

***Fakakoloa* as embodied mana moana and agency: Postcolonial sociology within Oceania**

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Abstract

The coupling of mana moana is grounded in inspiration from and through Indigeneity and Moana sense-making (intimate understanding through our sensibilities within Oceania). Tongan meaning-making is centred on talanoa-vā, a framework that begins theorisation and analytical unpacking from an Indigenous Moana relational vantage point. We employ *talatalanoa* (ongoing conversations) to story and capture our conceptualisations of *fakakoloa* (purposefully sharing and imparting knowledge) and mana moana across interdisciplinary intersections as Tongan male educators and researchers working across the social sciences and health sciences. Our unpacking of mana moana as collective agency and responsibility is a feature of being located in *tu'atonga* (outside of Tonga; also relates to the Tongan diaspora). Fronting and centring Tongan thought and concepts is our way of grounding relational sense-making in Aotearoa/New Zealand whenua (places). Sociological inquiry through decoloniality within the postcolonial era from a Moana vantage point relies on approaches like talanoa-vā and *talatalanoa* to disrupt the normalised conditions and traditions of thinking and theorising within Euro-American-centric academe.

Keywords Mana moana; *Talatalanoa*; *Fakakoloa*; Collective agency and responsibility; Postcolonial sociology; Decoloniality

Introduction

The Zimbabwean-born decolonial scholar Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) refers to decoloniality as a resistance to the exhaustion of hegemonic Euro-American-centric modernity and its dominant epistemology. This article acts as a counternarrative to postcolonial sociology that originates from a Euro-American-centric understanding by privileging Tongan thought and concepts grounded in Moana-nui-a-Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean/Oceania).

Mana (power and agency) in the moana (ocean) is an acknowledgement and appreciation of peoples and their knowledges within Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

Our collective intention and responsibility within this article is to *fakakoloa* (purposefully share and impart knowledge). We preface our critical insights into Tongan thought and praxis by acknowledging that our current thinking, philosophising and practice is specific to *tu'atonga* (outside of Tonga; also relates to the Tongan diaspora) contexts. *Fakakoloa* and thinking within *lototonga* (inside/within Tonga) looks, sounds and feels specifically different and yet at the same time familiar. Mindful of this, we acknowledge the unpacking of mana moana from Aotearoa/New Zealand, a whenua (land) in which Māori are tangata whenua (people of the land). Let us ground our *tu'ufonua* (place we stand and find connection as Tongan; to find a sense of belonging as Tongan, a sense of direction and unpack turangawaewae (Māori concept for sense of belonging) sense-making:

Tapu moe Ta'ehāmai	We acknowledge and honour God, the unseen
Tapu moe La'ā 'o Tonga, Tupou VI	We acknowledge and honour Tonga's reigning monarch, King Tupou VI
Tapu moha hou'eiki moe ha'a matāpule	We acknowledge and honour nobility and chiefs
Tapu mo Kingi Tūheitia Potatau Te Wherowhero	We acknowledge and honour King Tūheitia Potatau Te Wherowhero
Tapu moe Tangata Whenua, moe kelekele malu 'i Aotearoa/New Zealand	We acknowledge and honour Māori and their land in Aotearoa/New Zealand
Pea fakatapu mo kimoutolu hono kotoa	We acknowledge and honour you all
Kae 'ataa moe kau tangata tu'a koeni ke fai ha'atau talatalanoa	Let us of commoner status engage in ongoing conversations with you

When settling and entering into new and unfamiliar whenua, Indigenous communities turn to their ancestors and knowledge for guidance. We position intellectualising through an Indigenous 'worlded view' of the world (Mika, 2017). This philosophical viewpoint is an appreciation of the self being constituted by the world and vice versa. Such grounded perspectives embrace reciprocal interconnections with the deity, spirit, land, people, knowledges and the moana itself. The socio-ecological and socio-relational

perspectives position people, society and spirituality not as mutually exclusive but intimately connected spaces, enabling us to unpack mana moana and agency within the social sciences using Moana-centric (grounded in the Pacific/Oceania) knowledge canons that reflect and appreciate our intersubjective specificities (Matapo, 2021). Unless stated otherwise, we use the label and indicator 'Moana' to recentre people, communities, and knowledges grounded in Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

Tongan lore and knowledge have little value in Aotearoa/New Zealand universities. Indigenous critical thinking involves the employment of dominant hegemonic colonial tools to analyse and verify social and societal phenomena within research contexts. Our socialisation as Tongan within our social and cultural contexts privileges Tongan lore and thought, which are inherently relational and spiritually driven and which provide critical understanding of things that matter to us. Moana-centric Indigenous knowledges and concepts are *fālahi* (wide) and *lōloto* (deep) as Moana-nui-a-Kiwa itself, enriching and imparting meanings that vary based on contexts of use across disciplinary spaces.

Samoan literary scholar Albert Wendt (1982, p. 202), whose conceptualisations cross the disciplinary boundaries of literary studies and postcolonial studies, proclaims:

I belong to Oceania – or, at least, I am rooted in a fertile portion of it – and it nourishes my spirit, helps to define me, and feeds my imagination. . . . My commitment will not allow me to confine myself to so narrow a vision. . . . Oceania deserves more than an attempt at mundane fact; only the imagination in free flight can hope – if not to contain her – to grasp some of her shape, plumage and pain.

The call to articulate mana moana from Moana-centric perspectives and Indigeneity is a deliberate move to prioritise canonisation from the depths of Moana-nui-a-Kiwa itself, a source Wendt (1982) affirms nourishes his spirit and feeds his imagination. As Tongan male researchers engaged in Moana-centred meaning-making, inspired by Wendt's (1982) provocation to front our intersubjectivities as being a necessary aspect of our collective critical sense-

making, we bring into conversation in this article Tongan thought and centre Tongan concepts like *fakakoloa*, *mālie* (sense, spirit, feeling of inspiration and excitement), *māfana* (sense, spirit, feeling of inwardly warmth; connected to the *loto* [soul, heart]; see Manu'atu, 2016), and utilise *talanoa-vā*, a framework for interrogating intra-/inter-relational connections, in our social meaning-making across geographic and disciplinary contexts.

The late 'Eveli Hau'ofa's (1993) conceptualisation of Oceanic interconnections and collective agency is evident in his use of the phrase 'sea of islands' rather than 'islands in the sea'. 'Sea of islands' places Moana-nui-a-Kiwa as a significant source of provision and inspiration for Oceanic people. Hau'ofa's (1993) rationale was grounded on an appreciation of Oceanic worldviews and languages that centres the moana as a site of meaning-making. Karlo Mila (2017) developed 'mana moana' as a culturally responsive intervention approach centred on the health and wellbeing of Pasifika communities linked to notions of "power, energy, vitality and gifts sourced to an Oceanic existence and cultures" (Mila, 2017, p. 104). She positioned mana moana as the "empowerment found in being who we are, where we are from and how we have come to be" (ibid). In this article we articulate mana moana as a spiritually bounded and led collective agency. Mana moana is not bound only to people but an assemblage of relational entities including artefacts and entities across places (Vaai & Nabobo-Baba, 2017). Mana moana is sourced from and rooted in the moana, whenua, language, spirit, values, and beliefs. Such a collective inspiration and responsibility has led to the decolonisation and indigenisation of research within the region (Johansson Fua, 2016).

We saw the call for articles for this special issue as an opportunity to engage in critical *talatalanoa* (ongoing conversations). The special issue's title, 'When Mana Whenua and Mana Moana Make Knowledge', raised critical questions for us as to the place of Tongan-centred conceptualisations in connection with tangata whenua and their intentions for mana whenua. In particular, how Tongan scholars in Aotearoa/New Zealand could engage with Moana-centred meaning-making from-and-through whenua they are not ancestrally rooted yet feel connected to through birth and nationality. To unpack mana moana and the struggle for self-determination for Tongan

people, *tu'ufonua* provides a conceptual understanding for communities now settled in Aotearoa/New Zealand whenua, whilst maintaining their responsibility of supporting Māori mana whenua as ancestral kinfolk.

Our *talatalanoa* is guided by two overarching questions: (1) How do we create social science that reflects the spaces and places in which the knowledge is created?; and (2) What does social science in Aotearoa/New Zealand look like when we enable recentring on Moana-centric Indigenous analytical framings? We unfold and capture descriptively our answers to these questions through our *talatalanoa* across the article. We also unpack the theoretical and academic landscape that has shaped social science and sociological criticisms and meaning-making.

Why *talatalanoa*?

Talatalanoa is the method of capturing our collective conversations and ambitions (E. H. Havea et al., 2020; Ka'ili, 2017). The kaupapa (foundational values, principles, and ideas that guide an action or discussion) of *talatalanoa* as a cultural practice within Tongan *kāinga* (extended families) and society is guided by the ethical conditions of *vā* (nurture and honour the relational space), which in turn is governed by the principles of *loto'ofa* (love), *loto-fiefoaki* (generosity, care) and *loto-tō* (humility). The authors of this article are connected based on our responsibilities as fathers, church members, and researchers committed to continuing *lea faka-Tonga* (Tongan language) and cultural practices with our own children who were born and raised in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Our *talatalanoa* was intergenerational, ensuring the survival and thriving of our Tongan ways of thinking, seeing, knowing, and doing in *tu'atonga*.

As a derivative of *talanoa* (the practice of storying/to talk), *talatalanoa* enables meaningful conversations about important matters or issues and relies on the collective for meaning-making. People enter *talatalanoa* with preconceived ideas and expectations of engagement. The repetition of *tala* (to story, to tell, to talk) emphasises the iterative nature of *talatalanoa*. Vaioleti (2006) defines *noa* as something, nothing, anything or ordinary. *Noa* can also be defined as something unknown. Unpacking *noa* relies on ongoing *tala* to

reveal what really matters to people. This relies on the enacting of *vā* ethics. When *vā* is practised well, meaningful understanding can be expressed through the spirit of *mālie* and *māfana* within the *loto*. Our *vā* was already established. *Loto'ofa*, *loto-fiefoaki*, and *loto-toka'i* (deep respect) set the ethical conditions for our ongoing engagement. In this article, our modes of *talatalanoa* were predominantly via digital platforms—Google Docs, email and Zoom. Collectively, we made this decision. Doing online *talatalanoa* during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic felt appropriate given our dispersed locations across Auckland and Hamilton.

Turangawaewae and *tu'ufonua*: Grounding us in relation with Moana people

The concept of *turangawaewae* can support the development of critical thinking and practice. According to the eminent Māori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), when critical spaces, approaches and theories fail to consider the local characteristics of oppression, they can perpetuate unproductive and neocolonial practices. Localising critical theory to interrogate and understand oppression and its societal and systemic implications through Moana-centric values, language and worldviews can provide Moana/Pacific/Pasifika educators/researchers with the ability to make sense of how they care, respect and honour *mana whenua*, *mātauranga Māori* (Māori Indigenous knowledge and wisdom) and *tikanga* (Māori customs and practices). What is needed however, are spaces and opportunities for Māori and Pacific/Pasifika to make meaning of their ancestral connections, theorisations and responsibilities to each other as Moana people in Aotearoa/New Zealand (H. Smith & Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2021).

To orient and reorient our thinking in this article, we 'matter' the decluttering of knowledge by grounding, contextualising and articulating concepts (Tui Atua, 2005). Although the term 'Moana' may not resonate with all Pacific/Pasifika people, it enables us as Tongan researchers to work from a vantage point closely connected to our ancestral ways and practices.

In *lea faka-Tonga*, *tu'ufonua* means a place where one firmly places their feet. *Tu'ufonua* is used conceptually by Tongan scholars to articulate

their conceptualisations of Indigeneity and Indigenous becoming in *tu‘atonga* (Ka‘ili, 2017; Manu‘atu, 2005). As symbolic entities, *turangawaewae* and *tu‘ufonua* within the *whenua/fonua* (land) ground one’s sense of belonging to place and/or space. Articulating the ways Pacific/Pasifika people ground and situate their cultural locatedness in relation to *tangata whenua* is fundamental to understanding *mana moana* and *fakakoloa* (enriching others) for local communities (Fa‘avae et al., 2021).

Tangata moana negotiations: Te Tiriti o Waitangi, settler-colonialism, and trans-Indigeneity

The late Tracy Banivanua Mar (2016), of Fijian heritage, described settler-colonialism as an imperial political drive for national sovereignty and identity that was inherently resistant to Indigenous Pacific peoples’ self-governance. Decolonisation was initially very much a metropolitan affair driven by those who resided in urban and developed metropolitan nations. The histories of decolonisation mainly focused on national territories and left Indigenous Pacific peoples’ sovereignty unproblematised (Mar, 2016). Reconfiguring histories of decolonisation from the “angle of vision offered from the Moana, however, offers the opportunity to refocus on people rather than territory, as agents of decolonisation” (Mar, 2016, p. 8).

Despite the shared ancestry between Māori and other Moana people, when positioned relative to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi, settler-colonialism becomes a distinct force of political separation. The ancestral connections and affiliations become blurred spaces of vulnerability and distance. Trans-Indigeneity is a call for Indigenous-to-Indigenous meaningful exchanges and collaboration across geographic borders as well as thought spaces (Allen, 2012). There are very few opportunities for Māori and other Moana peoples to unpack and articulate Indigenous-work opportunities and vulnerabilities (H. Smith & Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2021). Aotearoa/New Zealand-born Samoan scholar Anae (2010, p. 14) identifies a need for “tools for Pacific researchers to *teu le va* in *palagi* [non-Pacific] spaces and Māori spaces”. Suaalii-Sauni (2017, p. 169), in her analysis of *Kaupapa Māori* (research that is conducted by Māori, for Māori and with Māori) and *vā*

connections, affirms the need to negotiate and 'wayfind' Māori and Moana meaning-making because "Māori and Pasifika researchers have a lot more in common than not".

The bicultural concept of tangata Tiriti (people of the Treaty) places all settlers, including Pacific/Pasifika people, as non-Māori. The term 'non-Māori' uniformalises all settlers and their diverse experiences and prioritises tangata whenua and mana whenua. Māori themselves have over time negotiated and navigated their inter-iwi (tribal) relations as part of their sense-making of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. For non-Māori, tangata Tiriti is a reminder of our settler-colonial obligations and responsibilities to Māori and the ways colonial history and oppression have implicated the livelihoods of tangata whenua and their mana whenua. Tangata Tiriti is a concept that Moana people can use to negotiate their mana moana and collective responsibility to each other.

Sense-making and meaning-making: Intersubjectivities and the hyphen case (-)

A detached objective analysis I will leave to the sociologist and all the other-ologists who have plagued Oceania since she captivated the imagination of the papalagi, or the white man. . . . Objectivity is for uncommitted gods. (Wendt, 1982, p. 202)

Pacific/Pasifika social scientists can engage in objective analysis, but does this actually lead to impact and transformation for their communities locally and regionally? As Tongan researchers in education, criminology, and health and nursing, respectively, who are also committed to enacting *faka'apa'apa* (respect), *anga fakatōkilalo/loto-tō* (humility), *tauhi vā* (maintaining good relations) and *mamahi'i me'a* (loyalty, passion), it is our shared *talatalanoa* and critical consciousness-work that generates our purpose and direction.

The Hawaiian definition of mana relates to "power, might, supernatural power, divine power, powerful, strong" (Lorrin Andrews, 1836, cited in Tomlinson & Tengan, 2016, p. 2). Tahitian definitions are similar and include "power, might, influence, powerful, affluent, to be in power, possess influence" (Davies, 1991, cited in Tomlinson & Tengan, 2016, p. 2). Samoan definitions include "supernatural power and to exert supernatural power" (Pratt, 1862,

cited in Tomlinson & Tengan, 2016, p. 3). The Tongan definition of mana also relates to the “supernatural, superhuman, miraculous, attended or accompanied by supernatural happenings” (Churchward, 2015, pp. 329–330). Although the origin of mana is linked to spirituality or the spiritual realm, how is it realised and operationalised today by Moana people?

David: We carry spirituality into these spaces. Because we are writing about ‘mana moana’ and its relevance and possibilities in social science/postcolonial sociology, it’s exciting for us to unpack this in an interdisciplinary way. Education, criminology, health, nursing are disciplinary spaces that need Tongan thought unpacked further.

Edmond: The spiritual richness we learn, observe, meditate, and constantly talk about are in our living rooms, garages, cars, *faikavas* [social kava gatherings] and other cultural settings . . . the *faikava* setting, everything is done in a circle . . . in a collective manner which settles power dynamics, eye contact and communication . . . allows *talatalanoa* . . . using Tongan language.

Sione: We are providing a more balanced view . . . moving away from the dominant worldview in health and nursing.

Intersubjectivity recognises collective and shared sense-making and meaning-making in interdisciplinary ways. Working-with Indigenous Moana and Tongan philosophies, concepts and approaches increases a sense of critical consciousness embedded within the intersectional boundaries that reveals our inter-relations and inter-dependence (Mika, 2017).

Bhaba (1994) conceptualised the ‘third space’ as a liminal/theoretical space of dynamic cultural change and shifting identities. Kalua (2009, p. 23) builds on Bhaba’s work by describing the liminal third space as being fuelled not only by “idle speculation, nor mere reflection, nor just a form of criticism, but a process of celebrating dynamic spaces of cultural change characterised by shifting identities”. Culture is not just spoken but expressed, uttered, embodied, performed, and shaped through a negotiation with and embracing

of collective intersubjectivity across the intersections of being-knowing-seeing-doing. As Iosefo (2016, p. 190) remarks,

To be able to conjure and confirm the third space as a site of struggle, I looked at how I clothe and validate my own identity as a Samoan woman, which in turn lead to the conceptualisation of third space as akin to the Va', a Samoan term for the social spaces of relationships.

The combining and weaving of “post-colonial and Samoan theories together to address the dominant culture is congruent with the process of constructing and deconstructing identity within the spaces of higher education” (Iosefo, 2016, p. 190).

Barad (2003, p. 185) proposed ‘ethico-onto-epistemology’ as an analytical framework that appreciates the “intertwining of ethics, knowing and being”. The entangled intra-relating of experiences and aspirations were believed to be an essential part of human experience. Jones and Jenkins (2008), of Pākehā (New Zealand European) and Māori heritage, respectively, explored the ‘indigene-coloniser hyphen’ to symbolise the negotiation of intercultural difference between them as Māori and Pākehā confronting their meaning-making interactions in Aotearoa/New Zealand. We employ here *talanoa-vā* (note the hyphen), as a critical relational approach centred on unpacking entangled intersectional spaces across cultural and interdisciplinary research contexts (see Figure 1).

Fakakoloa as transgenerational practice

Mana moana and agency are transgenerational in purpose. The transgenerational practice and transmission of knowledge through *fakakoloa* is a collective responsibility, what Indigenous people value and capitalise within their collectives (Thaman, 1995). Appreciating our ancestral knowledges in the Moana matters to the collective. Within academia however, the embedded dominant cultural capital is deeply rooted in knowledge canons and canonisation that reflect imperial legacies and histories appropriated and commodified by the colonisers (Barber & Naepi, 2020; Kidman, 2020). Neocolonial practices aided by neoliberal ideals that prioritise individual-

centred economic competition over collective wellbeing remain entrenched in academia. However, there are ways to decolonise and disrupt such neocolonial practices and conversations by shifting our priorities and unfolding what Spivak (1988) encourages subaltern marginalised voices to do: speak back, shift, and transform the oppressive structures by utilising their knowledge and approaches.

Engaging with tangata whenua and te ao Māori (the Māori world) within Aotearoa/New Zealand requires sense-making processes that acknowledge and honour the known, the unknown, the spiritual, metaphysical, and the non-living as well as the living. To *fakakoloa* across the spaces is to embrace the *mālie* and *māfana* conditions (Manu'atu, 2016). Such sense-making is a holistic and grounded way of knowing that recognises how the body embraces being-knowing-seeing-doing in the world. The embodied state of sense-making enables Moana-centric meaning-making. Sharing knowledge and meaning-making that benefits the next generation is what grounds our *fakakoloa* responsibilities, constantly reminding us of why we do what we do.

Talanoa vā, Tongan thought canon, and canonisation

Sione: We position ourselves closer to our people and they engage more in the talanoa-vā rather than our current linear and individualistic view of the health system.

David: Sione, what would talanoa-vā and mana moana look like in nursing research?

Sione: It incorporates Moana constructions of health, engagements [talanoa-vā] and treatment [traditional healing].

David: I've been working-with talanoa-vā as a critical relational framework for deep analysis . . . probing ideas-ideas and people-ideas into the same space and place (physical, spiritual, abstract). Us writing about mana moana and its relevance and possibilities in the social science/postcolonial sociology is exciting.

Sanga and Reynolds (2017) and Tunufa'i (2016) argue that when researchers use a Pacific name for a methodology/method/approach, it does not ensure alignment with Pacific thought or practice. This means Pacific/Pasifika scholars need to ground and articulate their implementation of ideas and approaches. Talanoa-vā's critical potentialities are connected to how it disrupts the privileging of the Euro-American-centric gaze and criticisms (see Figure 1). The entanglements at the intersectional space in which the physical and the spiritual sense-making takes place are what Vaka (2016) terms *tufunga fepaki*. Talanoa-vā provides a generative space for Indigenous criticisms that resembles and resonates with sense-making practices outside of academe. Talanoa-vā privileges decoloniality and indigenisation, which draw from an alternative politics grounded in a relational ethics that embraces our physical and spiritual worlds (Hau'ofa, 1993). Talanoa-vā adds another layer to Moana sociological criticism that is often beyond human oversight, a discourse that reflects an Indigenous worlded view of the human as an entity in and amongst an array of entities in the world (Mika, 2017).

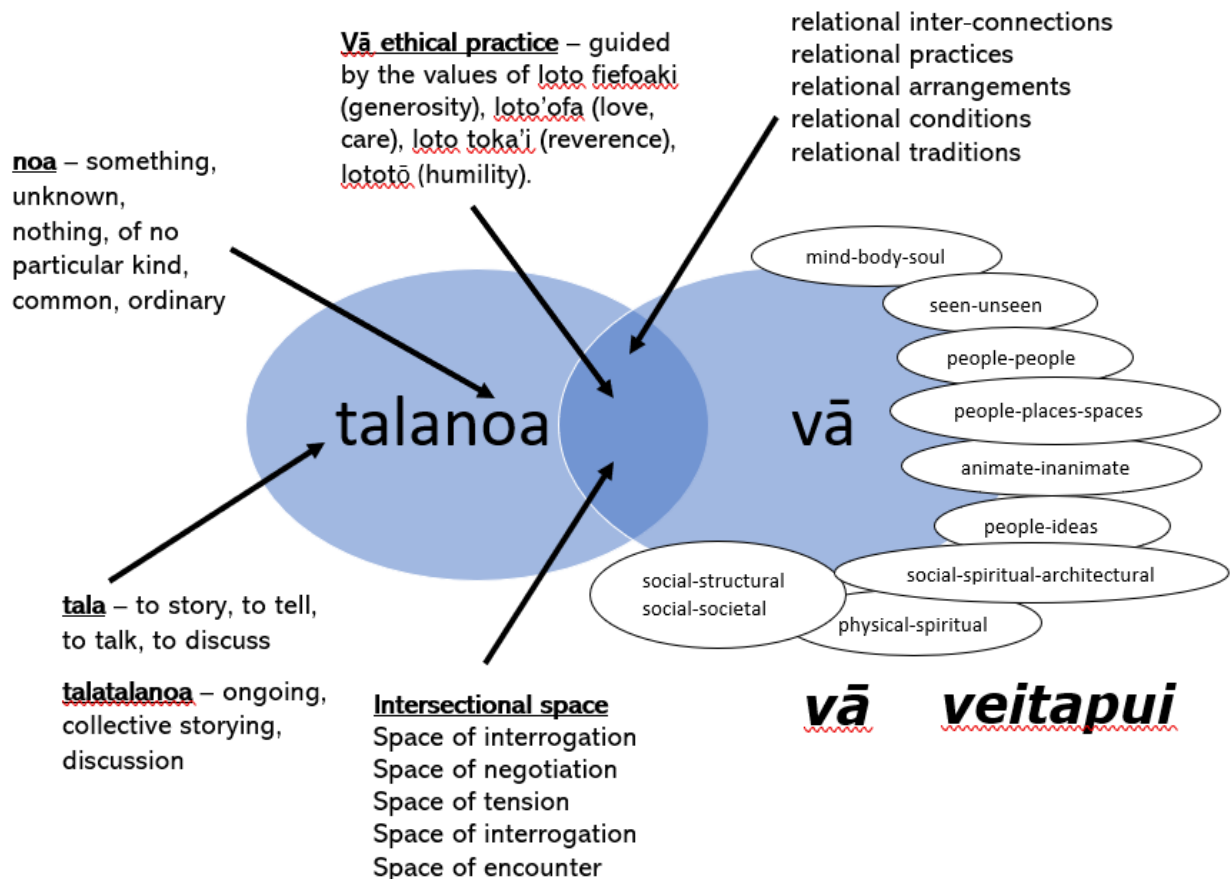


Figure 1: Talanoa vā approach

Tongan thought as an Indigenous Moana canon or body of knowledge is rooted in the *fonua* and the depths of the moana. Tongan canonisation utilises Tongan thought and draws from *ngaahi 'ilo moe poto 'a e Tonga* (Tongan knowledge and wisdoms) for inspiration and meaning-making. Sione also referred to “ngaahi 'ilo moe taukei mei ono'aho moe kuohili” as being valued knowledge and wisdoms from the past that can make sense of today’s social and societal ills:

‘Oku tala foki e ‘aho ni ko e onopooni ka ko e kuohili ko ono’aho. ‘A ia ‘oku totonu ke ‘omai e ngaahi tala mei ono’aho, ke ne huluhulu ‘etau ngaue he ‘aho ni ke teke e mana moana e kakai Tonga. Ka ‘ikai ke ‘omai ketau fakaaka ki ai pea tetau hē holo pē he kuonga fakapo’uli ni. Ko e fakatātā ko hono ‘omai e ‘ilo e ūloa [model of care] ke huluhulu ‘aki e ngāue he mo’ui. [Onopooni refers to our modern and contemporary time, but ono’aho refers to the ancient past. Therefore, it’s befitting to bring our ancient stories to highlight and guide our current work and concerns today,

encouraging Tongan peoples' mana moana. However, that knowledge is not only to ground us but so we don't get lost in today's problems. An example of this is in my use of the ūloa model of care to give light to health and wellbeing]

We should explore social science from a Tongan perspective, tauhi vā [nurturing relationships], ngaahi 'ilo mo e taukei mei ono'aho [knowledges/wisdoms from the past] and avoid trying to fit to the Western views of social science. For example – langimālie is about good health which capture our vā with people and also the environment and beautiful weather with clear sky.

Sanga and Reynolds (2017, p. 198) utilise Malaitan knowledge to understand leadership practices in research contexts and state that “to name something is to stake a claim, an action which, while having a moment of origin, requires dynamic attention to context and development”. We use the coupling of talanoa-vā to reimagine mana moana potential within social science and sociological criticisms. In doing so, vā (socio-relational and socio-temporal spaces of connections) and *veitapui* (sacred and spiritual space of connections) becomes central to critical engagement. The hyphen brings the decolonial and postcolonial discourses into close interrogation.

Although Tongan thought is not prioritised in Western-oriented universities, Tongan knowledge, philosophy, beliefs, values and practices have been introduced into Euro-American-centric academia by Tongan researchers (Fehoko et al., 2021; Manu'atu, 2000; Taufe'ulungaki, 2014; Thaman, 1995; Vaka, 2016). Our naming of Tongan thought in this article is a deliberate move to foreground the fundamental Tongan-centred paradigms in which we ground our thinking, articulation and analysis of social science disciplines, and what it means to become Tongan in *tu'atonga*.

The postcolonial Pacific and mana moana across disciplines

How do we create social science that reflects the spaces and places in which knowledge is created? We tackle this question throughout the rest of the article. Interdisciplinary practice is much needed in the postcolonial Pacific. It is a practice Hviding (2003) describes as the disturbance of knowledge exchange across disciplinary boundaries. The interdisciplinary intersection is

a feature of talanoa-vā (see Figure 1), a critical space of encounter. Sociologists Barber and Naepi (2020, p. 700) argue that for sociology to remain transformational and relevant for years to come, it must “encounter with other ways of thinking, learning, and knowing”. For Tongan researchers (and other Indigenous Moana researchers) in academia, detaching themselves from critical sense-making and meaning-making ignores the rich and in-depth layers of knowledges that help contextualise social science and sociological learning that matter to our decolonisation attempts. Mana moana as a collective decolonial endeavour unpacks our intersubjectivities across the disciplinary spaces we operate. Social theorisation and analysis through talanoa-vā is the interrogation of the social structures and systems that perpetuate the marginalisation and oppression of Tongan communities and their knowledges.

David: Social science is multi-disciplinary. It houses History, Geography, Ancient History, Anthropology, Politics, Law, Economics, etc. I feel inspired using Tongan concepts and frameworks to tell the neglected stories and disrupt Eurocentric epistemes that have troubled us for ages. Validating our knowledge and practices from the *falelotu* [church site], *akohiva* [choir practices], *fakaafe* [feasts], *faikava* [social kava drinking], etc, across disciplines is exciting yet demanding and scary.

Edmond: I agree with David, the fact we can weave and continue to interweave our voices across spaces that are usually voiceless in social science is exciting. We as emerging scholars continue to challenge the spaces we are in and allow for Tongan Indigenous ways and knowledges to be used and valued. However, we must also allow these creations in these exciting spaces to evolve just like our Tongan culture has abroad.

David: *Koia* [yes, agreed], the conversation about the way in which Tongan culture is changing is important. How best to sustain that is not one that people feel open to share. Even for me, it's a tricky one. So, Edmond, what does mana

moana mean to you and is it an important part of the Tongan culture evolving in the *tu'atonga*/diaspora?

Edmond: Mana moana gives me strength in academia. It almost aligns with the Tongan value of *mamahi'i me'a* [loyalty], having a willing heart to do things for your families and communities you serve. While mana moana as a phrase is uncommon in Tongan communities, I can envisage it as a strengths-based model for future Tongans to feel that in-depth connection with the moana and people from there.

Edmond noted in our *talatalanoa* the close link between mana moana, willing heart, *mamahi'i me'a*, and the changing and evolving nature of Tongan culture and language in *tu'atonga*. The term mana is becoming prominent across political, education, religious, and artistic projects in Oceania. In 2016, anthropologists Tomlinson and Tengan (2016) re-conceptualised new meanings of mana using Pacific languages and cultural understandings. Tomlinson and Tengan (2016, p.1) suggested that by “focus[ing] on mana anew . . . [it] offer[ed] scholars fresh insights about relationships between aesthetics, ethics, and power and authority . . . [and that] a new focus on mana has the potential to generate new forms of anthropological practice . . . developing new understandings of mana that have practical consequences”. Making sense of the possibilities of mana moana through *Lea fakaTonga* (Tongan language) in *tu'atonga* can lead to generative yet pragmatic practices for our communities (Mila, 2017).

Mana moana is apparent in Oceania and agency is noted as key to talanoa-vā research practices. The mid- to late twentieth century was an era in which small island nations in the moana desired political independence and self-governance from imperial rule. Scholars of Moana heritage within literary studies, education, anthropology, and Pacific studies found strength to speak back to Eurocentric theorisation using their Indigenous Moana knowledge and worldviews (Hau'ofa, 1993; Hereniko, 1994; Nabobo-Baba; 2006; Thaman, 1995; Wendt, 1982).

As early career researchers, we found our collective agency through learning from each other about how to operationalise Tongan knowledge and

language within spaces in which we work. To foster and *fakakoloa* our learnings with other early career researchers is our responsibility, and we have asserted time and energy to developing a critical space for Tongan scholars in *tu'atonga*—to connect our thinking and practice of Tongan theoretical approaches and research frameworks every month. The Tongan Global Scholars Network was developed by enthusiastic early career scholars to mobilise, motivate and support each other in our decolonial endeavours across the United States, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Tonga.

Indigenising postcolonial sociology—Moana perspectives

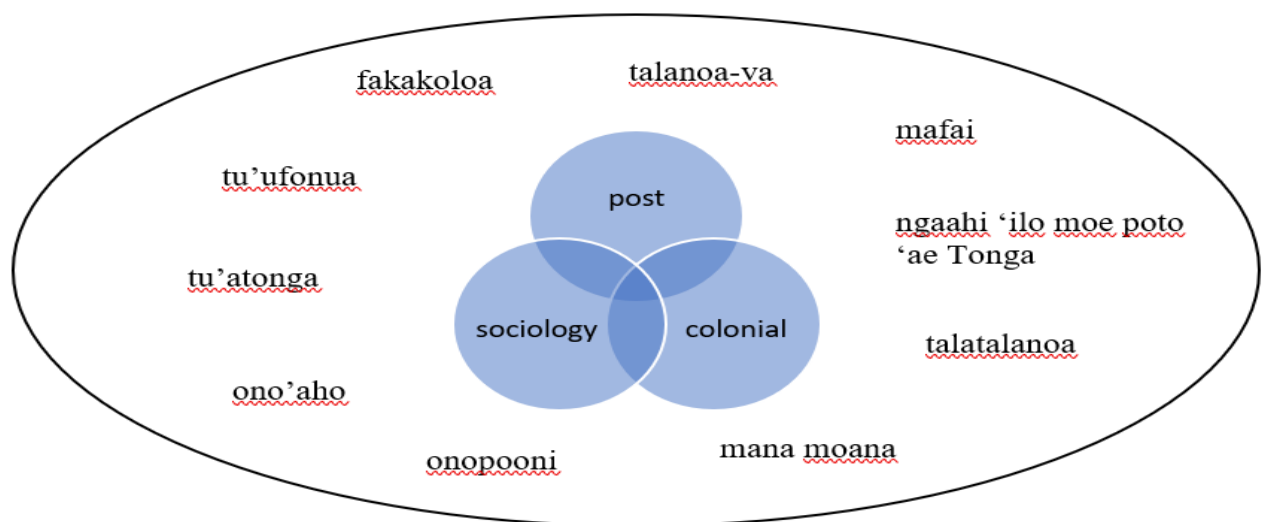


Figure 2: Critical interrogations of postcolonial sociology in the Moana

Figure 2 is a representation of critical interrogation. Unpacking the intersections between post-colonial-sociology is mindful of the complex meanings of each term individually and when they all collectively combine. Binding 'post-' with 'colonial' positions an analysis of the colonial condition in today's academic canonisation. Adding sociology widens the analysis of today's colonial condition by challenging the societal and structural inequities that perpetuate oppressive thinking and practice. So therefore, what is the place of Indigenous Moana concepts and frameworks? We utilise Tongan concepts in our paper to capture postcolonial sociology from Oceania.

Global North scholar Julian Go (2016) claims sociology is a disciplinary field that has not always embraced postcolonial theory, and analysis. Within social science including sociology, social theory is used as a tool of interrogation to help explain and give meaning to social phenomena/variables. To understand the societal systemic issues linked to inequity, injustice, racism, poverty, or gambling for example, key social phenomena such as ethnicity, gender, social class, femininities, masculinities, sexuality, religion, culture, and identity for instance, can be interrogated and unpacked (Go, 2016). This is done to reveal the ways people and communities conceptualise, frame and re-frame, and enact their social and cultural responsibilities, actions, decision-making, as well as re-imagine possible solutions within their own communities and the wider society.

A collection of essays edited by Go (2016, p. 8) provides Global North social scientists with a critical space to engage with postcolonial theory. For sociology, postcolonial theory provides an “injunction to examine colonialism” (Go, 2016, p. 8). Postcolonial theory should not just be about “countering Eurocentrism with an Asian-centrism or African-centrism; this would only prioritize the dialectical opposite of its object of critique” (Go, 2016, p. 8). Instead Go (2016) asserts that postcolonial theory must move beyond colonial knowledge structures entirely. Postcolonial theory offers a “serious analytic engagement with the racialised, cultural, discursive, and epistemic aspects of global inequalities which conventional sociology (including traditional world-systems theory) has only partially addressed” (Go, 2016, p. 9). The analytic engagement we provide in this article as Tongan scholars located in Oceania moves beyond and across disciplines in search of collective agency and responsibility—through social science, education, health, nursing, and Indigenous studies.

Dalleo (2016) highlights the ways postcolonialism across different disciplines have been conceptualised and utilised in different ways. Dalleo (2016) seeks to shift understanding of ‘colonialism’ and ‘postcolonialism’ away from English literary studies and Cultural studies, the two disciplinary fields that have dominated conceptualisations of postcolonial in recent times (Huggan, 2016), to a contemporary postcolonial critique using a combination

of disciplinary knowledges. However, Hviding (2003, p. 43) proposes interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary practice as “more than a combination of existing academic disciplines, and that a successful interdisciplinary approach should cause the epistemological, methodological, and institutional boundaries between disciplines to be disturbed, even remade”. Our analyses in this article begin from an Indigenous Moana vantage point and uses critical Indigenous and Tongan concepts and approaches to comprehend mana moana and agency across Education studies, critical Indigenous studies, and Pacific studies.

Through Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) scholarship and Indigenous social criticisms, Māori and other Moana scholars have engaged and disrupted research and scholarly work for a while (Hau’ofa, 1993; Hereniko, 1994; Thaman, 1995; Wendt, 1982). The next generation of educators, researchers, and scholars have taken up the call to do the same (Fa’aea & Fonua, 2021; Fa’avae et al., 2021; Fehoko et al., 2021; E. H. Havea et al., 2020; Iosefo, 2016; Leenen-Young et al., 2021; Lopesi, 2021; Matapo & Allen, 2021; Ng Shiu & Iosefo, 2021; Sisifa & Fifita, 2021; Tecun, 2020; Thomsen & Iosefo-Williams, 2021; Vaka et al., 2020). Grounding postcolonial sociology in Oceania shifts theorisation and meaning-making “beyond colonial knowledge structures . . . [and] strive to transcend the very oppositions between Europe and the Rest, or the West and the East, which colonialism inscribed in our theories” (Go, 2016, p. 8). The vantage and entry point into serious analytic engagement, as Moana scholars and researchers, is through Moana ideas and knowledge.

Tongan theologian Jione Havea (2017) urges scholars to “postcolonise now”. Havea’s edited collection features Indigenous scholars and allies from the Global South who have attempted to disrupt the theology discipline using criticisms that confront and provoke dominant practice. Postcolonial criticism confronts the “gatekeepers of oppressing traditions, cultures, scriptures and theologies” (Havea, 2017, p. 4). For genuine change Havea (2017, p. 4) suggests we take up Audre Lorde’s call to confront and familiarise with the “master’s tools [because it] will never dismantle the master’s house”. As a confident speaker and meaning-maker of lea faka-Tonga and ngahi ‘ilo moe

poto 'a e Tonga (Tongan knowledge and wisdom, also Tongan thought), the doing of postcolonial criticism allows him to utilise and play “with the colonial English language and mainline traditions” (Havea, 2017, p. 1) in his thinking and writing. The doing of postcolonial criticism, however, can look and feel different for us as early career Tongan researchers who are still learning to operationalise such critical canonisation. Having the three of us work-through our understanding of lea faka-Tonga and Tongan thought helps us wayfind across disciplinary spaces.

Decolonial projects have transcended geographies as well as disciplinary spaces in the moana (L. T. Smith, 1999). The Rethinking Pacific Education Initiative for-by-with Pacific People (RPEIPP) was developed in 2000–2001 by educators/researchers in Oceania to counter the ways in which education aid and support was framed and implemented in their own nations (Taufe'ulungaki, 2014). Fundamental to RPEIPP aspirations was the desire to inspire, mana enhance, and transform people as well as shift systems in ways that align with Indigenous Moana worldviews, pedagogies, and practices (Johansson-Fua, 2016).

Recentring Indigenous Moana analytical frames

Edmond: Decentring Eurocentric understandings in sociology, education, nursing, and public health, will allow us to acknowledge knowledges and ideas that we take for granted in writing and research.

David: Edmond, earlier you described cultural spaces that decentre Eurocentric thinking and provide rich meaning. Also noted *faikava* as a rich cultural setting. How can *faikava* recentre Indigenous Tongan way of making meaning including analysis of data?

Edmond: . . . [A]t the *faikava* setting, everything is done in a circle or collective manner which automatically fronts and questions power dynamics at eye contact. . . . Hierarchies are negotiated. . . . The use of Tongan language through the art of oratory tradition, music brings recentring indigenous Tongan ways of making meaning.

Another key question we asked was: What does social science in Aotearoa/New Zealand look like when we enable the recentring process on Indigenous Moana analytical framings? Recentring Indigenous Moana analysis involves a shift from a Western gaze based on Euro-American-centric criticism to a reorientation of critical analysis from the local and community level (Naepi, 2019). It requires Indigenous language equipped with conceptual and theoretical frames (Anae, 2010). Edmond highlights these frames from our local communities which are often taken for granted in writing and research. At the same time, Edmond acknowledges *talatalanoa* as an analytical process that enables the confronting of power dynamics between people within a cultural space which requires careful sense-making (J. Havea, 2017). Learning to be and become critical thinkers requires our creative sense-making. Being present, tapping into what we know, seeing what we feel, and doing what we know and feel are embodied learnings through *talanoa-vā* practice (Fa'avae et al., 2021).

Indigenising postcolonial sociological analysis

Sociologist Joanna Kidman (2020) continues to challenge and resist institutional neo-colonial processes that undermine Indigenous scholars. She argues settler-colonialism is not a historical event tucked away in the past, rather a “constantly evolving structure that seeks allies in modern economies” (Kidman, 2020, p. 249). Universities hide their true feelings about Indigeneity behind the ‘cultural inclusivity’ and ‘diversity’ ideal and a “normative feel-good whiteness” (Kidman, 2020, p. 251) mentality. Many Indigenous Moana faculty members resist and become highly adaptable, capable of navigating the marginalised spaces created for them by the institutional elites (Faleolo, 2020; Smith & Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2021).

Indigenising the Euro-American-centric gaze requires a deconstruction of meaning-making using the master’s tools (Havea, 2017). Localising critical sociological theory to interrogate and understand social issues, oppressive structures, and its societal and systemic implications through Indigenous

Moana values, language and worldviews can provide meaningful sense-making for Moana educators/researchers (L. T. Smith, 1999).

Indigenising postcolonial sociology begins from Indigenous canons and canonisation. Despite evidence of intellectualisation through Indigenous Moana knowledge canons within the social science, education, and health disciplines in Aotearoa/New Zealand higher education, indigenous ontology is often ignored (Bhaskar, 2020). Recent provocations by Indigenous scholars in Aotearoa have urged emerging scholars of Māori and Moana heritages to consider what it means to either indigenise or decolonise research engagement and analysis (Fa'avae et al., 2021; Fehoko et al., 2021). Our use of *talanoa-vā* as a local and culturally relevant frame of reference is to navigate and explore the indigenisation of postcolonial sociology within *tu'atonga*.

Similarly, the Indigenising of social work recognises interpretation from a local frame of reference that is locally and culturally relevant. Mafile'o and Vakalahi (2018, pp. 537–538) propose the “next wave of Pacific social work development be centred back in Pacific nation contexts in order to invigorate new social work approaches and social development strategies that better address contemporary overall social, cultural and economic well-being for transnational Pacific peoples”. Mafile'o and Vakalahi's (2018, p. 538) rationale and desire for indigenisation is closely connected to re-invigorating and re-centring Moana Indigenous social work “relative to greater equality, locally-led development, cultural preservation, and knowledge generation”.

Conclusion

Indigenising social science, especially sociology, reflects the critical spaces and decolonial aspirations in postcolonial Oceania. Social theory, postcolonial theory, and Indigenous theory are not always employed nor rooted in in-depth critical sociological analysis. They are often absent across academic disciplines. Recentring Moana-centric concepts and approaches from the margins into the fore raises the critical consciousness of settler-colonialism specifically from Oceania (Kidman, 2021). Barber & Naepi (2020, p. 700) claim, for sociology to remain transformational and relevant for years to come, it must “encounter with other ways of thinking, learning, and knowing”. Our

collective *talatalanoa* has highlighted a valued practice that generates meaningful meaning-making for Tongan educators and researchers.

Mana moana and agency is made sense of through ongoing and collective *talatalanoa*, a responsibility we value. Mana moana is learning to *fakakoloa*. Some Moana scholars and researchers have utilised social science and sociology spaces in Oceania to disrupt and resist Eurocentric and hegemonic practices that undermine Indigenous criticisms (Havea, 2017; Kidman, 2020). Emphasis has been placed on trans-Indigenous engagement, collaboration, and meaning-making (Allen, 2012). Reconfiguring histories of decolonisation from the vantage point that Moana provides the opportunity to also refocus on people, rather than solely on geography, as agents of decolonisation (Mar, 2016). It made sense for us to draw-from our *ngaahi 'ilo moe poto 'a e Tonga* because they resonate with our knowledges and practices within Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

Suaalii-Sauni (2017, p. 169) affirms the need to negotiate and wayfind Māori and Moana meaning-making because “Māori and Pasifika researchers have a lot more in common than not”. H. Smith and Wolfgramm-Foliaki (2021) call for more opportunities between Māori and other Moana people to come together, unpack and articulate meaning-making as Moana people. The development of Indigenous Moana “tools for Pacific researchers to *teu le va* in palagi spaces and Māori spaces” (Anae, 2010, p. 14), through *talanoa-vā* is useful resistance-work, a deliberate shift from normalised dominant Euro-American-centric tools to cultural frames that matter to local communities.

Albert Wendt (1982) reminds us of the Western academe’s tendency to detach and distance our intersubjectivities from critical criticisms and sociological analysis. Mana moana is to *fakakoloa* and honours critical sense-making and meaning-making through Indigenous Moana practices. *Talatalanoa* and *talanoa-vā* appreciate the ways in which knowledge is embraced by our bodies and senses which heighten meaning-making in meaningful ways that sustain our spirit, enthusiasm, and inspiration. For Tongan researchers obligated with the continuation of our next generation, we evoke *mālie* and *māfana* as liberating sprits of change. Our being-knowing-

seeing-doing embraces mana moana possibilities beyond Aotearoa/New Zealand whenua.

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