pea ko e faka’ofa atu e fanga ki ‘i fānau ia ku nau fie lea faka-Tonga ka ku kai lava ia lea’*

“Language (Tongan) brings us together, and it’s a pity that some children want to speak Tongan but they can’t.”

The statement in Example 6—and other variations with the same meaning—was used seven times by the participants in the United States population and six times by the participants in Tonga. The question that was asked was in reference to people who have lost or have difficulty speaking the Tongan language and what the participants thought of their experiences with them.
Looking at the literal meaning of this sentence does not tell us much without specifying what it implies. Fundamentally, the statement implies that the Tongan language is seen as the only thing, i.e., agent, that maintains and keeps the current and future generation from losing their identity. This results in stressing the importance of the use of the Tongan language—and the teaching of it—for the future generation to keep it alive.

Example 7 expresses lea as an agent referring to it as a “rope” that brings and binds the Tongan people together. This idea was used by participants both from Tonga and those residing in the United States. The question was the same as the question that generated the statement in Example 6. The sentence in Example 7 shows not just how important language is in preserving Tongan identity, but it also points to its role as an agent unifying Tongan people.

‘Ulungaanga [Behavior]

The term ‘ulungaanga [behavior] used as an agent performs the function of differentiating between Tongan and others. The use of this term also signifies that there is a specificity of what is considered ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga [Tongan behavior].

Example 8:

“‘Oku fakafaikehekehe ‘i ‘etau Tonga mei he tau ‘ulungaanga”

“Our Tongan-ness is differentiated by our behavior.”

The Tongan behavior specificity includes the fourth term, faka’apa’apa [respect], but it is limited to it. In many of my post-interview conversations with participants, the main concept that they all expressed as important in explaining ‘ulungaanga is ‘ofa [love]. ‘Ofa is considered to be
inclusive of all positive and good emotions and actions. In Bennardo (2009), when describing ‘ofā, he states that it is perceived as mostly actions that put others before oneself, backgrounding ego (the self) and foregrounding others.

Example 8 shows the term ‘ulungaanga acting in the role of agent, that is, as something that makes Tongans different. Sentences containing different variations of this same idea appeared in 21 out of the 28 participants. It seems that one of the most common factors for a person to be considered Tongan is their behavior. This idea of ‘ulungaanga being a deciding factor for being a Tongan was repeated in different ways as in Examples 9 and 10.

Example 9:

“Ko e me’a ku tau kekehehe ai ko ‘etau ‘ulungaanga’”

“The thing that makes us different is our behavior.”

Example 10:

“Tatau pe ko fē tapa ‘o māmani te te ‘alu ki ai, te te lava pe kita tala e Tonga hono ‘ulungaanga”

“Regardless of where in the world you go, you can tell a Tongan by their behavior.”

**Faka’apa’apa [Respect]**

When used as an agent, faka’apa’apa [respect] plays a similar role to ‘ulungaanga [behavior] in the sense that the participants view it as a unique and specific feature of being Tongan. In the cases when it is used as an agent, faka’apa’apa is talked about as a teacher and giver of wisdom. This term appeared often when the participants explained their experiences
with family and friends who are overseas, including those residing in the outer islands within the Kingdom of Tonga, not including the main island Tongatapu.

Example 11:

“'E hanga he faka'apa'apa 'o ako'i e fānau ke nau 'ilo honau tupu'anga”

“Respect will teach the children to know about their origin.”

Example 12:

“Ko e hā e ‘uhinga ku tau kei Tonga ai?... ko e faka'apa'apa”

“What is the reason that we are still Tonga?... Respect.”

In Example 12, the content of the sentence suggests that faka'apa'apa [respect] plays a major role in defining what it is to be Tongan. The questions that were asked that elicited these types of answers were in reference to the participants’ perspectives on Tongans who have been overseas for a long time. The questions were also about the behavior of the youth and the contemporary generation.

**Palangi [Foreigner/European]**

The term palangi [foreigner/European] appears more often in the semantic role of patient than that of agent. In Example 13, palangi are patients who are being copied by Tongan youth.

Example 13:

“Ku ha'u foki e palangi ia pa fakatakita'i ai pe ia he fānau ko e fietatau”

“The foreigners are being copied by children because they want to be the same.”
Example 14:

“‘Io ka ako‘i e palangi ‘e poto pe ia he lea”

“Yes, if the foreigner is taught, they will know how to speak (Tongan).”

In Example 13, palangi are being copied by Tongans. When talking about identity, there will always be an aspect of comparison between two or more sides. In this case, the base for a comparison is the palangi. The palangi is said to be copied by children who are perceived as wanting to be a foreigner, or fie palangi. This idea appears as an answer to a follow-up question about foreign migration into the islands and what people thought of it.

Example 14 suggests that palangi can be taught and they can learn to speak Tongan. The context for this statement is from the same follow-up question that provided Example 12. The participant was asked to further explain the experience with foreign immigrants (palangi), and this particular participant talked about how he likes to try and teach them the native language and takes pride in how easy he can teach them to speak the language.

**Kainga [Extended Family]**

The term kainga [extended family] is mostly found in the role of agent. The term was used by participants in different ways, specifically, either as helper or protector.

Example 15:

“Ko e taimi ku tau faingata’a‘ia ai, ko hotau kainga pe tokoni ofi taha mai”

“When we are struggling, our extended family is the closest help we got.”
Example 16:

“Ko hotau kainga Tonga pe te nau ongo ‘i mo malu ‘i tautolu”

“Our Tongan extended families are the ones that protect us and feel for us.”

Examples 15 and 16 are taken from replies to my questions to explain experiences in Tonga and in foreign places and also about their reactions to different encounters with other Tongans overseas. Example 15 is a statement by a participant in Tonga who is talking about interacting with people within Tonga and how regardless of who these people might be, no one is closer than the kainga.

These examples show the saliency of kainga regarding Tongan identity and the Tongan people as a whole. The kainga is being perceived as helpers and protectors and this shows how much importance is given to it. It is not only perceived as just literally protecting and helping its members, but also as protecting and helping preserve the Tongan identity. In post-interview conversations with the participants, I asked directly about how the Tongan culture and traditions are being passed down to the next generation. The answers that I got all gave this responsibility to the kainga. Regardless of whether it is the parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents or any of the elders in the Tongan community (in the United States) or in the village (in Tonga), it is their responsibility as kainga to uphold and pass on these important Tongan traditions and values (language and behavior).

Another idea that I noticed when asking about this process of passing on the traditions is that the participants (mostly from the United States) agree that some palangi are interested in learning and receiving the teachings of the Tongan elders in the community. However, the seriousness that is given to teaching these foreign “students” are not as strict as the one given to the younger generation from the Tongan community. The idea is that failing in teaching and
passing on these traditions to the younger members of the *kainga* is considered shameful and a failure not just for those young members but also to the *kainga* as a whole.

**Hafekasi [Half-caste]**

I looked for the semantic role of the term *hafekasi* [half-caste] even though it is not as frequently used as the previous ones (only 8 out of 28 participants used it). *Hafekasi* is used as a patient more than as an agent. In Example 17, the term is used as a receiver of a form of ridicule or separation from other people.

Example 17:

“Lahi e kau hafekasi ku fa’a siolalo ki ai e kakai ‘o fakamavahe’i nautolu”

“Many half-castes are being looked down on by people and are being separated.”

The question that was asked was for the participants to describe their perspectives on half-castes in Tonga and overseas, that is, those individuals who have one Tongan parent and one foreign one. This particular participant, who produced the statement in Example 17, explained her perspective by stating that although Tongan half-castes are not being openly oppressed or given bad treatment, there is still some visible separation between them and everyone else. Even though it might not be openly done, some people tend to look down on Tongan half-castes as less knowledgeable and less “cultured” than other Tongans. Two other participants also living in Tonga stated that *hafekasi* are expected to behave differently from other Tongans. They added that when some *hafekasi* might do something that is out of the norm, they would attribute that behavior to the non-Tongan ethnicity to which they belong.
The term *toto* [blood] is used less frequently (22 times) than the other terms in the transcripts of the interviews. However, because of its connection to one of the most frequently used factors in establishing Tongan identity, that is, *kainga* [extended family], it is also included in this analysis. I found that the term *toto* appears mainly in the semantic role of agent (15 times), yet it also appears as a patient, but not as frequently (three times only). As for the other four times that the term was used, it was mentioned neither as agent nor patient. It was used as a one word answer to different interview questions.

Example 18:

“*Ko toto ko e’a ia ku tafe*”

“Blood is something that flows.”

The sentence in Example 18 shows *toto* [blood] used as an agent which makes itself flow freely with no indication of an external force that makes it do so. Regarding the linguistic context in relation to the interview as a whole, Example 18 is an answer to a question asking for the participants to describe their perspectives on relatives and friends who have resided overseas for a long time and whom they have not seen or heard of in years. This particular participant expressed his opinion on Tongans overseas in general. He states that even though they might be far from Tonga and completely assimilated to their respective places of residence, there will always be something that keeps them connected back to Tonga, and that is their *toto*. In his words:
Example 19:

“Tatau ai pē pe ko e hā e lōloa e nofo ha taha ‘i muli, pe ko e hafekasi pe ko e ha, ‘e kei vivili mai pe honau toto ki Tonga”

“Regardless of how long one stays overseas, be it half-caste or whatever, their blood will still yearn for Tonga.”

After conducting this analysis, the role that I would like to focus on is the semantic role of agency. When talking about Tongan identity, the top five terms and three salient terms from the keyword analysis varied in terms of being agents or patients. Lea, ‘ulungaanga, faka’apa’apa, kainga and toto all share the similarity of being frequently used as agents in regards to Tongan identity. Tonga, palangi and hafekasi were frequently used as patients. This finding contributes to the Tongan cultural model of identity in how the frequent use of lea, ‘ulungaanga, faka’apa’apa, kainga and toto illustrates the shared agreement between the participants on how their agency plays a role in defining Tongan identity using language ‘lea’, behavior ‘faka’apa’apa and ‘ulungaanga’ and kinship ‘kainga and toto’. This does not take away from the contributions of the semantic roles of Tonga, palangi and hafekasi (being patients), as they are also used as a point of comparison and relation to the Tongan identity (one’s identity cannot be defined and appreciated without comparing it to another).

Results of the Reasoning/Causality Analysis

For the reasoning and causality analysis, I used MAXQDA to code and group different themes that appeared in the texts of the interviews. The core themes that I found are:

- *Toto* [blood] as a salient contributor to Tongan identity
• **Identity shaped by residency**

• **Linguistic plus cultural competency equals acceptance**

The most prominent theme is *toto [blood] as a salient contributor to Tongan identity*. I found a good number of reasoning and causality passages that support this conclusion. When analyzing these passages further, I determined that there are two sides that co-exist within this main theme, one being that a person’s Tongan-ness is measurable by a scale and the other being that only one qualification is considered relevant and that is a “blood” connection to a Tongan heritage.

In Examples 20 and 21, some people are seen as different and separate from other Tongans because they are half-caste and only have one Tongan parent.

Example 20:

“‘Ilonga pe foki e kau hafekasi ia neongo ku nau poto pe he anga faka Tonga ka ku kehekehe pe taimi lahi’”

“We can tell they are half-caste even though they know the Tongan behavior; many times they’re different.”

Example 21:

“‘Ko e ’uhinga ku pehe ai he ko ‘ene tamai ko e Tonga ka e fa’e palangi’”

“The reason why he’s like that is because his father is Tongan and the mother is a foreigner.”

The questions that prompted these answers were in relation to what the participants think of and how they perceive *hafekasi* [half-caste] people. Both these examples are from texts in which participants are describing and making assumptions about relatives who are *hafekasi*. The emphasis on having two Tongan parents does not mean that half-castes are considered complete
outsiders or non-Tongans. From these examples, one can deduce that the main idea expressed is that to a person with one Tongan parent, even though still considered Tongan, there seems to be a scale applied regarding this person’s Tongan-ness. Half-caste people occupy a lower place in this scale. Consequently, it appears that although they are considered Tongan, they are also perceived by some as less Tongan than those with two Tongan parents.

On the other hand, some interviewees also state that regardless of who a person is, the only qualification that they need to be considered Tongan is a “blood” connection to a Tongan ancestry or heritage. For example:

Example 22:

“Ko e toto ko e me’a ia ku tafe. Tatau ai pe pe ko e ha e fa’ahinga matakali ku hafekasi ki ai, ‘e kei Tonga pe ia’”

“Blood is something that flows. Regardless of what ethnicity they are part half-caste of, they’ll still be Tongan.”

The reasoning behind this statement is that there is no scale in measuring one’s Tongan-ness or Tongan identity. Any person who is related to a Tongan ancestry or kainga [extended family] is to be considered Tongan regardless of other factors.

In presenting these two perspectives regarding toto [blood] and Tongan ancestry, something interviewees agreed on was the role of toto in what they perceive as Tongan identity. Whether it be the first or second type of reasoning, toto is seen as a container and keeper of Tongan identity. In Examples 20 and 21, the idea of the scale depends on toto in relation to a person having one or two Tongan parents. Having more “Tongan toto”—i.e., both parents—means a higher position in the identity scale. In Example 22 the emphasis is also on toto. The meaning behind the sentence, “Blood is something that flows,” suggests the importance of toto when considering Tongan
identity. It is something that not only contains but also transfers Tongan identity from one generation to another, regardless of how it flows. Within both perspectives, *toto* is seen as a salient form of measurement for what it means to be Tongan. One sees it as one aspect of Tongan identity that adds to one’s Tongan-ness, and the other sees it as the core definition of Tongan identity regardless of what other aspects there are (such as behavior and language).

*Toto* [blood], then, appears as foundational when Tongans think about themselves as Tongans. When differentiating between oneself and the other, it is at the *kainga* [extended family] level that differences start to emerge. Each *kainga* is considered different and has its unique characteristics that are due to history and legacy of each family being passed down. From this, it is possible to understand the reason why the importance of place of residency is the next theme. The members of most villages in Tonga constitute one large *kainga* that connects them. Occasionally, there are some families that move into the village as well. Because of their original place of residence, these villagers are perceived as different, having their own way of living and how they do things.

The third theme, *identity shaped by residency*, appeared multiple times in the language of all the participants. The idea refers to how a person’s environment affects his/her identity. In most cases, this theme appears when participants are asked to talk about their experiences with relatives and friends whom they know well, who have either migrated overseas and permanently reside there, or stay overseas for a long time (two years or more) then go back to Tonga.

Example 23:

“*Fu’u lahi e nofo muli ku liliu ‘aupito’*”

“Too much staying overseas makes them change a lot.”
Example 24:

“Kuo ʻō ia ki muli pa foki mai kuo kai toe ʻilo atu ia ha taha. Liliu e anga ‘enau lea, anga ‘enau fakakaukau, anga ‘i muli ai pē”

“They go overseas then come back and no one notices them anymore (they don’t know anything anymore). They change the way they talk, the way they think, behaving like a foreigner.”

Example 25:

“Te ʻilo pe kita e kau nofo fuoloa hen mo e kau toki ha’u henau fa’ahinga to’onga”

“We can tell those who’ve lived here for a long time from those who just came here from the way they behave.”

Examples 23 and 24 were produced by participants living in Tonga and Example 25 is from a participant living in the United States. All three examples are in relation to a question about how they perceive Tongan immigrants and emigrants. In Example 23, the reasoning behind this statement is that the amount of time spent in a certain place changes one’s identity. The reasoning behind Example 25 can be said to be the same as the preceding two, with more of a focus on behavior. All three examples suggest that a person’s place of residency affects and changes one’s identity.

In terms of what type of change occurs, this ranges from a change in behavior, speech and language patterns to overall personal demeanor. These changes are not necessarily perceived as bad by the participants; they are just perceived as non-Tongan and different. The perceived changes that are attributed to place of residency are not limited to the global level between countries. Especially with the participants living in Tonga, these changes are thought to occur also with residency between islands. Each island has its own type of behavior and way of speaking, and if one were to live there for a long time, they will be affected by the residency and
later speak and behave the same way the local residents do. Here are some examples in which these ideas are expressed:

Example 26:

“*Ko e ta’efietō foki he koe Vava’u*”

“The reason for him not willing to concede is because he’s from Vava’u.”

Example 27:

“*Kapau ko e ha’u mei ‘Eua ‘e angaanganoa pe ia*”

“If they’re from ‘Eua, they’ll look and act like they’re not interested in anything.”

Statements such as these were expressed by all 28 participants when asked about their perceptions of people from other islands besides the main one of Tongatapu. There is a shared agreement among the participants that each island (Vava’u, ‘Eua, and Ha’apai among others) in the Kingdom possess their own unique qualities that can be pointed out.

To go even further, as mentioned when talking about *toto* [blood], the participants also differentiate between villages within the islands. When explaining their perspectives on people from other villages, 6 out of 17 participants from those living in Tonga stated that there are unique differences among villages, especially in terms of behavior. This is the same when comparing villages in the rural sides of the islands versus those close to the capital area. Rural areas are perceived as more conservative than village areas close to the capital. The same idea applies to islands, where the outer islands are considered more traditional than the main island of Tongatapu where the capital is located. These differences in behavior and way of speaking between places of residence show how deeply the concept of place contributes to determining one’s identity.
The theme **linguistic plus cultural competency equals acceptance** appeared in the texts of the interviews as a common agreement on a certain type of behavior that is considered to be what it is to be Tongan, i.e., cultural competency in Tongan culture. This behavior includes a certain type of language/speaking as well, i.e., being linguistically competent in the Tongan language. Participants seem to agree on an ideal that includes an appreciation, respect, and understanding of both these two behavioral components, that is, language and behavior.

Example 28:

“*Tatau ai pē pe ‘e sio mai ia ku mata’i Tonga mo lea faka Tonga, ka mole e ‘ulungaanga faka Tonga, ko e maumau taimi pe ia.’*

“Regardless of whether the person looks like a Tongan and speaks Tongan, when the Tongan behavior is lost, it is just a waste of time.”

This example stresses the importance of understanding both Tongan language and behavior. One constant idea that emerges from this analysis is that *lea* [language/speaking] and *ulungaanga* [behavior] usually go together. One without the other is perceived as either incomplete or it is not completely accepted. The reasoning behind example 28 shows how competency in Tongan language and behavior are accepted as a way of measuring Tongan-ness. After producing the statement in Example 28, the same participant went on to explain what she meant.

Example 29:

“* ‘Oku tau kei Tonga pe ko ‘etau lea, tanaki atu ki ai mo e ‘ulungaanga ke ako’i tautautefito ki he to’utupu’*

“We are still Tongans because of our language, add to that our behavior that has to be taught, especially to the youth.”
This statement points to the saliency that both language and behavior have and how they are both perceived to be major contributors in understanding Tongan identity. For most of the participants living in the United States (7 out of 11), each and every one expressed respect for Latino/Mexican families who speak their native language at home and teach their culture to their children. This came out after asking questions about their perspective on second and third generation Tongans born and raised overseas (in the United States in this case). They use the Latino community as a comparison of what they think they should be doing. The participants also express how some Tongan families have completely stopped using the Tongan language even at home.

Example 30:

“Ko e faka’ofa he ku kai toe fai ha lea faka Tonga ia ‘i ‘api. Lea faka-palangi pe ia he taimi kotoa pa mole ai pe anga faka Tonga ia”

“It’s a pity that there is no more Tongan language used at home. They speak English all the time and then the Tongan behavior disappears too.”

During the post-interviews, I would continue to make conversations with the participants about the topic of Tongan identity. One question that I asked after the interviews was, “If a person knows how to speak Tongan and behave as a Tongan, but has no ‘blood’ connection to a Tongan ancestry or kainga, is that person accepted as Tongan?” For most of the participants living in the United States (8 out of 11) the answer was yes. Some participants from those living in Tonga (4 out of 17) also answered positively in agreement with their American counterparts. Regardless of the person being a foreigner or not, most of the participants stated that they would be considered Tongan out of respect.
Example 31:

“Kapau ku nau faka’apa’apa’i ‘etau lea mo nau fie ako ki hetau culture, kou tui ku tonu ke ui nautolu ko e kau Tonga”

“If they respect our language and want to learn about our culture, I believe they should be called Tongans.”

The reasoning behind this example fits into what I have mentioned before (in the first theme of *toto* [blood] as a salient contributor to Tongan identity) about Tongan identity being measurable in a scale. For the participants who mentioned the idea of considering foreigners who respect and learn the culture as Tongans, they are considered as “Tongans but not exactly like Tongans” with Tongan blood.

This scale exists regarding other aspects considered measurable, such as language (Tongan), place of residency, and behavior, among other things. One common idea that is shared among all the participants in terms of Tongan identity is that the foundation for what it means to be Tongan is *kainga* [extended family]. As mentioned above, the foremost assumption that the participants make before talking about Tongan identity is that the person has to be of Tongan blood and part of a Tongan *kainga* [extended family], the idea being that every Tongan belongs to a *kainga*. Every other aspect such as language, behavior, and place of residence also contributes and shapes a person’s position in the Tongan-ness scale.

**Free Listing**

After conducting the interviews, I administered a free listing task (as mentioned in Chapter 4) to the same participants. The task intended to make them focus on what they consider or think about when the idea of what makes a person Tongan comes to mind. I asked them to imagine a
scenario in which, while they are with a group of friends or relatives that they know well, a stranger would approach them and one of the people in the group goes to talk with that person. Participants were then asked to list all the things they would consider when deciding whether the stranger is a Tongan or not.

In Table 5.2, I present the top five things that the participants considered and how many of them mentioned it out of the 28 interviewed. There were three other things that were also mentioned, but they were only mentioned once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lea ‘Language’</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fōtunga ‘Physical Features’</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ulungaanga ‘Behavior’</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teuteu ‘Clothes’</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ofa/Mata’ofa ‘Love/Loving Personality’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The free listing results in Table 5.2 show a focus on the physical and observable attributes (language, behavior, physical appearance, clothes and personality) of a Tongan person and how specific and uniquely Tongan it is perceived to be (as explained in the following paragraphs).

After the free listing task, I further asked the participants to expand on what they meant when mentioning these items on their lists. For those who mentioned lea [language], the reasoning behind this choice was that the spoken Tongan language is suggested to have a specific sound and intonation when produced by Tongans. And even though some might learn to
be fluent in the Tongan language, there are still perceived differences between non-Tongans who speak Tongan and Tongans who speak Tongan. When asked to expand on this perspective, the participants mentioned a foreign accent that shows when “non-Tongans” speak the language. The term lea mentioned in the participants’ lists refers to not just listening for the language used (Tongan) but also how it is being used in terms of accent and what is being said. That is, whether it is appropriate regarding the situation: place of conversation and who the person they are talking to is. For example, if the situation is at a place near a home that has just lost a member of their kainga, Tongans will not be loud and try to be as quiet as possible.

When asked about the reason for mentioning fōtunga [physical features], the participants all mentioned the uniqueness of Tongan’s physical attributes, mostly facial features. When asked to specify what these specific features are, the answers were that they “just know” and “can tell who is a Tongan just from their ‘all-around’ facial features.” No specific features were specified besides it being acknowledged that they can tell some “faces” (the reason why I use “faces” here is because the participants did not mention specific facial features but rather just faces as a whole) are uniquely Tongan. The term that comes up the most when asked this question is mata ‘i-Tonga or “Tongan face.”

Regarding ‘ulungaanga [behavior], the participants who mentioned it were asked to elaborate on what they meant by it. The answers that are provided all agree on behavior being described as how people carry themselves. Since the person in question—the one in the scenario presented—is considered to be a stranger, the participants who mentioned ‘ulungaanga explained that they were looking for how that stranger interacts with the person in the group that goes to meet with him/her. Some participants also mentioned an interest in how that person acts towards their group even though they are strangers to that person.
When asked about what behavior they consider to be Tongan in this situation, some participants could not really explain it. However, other participants explained it as faka’apa’apa [respect] and toka’i [acknowledgement/to show consideration]—among other things—that they expect Tongans to show when meeting other Tongans, regardless of whether they know them or not. For example, in the scenario that was given to them, one of the participants explained that Tongans would acknowledge other Tongans when they see them, regardless of whether or not those other Tongans are in any way related to them. Even though the stranger is talking to one of the people in the group separately, they would still acknowledge the group as a whole by greeting them all and saying farewell to them when leaving, even though they have not met or talked before.

The fourth term, teuteu [clothes] is somewhat self-explanatory in the sense that it is about what Tongans wear. When referring to males, the most common example of this is the wearing of a tupenu (a skirt for men) and a ta’ovala [waist mat]. The tupenu and the ta’ovala are considered to be specifically Tongan teuteu. This issue of the teuteu was also addressed by the participants as something that Tongans do with foreign clothes that seem to be worn out of some norm. The participants from the United States population called these types of fashion as “f.o.b.bish,” f.o.b meaning “fresh off the boat.” An example of this type of lack of knowledge of norms for clothes—as mentioned by one of the participants—is a buttoned-up suit and tie worn with flip flops and a winter hat. When asked why they think people do that, the answers were that the Tongans who dress like that just do not care and are very ‘chill’ or relaxed. Another answer was also that they do not know the “correct” way those clothes are meant to be worn.

The last term, ‘ofa/mata’ofa [love/loving personality], was only mentioned by two of the participants. When asked to elaborate on the reasoning behind choosing this term, both
participants employed the same reasoning. The focus of both these participants was a loving and friendly personality. One of the two participants explained it as *natula faka-Tonga* [Tongan nature]. When asked to expand on this matter, the participant explained ‘*o fa*’ as an over-encompassing love and respect between people. She went on to talk about Tongan personality and how ‘*o fa*’ is an emotion that rises when Tongans meet each other, especially after a long time apart. The other participant, in addition, explains ‘*o fa*’ as an emotion that appears among Tongans who meet in a place where there are rarely any Tongans, especially overseas.

After conducting the analysis on the results of the free listing tasks, I found the most frequent three terms mentioned—*lea* [language], *fōtunga* [physical features], and *‘ulungaanga* [behavior]—to be widely shared among the participants both from Tonga and the United States. These three factors represent the surface-level or observable aspects of what the participants conceive as what makes a person Tongan. The other terms that were mentioned by the participants—*teuteu* [clothes] and ‘*o fa*’ [love]—also contribute to what needs to be considered when deciding one’s Tongan-ness. Not only are Tongans conceived as expected to speak the Tongan language fluently and in a certain way, they are also expected to behave—including expressing love and showing respect—and look, physically and in what they wear, a certain way as well.

These free listing results add to the results of the previous analyses in terms of how important *lea* [language] and ‘*ulungaanga* [behavior] are (this analysis also adds ‘*o fa*’ as a behavior) regarding Tongan identity. The frequent mentioning of *fōtunga* [physical features] and *teuteu* [clothes] are understandable in terms of what the observable attributes of a Tongan is considered to be. These latter contribute to the content of the cultural model of Tongan identity and need to be added to the content I hypothesized before the study, that is, language, behavior,
kinship and place of residency. Although not mentioned in the literature as these latter four factors, the participants consider such glossed over, and sometimes regarded unimportant, aspects like physical features and clothes as important factors to consider when defining what it means to be Tongan.
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

After conducting the analyses and compiling all the different data collected from the two populations in Tonga and in the United States, I compared even further the characteristics of the participants from both populations that emerged. As presented in Chapter 5, some comparisons focused on characteristics across the two populations and others on characteristics within groups in each population. I now discuss comparisons between the two populations in more detail while also comparing groups of the participants within each population, especially about the participants from the Tongan population.

Comparisons Between Tongan and USA Populations

When comparing the two populations, there is one main similarity that was mentioned by all the participants: the most salient and shared conception of Tongan identity is that at the initial stage of defining it is the idea of considering the Tongan kainga [extended family] and Tongan blood/descent relations. The underlying assumption behind most of the answers about what it means to be Tongan from both the semi-structured interviews and the free listing tasks is that a person is already assumed to have Tongan “connections” (by blood) before starting to consider the possibility that this person is Tongan. This was the case with all the participants when explaining what it means to be Tongan.
After the interviews, I asked the question, “If the person behaves like a Tongan, speaks Tongan fluently, but does not have any blood connections to Tongans, are they still considered Tongan?” The answers as shown in Chapter 5 had 8 out of 11 participants from the USA population and 4 out of 17 participants from Tonga agreeing with it, but in a specific way. These individuals are considered “Tongans, but not really like Tongans.” This statement suggests the Tongan identity can be attributed to those without Tongan blood but according to a scale that separates them from those with Tongan blood. Hence kainga and toto [blood] are the foundational concepts in defining Tongan identity. In a sense, if Tongan identity can be illustrated as a ball/sphere, kainga is the core from which a Tongan’s identity is molded and begins. From there, different layers (such as place of residence, language, behavior, physical appearance, among others) add onto it to make the sphere bigger and more prominent. The more layers added, the more Tongan one is considered to be. The saliency of each layer differs in different populations as it emerged from the Tongan and the USA populations. Throughout this thesis, I have referred to these layers as contributing to a scale that measures a person’s Tonganness.

After further looking at the results from both participant populations, there are also some differences in terms of what is considered more salient among the layers. For the USA population, language and behavior are high on the scale, more so than place of residence. From the free listing results in Table 5.2, out of the 26 who mentioned lea [language], 11 were from the USA population (11 out of 11). From these 11, eight of them mentioned it first. The other three all mentioned it second. Regarding ‘ulungaanga [behavior], 8 out of the 17 participants who mentioned it were from the USA population. From these eight, two mentioned it first, four mentioned it second and two mentioned it third. From the reasoning/causality analysis, one of the
major themes, *linguistic plus cultural competency equals acceptance*, revolves mostly around what the USA participants expressed.

The importance given to both language and behavior introduces the possibility of Tongan identity being attributed to those without Tongan blood. In the free listing results in the Tongan population, the most frequent term mentioned was *fōtunga* [physical attributes]. Out of the 25 participants who mentioned it, 16 were from the Tongan population. *Lea* [language] was the second term that was most mentioned by 15 of the participants from the Tongan population; 15 out of 17 Tongan participants all mentioned *fōtunga* first and *lea* second.

From participant observation in both Tongan and USA populations, I realize how the importance of place of residence varies between the two groups. Within the Tongan populations, place of residence is expressed very frequently when talking about a person’s identity. Depending on where the person is from (resides), the behavior towards them will be different. For example, in Tonga, Tongans from overseas are perceived differently from Tongans in Tonga. Those from overseas are considered “different” in the sense that they are perceived as looking different, sounding different, and also behaving differently from the locals residing in Tonga. The behavior of those residing in Tonga is what the locals consider to be the standard of what Tongan behavior should be. Those behaving differently from how the locals behave are considered as “others.” This differentiation is not just the case between Tongans in Tonga and Tongans overseas. This also exists at the local level between islands, even between villages.

This concept of “my group versus the other” extends all the way down to the *kainga* level, where there is differentiation between two or more *kaingas*. In terms of identifying oneself in comparison to another person, the separation begins with the *kainga*. Most *kainga* reside in one village, and some villages have many *kaingas*. When considering people from other villages,
these *kaingas* from the same village identify themselves as one in comparison to the other villages. When there is a comparison with a village from a different district of the same island, the villages of each district seem to band together and identify as one group against each district. When the comparison is between islands, all members of the different districts identify as one against the other islands within the Kingdom of Tonga. When comparing with other countries, the islands all come together and identify as one, Tongan.

The common factors behind all these comparisons are place of residence and *kainga*. This contributes to consider *kainga* as the core and foundation of Tongan identity and also points out how much prominent place of residency is considered by Tongans in Tonga regarding their identity. This differentiation in identity due to place of residency seldom appears in the USA population. There are still some minor differentiation felt within the Tongan community among those who migrated from different islands and villages back in Tonga, but not to the degree that it exists in Tonga itself. Even though people still identify themselves as from different islands (especially first-generation Tongan Americans), there is a unity found among the Tongan community in the USA where they come together as Tongans.

These differentiations are often dismissed by many Tongans when asked about this possibility, but on close inspection and extensive observation, this aspect becomes evident. Of course this is not the case with all Tongans, as there is no absolute stereotypical behavior or action that all members of an ethnic or social group fall under. For example, all Tongans are friendly, all Tongans are respectful and kind. These are ideal stereotypes that people often think about when they think of Tongans. However, there are still some people who are different. Stereotypes do not reflect a whole culture or society.
Considering why the USA population would not consider place of residency to be of higher saliency similar to the Tongan population, I suggest that it is due to a loss of “place.” The importance of place when defining Tongan identity is very prominent in Tonga. However, that is because they are in Tonga (place) and can use the island Kingdom as a focal point about which they are very familiar and where the Tongan culture and traditions are kept and taught with minimal outside (foreign) interference. This is not the case in the United States, which has its own culture and traditions, making it hard for Tongans to adapt while holding on to the importance of ‘place’ when defining their identity. Therefore, place of residency becomes lower in terms of saliency for Tongans in the United States. The most prominent factors that they seem to focus more on is Tongan language and behavior that, unlike place of residency, can be taught and passed on to the next generation.

Regarding the other two factors that were mentioned as contributors to defining Tongan identity—fōtunga [physical features], teuteu [clothes]—there are no major differences between the two populations. In the free listing results, 25 out of 28 participants mentioned fōtunga while 10 participants mentioned teuteu. These two factors were also addressed during the semi-structured interviews when explaining their opinions on immigrants and emigrants, foreign and Tongan, in both the Tongan and USA populations, the idea being that the participants can tell whether a person is Tongan or not based solely on their physical/facial features and the way he/she dresses. Participants from both populations even mention how these two things can be used to measure a person’s Tongan-ness depending solely on how “Tongan” they dress or look.

In terms of age and gender, there is no clear difference in use between them. Even with the majority of the participants being female, their answers and results from the semi-structured interviews and the free listing task were very similar in frequency and reasoning to what the male
participants provided. The only visible thing that was different and uniquely female in the results of this research was the mentioning of ‘ofa [love] as one of the things to look for when deciding Tongan identity. This term was provided by two female participants, one from each population (Tonga and USA) during the free listing exercise. I dare not make any overall assumptions about female opinion on this matter due to lack of data in this research that differentiates their opinions on Tongan identity. However, this term alone is a powerful and salient aspect of what is perceived as Tongan culture. ‘Ofa was explained by these participants as an over-encompassing love and respect between people, often caused by a longing towards Tonga (especially overseas when one has been away from Tonga for a while).

Considering age, there is no difference among the participants (all between the ages of 25 and 75) in their opinions and reasoning, besides a few differences in the way they talked and behaved. When I carried out this research, I was younger than all the participants. Although some were only a few years older and considered as in the same generation as I am, there were still some differentiations in the way I was being approached. For those younger than 35, they were very informal and easy to interact with. Those older than 35 seemed very composed and formal towards me. Some of their post-interview comments and stories were longer than the actual interview.

In the Tongan population, the language used by younger participants (35 and under) were very informal and often used slang. The same age group from the USA population were also quite informal and from time to time would speak in English instead of Tongan. Both the older participant groups from the two populations were quite similar in their word choices and phrases, being very formal. The reasoning that I have assigned to these differences is based on their perceptions of me, the researcher/interviewer.
Before volunteering for the interviews, all of the participants had been made aware of my background and identity. This was not planned by me, but rather, many individuals within the communities knew about me. This information was then passed on to everyone in the community, and before I knew it, almost everybody could find a connection to either members of my kainga, my village, and even my high school. These connections led to my being treated based on each different connection that had been already established. For example, those who found connections to my kainga and village (most of my participants) started treating me as either their son, nephew, niece,\textsuperscript{12} grandson, cousin, or brother. The elder people treated me more formally and also appeared more serious when bestowing knowledge upon me, whereas the younger people who are in my generation were less formal.

**Propositional Content of the Tongan Cultural Model of Identity.**

After carrying out this research and conducting the analyses, I looked at the overall results and can confidently hypothesize the following propositional contents for the Tongan cultural model of identity:

- **Kainga is the foundation/core of Tongan identity.**

A person’s Tongan-ness starts with the assumption that he or she has Tongan blood/descent, regardless of how “pure” it is.\textsuperscript{13} In other words, any person who has any blood connection to Tongans can be considered Tongan regardless of anything else or whether they want to be or not.

- **There is a scale on which a person’s Tongan-ness can be measured.**

\textsuperscript{12} In Tonga, nephew means a man’s sister’s/female cousin’s children. Niece is what a woman calls her brother’s/male cousin’s children.

\textsuperscript{13} Being Tongan in comparison to a hafekasi [half-caste] or konga Tonga [part Tongan].
After assuming that the person has Tongan blood, the first measurement on the scale is how Tongan a person’s *toto* [blood] is. In this case, whether the person is full Tongan, half Tongan or how many parts Tongan, with the full Tongan being the most Tongan.

- *Length of residency in a foreign place (not Tonga) leads to a change in identity, often including assimilating to different aspects of that place.*

People who move to foreign places are considered by the participants as changed and becoming less Tongan than what they used to be before leaving. After returning to Tonga, individuals such as these are perceived as slightly different and are expected to be slightly different for a time until they are fully re-assimilated back into the community. The time it takes to re-assimilate depends on the individual and how much they personally want to.

- *Language, behavior, place of residency, physical features and clothes/fashion determine a person’s position on the measuring scale of Tongan-ness.*

The components that contribute to a person’s position on the scale of Tongan-ness vary in saliency depending on place of residency. Language and behavior are considered more salient than place of residency among the participants of the USA population. Place of residency has higher saliency among the participants of the Tongan population.

- *The process of fission and fusion seems to operate when defining identity.*

As mentioned earlier, people break into different segments when identifying themselves and their group against others. In the Tongan case, the segmentation ends with the *kainga* [extended family]. The idea is that starting from the *kainga* stage, people fuse and identify together with those closest to them in terms of *kainga* or place of residency when comparing against others who are not as similar.
This research has been a very helpful and eye-opening experience. It has helped me further understand the Tongan perspective on how Tongan identity is perceived and interpreted. After going through this experience and learning about Tongan identity, this study has also enriched my understanding of who I am and my own identity as a Tongan. This research supports the suggestions found in the literature about the factors that define Tongan identity (language, behavior, place and *kainga* [kin group/descent]). I was also able to add two other factors that people consider when deciding what it means to be Tongan: physical features and clothes. For future research, this study could be conducted in other Tongan communities not just from the various inhabited islands of the Kingdom of Tonga but also from other communities in other states besides California. In addition, the study could also include Tongan communities in other countries such as New Zealand and Australia. Another contribution to future research would be to find a way to involve more *hafekasi* [half-castes] as participants (unfortunately, no one who is considered a *hafekasi* volunteered for this study). After conducting a broader study of this type, a consensus analysis could be used to find out how the discovered cultural model of Tongan identity is distributed among the communities involved.

It is also my hope that a study of this type could be expanded to include identity perceived by Pacific Islanders in general and possibly with any community that deals with migration and having to assimilate into a different culture altogether. This often leads to many people who struggle with who they are not just as individuals but also as a group/community and a culture. Understanding identity in relation to each individual culture and people can contribute to establishing and evolving one’s identity even while assimilating and adapting into another culture. With climate change on the rise, people and cultures living on small islands that will be completely under water in the near future will have no choice but to migrate and settle down in
foreign lands. The understanding of what comprises their identity can help these people not just to preserve and pass on their culture and traditions but also to have a way to firmly hold onto their identities as people of that culture. Using this study as a basis, it would be interesting to explore whether Tongan identity and transnationalism is similar to or different than transnationalism elsewhere. Are these identity issues unique to Tongans? Are they different from Samoans who come to the United States? This type of study can help compare and contrast between transnational people from various backgrounds.

Finally, it is my hope that the Tongans who have migrated and assimilated to cultures overseas can use this study to firmly acknowledge and respect their own identity as Tongans. For Tongans who have completely integrated themselves into a new identity, often disregarding their Tongan-ness, and for those who feel that they are no longer Tongans for different reasons, I hope that this study will bring Tongan people together and recognize their Tongan-ness with no restrictions.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
**Free Listing Question**

If you were talking to a group of friends at the corner of a street in Tonga and you see a person you do not know approaching the group and starting to interact with one of your group, how can you tell if she/he is a Tongan? List all the things you would consider.

- Tau pehe pe ‘oku mou pōtalanoa mo ha’o ngaahi kaungāme’a ‘i ha tuliki ‘i Tonga pea fe kafatokanga’i ha taha ‘oku ‘ikai ke ke ‘ilo ‘oku hangatona mai ki homou kulupu ‘o kamata talanoa moe taha ‘i ho kulupu. ‘E anga fēfē ha’o ‘ilo pe koe taha Tonga ia pe ‘ikai? Fakalau mai kātoa e ngaahi me’a te ke fakasio.

**Post-Free Listing Inquiries**

Can you please explain more about what you mean by these terms (the terms from their free listing results)?

- Kataki pe te ke lava ‘o toe fakamatala mai ange pe koe hā ho’o ‘uhinga ki he ngaahi lea kuo ke talamai?

**Semi-structured Interview Discussion points**

**Main Research Question:** What does it mean to be Tongan?

1. Do you know anyone in the other Tongan islands, besides the island you’re from? (Any family, friends, etc.)
   - ‘Oku ke ‘ilo ha taha mei motu, tukukehe e motu ‘oku ke ha’u mei ai? (ha fāmili, kaungāme’a, etc.)
2. Can you tell me about your experiences with them?
   - ‘E lava ke ke fakamatala mai ho’omou me’a ‘oku fa’a fai mo naautolu?
     a. When was the last time you’ve seen them?
     - Ko fē taimi na ke sio fakamuimui ai ki a naautolu?
     b. What did you do together?
     - Ko e hā ho’omou me’a ‘oku fa’a fai fakataha?
     c. Are there any questions that they ask you and vice versa?
     - ‘Oku fa’a ‘i ai ha ngaahi fehu’i ‘oku nau fa’a ‘eke atu, mo ha ngaahi fehu’i ‘oku ke fa’a ‘eke ka naautolu?
     d. Are there any differences in the way you behave and the way they behave?
     - ‘Oku ke fa’a fakatokanga’i ha faikehekehe ‘i he ‘ulungaanga moe to’onga ‘o koe pea mo naautolu?
     e. What are your other experiences with people from other Tongan islands?
     - Ko e hā ha ‘ū me’a kehe te ke lava ‘o talamai fekau’aki moe kakai he ‘ū motu kehe?
3. Do you know anyone that has migrated or traveled overseas for a long time? (Any family, friends, etc.)
   - ‘Oku ke ‘ilo ha taha kufo folau ki mili ‘o nofo fuolua ai? (ha fāmili, kaungāme’a, etc.)
4. Can you tell me about your experiences with them?
   
   - ‘E lava ke ke Fakamatala mai ho’omou ‘u me’a ‘oku fai?
   
   a. When was the last time you’ve seen them?
   
   - Ko fē taimi na’a ke sio fakamuimui ai ka nautolu?
   
   b. What did you do together?
   
   - Ko e hā ho’omou me’a ‘oku fa’a fai he taimi ‘oku mou feohi ai?
   
   c. Are there any questions that they ask you and vice versa?
   
   - ‘Oku ‘i ai ngaahi fēhu’i ‘oku nau fa’a ‘eke atu pe ko ho ‘eke ‘e koe ka nautolu?
   
   d. Are there any differences in the way you behave and the way they behave?
   
   - ‘Oku ke fa’a fakatokanga’i ha faikehekehe ‘i homou to’onga moe ‘ulungaanga?
   
   e. What are your other experiences with people from overseas?
   
   - Ko e hā ha ‘u me’a kehe ‘oku ke fa’a fakatokanga’i ho’omou feohi?

5. Do you know or are you related to any multiracial Tongans (hafekasi)?

   - ‘Oku ke ‘ilo pe kāinga mo ha taha hafekasi?

6. What are your experiences with them?

   - Ko e hā ho’omou me’a ‘oku fa’a fai ho’omou feohi?

   a. How often do you see them?

   - Ko e hā e lahi ho’omou fa’a fesiofaki?

   b. What do you do with them?

   - Ko e hā ho’omou me’a ‘oku fa’a fai?

   c. What stood out to you in these exchanges?

   - Ko e hā ha ngaahi me’a na’a ke fakatokanga’i he taimi ‘oku mou feohi ai?

7. Do you speak another language other than Tongan?

   - ‘Oku ke lea ha lea kehe tukukehe e lea faka-Tonga?

   a. When do you use the other language?

   - Ko fē taimi ‘oku ke ngāue’aki ai e lea ni?

   b. Do you use it because you want to or have to?

   - ‘Oku ke ngāue’aki koe’uhi ‘oku ke fie ngāue’aki pe koe lea pē ia ‘oku pau ke fai he taimi ko ia?

   c. What are your experiences with people who speak a different language most of the time instead of Tongan?

   - Ko e hā ho’o me’a ‘oku fai ‘i ha’o fetaulaki pe sio ki ha kakai ‘oku lea’aki ha lea kehe he taimi lahi, tukukehe e lea faka-Tonga?
8. Have you ever had an experience with people (also Tongans) who are non-fluent Tongan speakers?
- ‘Oku ke ‘ilo ha taha Tonga ‘oku ‘ikai ke fu’u sai ‘ene lea faka-Tonga?
  a. Describe your experience.
  - Fakamatala mai e me’a na’e hoko.

9. Do you consider yourself different from people in other villages/islands/states? Explain
- ‘Oku ke pehe ‘oku mou kehe moutolu he kolo ni mei he kakai he ‘u kolo/motu/sitetiti kehe? Fakamatala mai.

Note: Questions for USA participants were the same. The only question that was changed was number 3. Here is the substitute for it:

3. Do you know anyone that is still in Tonga? (Any family, friends, etc.)
- ‘Oku ke ‘ilo ha taha ‘oku kei nofo ‘i Tonga? (ha fāmili, kaungāme’a, etc.)
Thank you for taking your time to participate in this *fono* ‘village meeting’. As your town officer/chief has mentioned, I will be conducting a research, which includes some semi-structured interviews and other exercises. I am looking for some volunteers to participate in this. Given your perspective as core members of the community and Tonga as a whole, I would appreciate your help in participating in this research.

Interviews will last around an hour, possibly longer, depending on your answers to the questions, and we will conduct it at a time and place of your choosing, keeping in mind your confidentiality.

If you are willing to participate in this interview, please feel free to contact me or the town officer after this about a time or place. You are also welcome to come by and talk to me directly if you would like to participate.

Thank you very much!
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT
**Tongan Version (Using Tongan Alphabet instead of A, B, C)**

A. Ko e taumu’a ‘o e fakatotolo ni ke fekumi ki he ngaahi ‘uhinga mo e ‘ulungaanga ‘oku ne fakamatala’i e Tonga.

E. ‘E lava ke tokoni e fakatotolo ni ke ne fakamahino’i ange ‘a e ‘uhinga ‘o e Tonga mo e ngaahi palopalema ‘oku fekuki mo e kakai Tonga nofo muli fekau’aki mo ‘enau fakakaukau pe ko e Tonga kinautolu.

F. Ko ho’o hingoa ‘e tauhi pe ia ke fakapulipuli ‘o ‘ikai ‘ilo ‘e ha taha.

H. Ko e fakatotolo ni ‘e ‘i ai ‘a e hiki vitio ‘e fakafuofua mei he houa ‘e 1 ki he houa ‘e taha mo e konga.

I. Ko ho’o kau mai ki he fakatotolo ni ‘oku fai pe ki ho’o fili. Kapau he’ikai ke ke fie kau, he’ikai ke ‘i ai ha tautea ki a koe. ‘Oku ke tau’ataina ke ke ta’etali ha ngaahi fehu’i, pe foaki ha ngaahi tali ‘oku ‘ikai ke ke fie foaki.

K. Ko au, Tevita Manu’atu te u fakahoko e fakatotolo ni. Kapau ‘oku ‘i ai ha’o ngaahi fehu’i pe talanoa fekau’aki mo e fakatotolo ni pea ke fetu’utaki mai ki heku telefoni (676) 75-12313, pe koe email mai he tmanuatu1@niu.edu

L. ‘Oku ngofua ke ke ta’ofi ho’o tokoni mai ki he fakatotolo ni ‘o ‘ikai ‘i ai hano tautea pe totongi mo’ua

M. ‘E ‘ikai ke ngaue’aki ho’o hingoa totonu ‘i he taimi ‘e hiki tohi ai e faka’eke’eke ni

N. ‘Oku ‘i ai ha’o fehu’i mai ki a au he taimi ni?

‘Oku ke loto ke hiki tepi e faka’eke’eke ko eni?
‘Oku ke loto ke hiki tohi e faka’eke’eke ko eni he kaha’u?
‘E lava ke ke talamai e ‘aho mo e taimi ‘o e faka’eke’eke ni.

Mālō
English Translation

A. The purpose of this research is to explore what it means to be Tongan.
B. This research might help you in further understanding what it means to be Tongan, and how Tongans overseas cope with their Tongan identity while in a foreign country.
C. Your name and identity will be kept confidential.
D. This research will involve a video recording which will last for an hour to an hour and a half.
E. Your participation is voluntary. If you refuse to participate, there will be no penalty of any kind towards you. You are free to refuse to answer some questions if you feel like it.
F. I, Tevita Molisi Manu’atu will be directing this research. If you have any further questions or comments about this research, contact me at (676)75-12313, or email me at tmanuatu1@niu.edu
G. You can stop participating in this research at any time without prejudice or suspicion.
H. Your name will not be used when this interview is being written.
I. Do you have any questions for me?

Do you consent to have an interview recorded?
Do you consent to have the content of this interview published?
Verbally note the date and time of the interview

Thank you.